

THE EYES and EARS

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Unit Citation for Gallantry
awarded to the Detachment and
those who served at the Battles
of Coral/Balmoral,
South Vietnam, 1968

**Detachment 131 Divisional
Locating Battery RAA
South Vietnam 1966 – 1971
2025**

**59 Years and the Detachment
Spirit Remains**



Republic of Vietnam Cross of
Gallantry with Palm Unit Citation
Awarded to those who served
with the Detachment
from 01.04.66 – 19.08.71



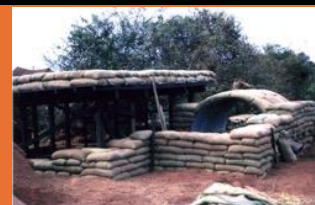
"Tug of War" time '66



Op Duntroon '68



Training, Holsworthy



A "Home" '67



EKN/69/0085/VN

**Vietnam Veterans Day
and
Long Tan Day
18th August 2025**

- a memory we continue to maintain.

Long Tan Day in Australia, also known as **[Vietnam Veterans' Day](#)**, is observed on August 18th each year to commemorate the anniversary of the **[Battle of Long Tan](#)** during the Vietnam War. It's a day to remember the sacrifices of all Australians who served in the Vietnam War, not just those who fought in that particular battle. The Battle of Long Tan, fought in 1966, was a significant engagement where Australian and New Zealand forces faced off against the Viet Cong.

Australia in the Vietnam War -

Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War began with a small commitment of 30 military advisors in 1962 and increased over the following decade to a peak of 7,672 Australian personnel following the Menzies Government's April 1965 decision to upgrade its military commitment to South Vietnam's security.



NB: During the 1966 to 1971 period of the Vietnam War, **Detachment 131 Divisional Locating Battery** became the **longest continuing Detachment in the Royal Australian Artillery having been deployed for five years and two months (1886 days)**. During this period **476 soldiers** served on a rotational basis, with some completing multiple tours with never more than 70 members in country at one time. Also, because of our Radar deployment there were **41 RAEME personnel** attached to the Detachment who we proudly consider as members of our group and have always welcomed their involvement in our activities.

Key Aspects of their Deployment:

Radar: The Detachment began with AN/KPQ-1 mortar locating radars to provide counter-battery fire support.

Survey: An artillery survey section provided crucial survey information for fire support bases.

Sound Ranging & Sensors: The Detachment also had a sound ranging troop and a ground sensor program, which was a significant part of their duties in the later stages of their deployment.

Personnel: 476 soldiers served with the Detachment on a rotational basis.

Withdrawal: The radar and sound ranging elements were returned to Australia in 1970. The remaining sensor section was transferred in June 1971, and the Detachment itself officially closed on July 31, 1971.

Vietnam Veterans Day / Long Tan Day 2025 - activities...

Rieny Nieuwenhof - Living with all the freedoms and opportunities this great country offers, I could not help but to feel extremely grateful and privileged to attend the memorial and acknowledgement of the 59th year since the battle of Long Tan, and the 50th anniversary of the **Vietnam Veterans Association Geelong & District Sub-Branch** at Osborne Park, North Geelong. My honour was even greater being permitted to lay a wreath and poppy alongside fellow Councillors **Cr Ron Nelson, Barrabool Hills Ward** (Deputy Mayor) & **Christopher Burson** whilst representing the **City of Greater Geelong Council**



Phil Connor - his plans for the 18th... "Unfortunately, I am down with Covid, still. Isolation.

This time hit like a baseball bat, ugly.

Miriam is OK.

Cheers, Phil."

Blair Sheppard - sent in the following email with some great photos...

"Hi Paul,

As requested, some photos from Vietnam Veterans Day.

Nine veterans from 131... **"Vietnam 1970-71"**and spouses attended the service at Currumbin RSL and also visited Mudgeeraba Light Horse Museum.

Blair Sheppard, Ron Boaler, Ted Jux, Mick Davis, John Lucas, Graeme Jennion, Erik Williams, Warren Jaenke and Rob Torrsi.

Excellent time spent together.

Cheers,

Blair."



Gordon Malcolm - "Myself and 2 other Armoured Corps veterans from our Brooklyn RSL sub-branch attended a service at Ettalong by the Central Coast Vietnam Vets on Sunday 17th, quite a pleasant Memorial site. Gordon."



Bob Billiards - had pre-plans for the 18th too... "I will reflect on mine at Nepean hospital having a PET scan. Springwood VVA had theirs last Sunday - photos below."



Bill Taggart (1st/83rd USA Artillery) - Has a memory to share...

"Paul,
I and the majority of the 1/83rd Battalion arrived in Vung Tau harbor on Halloween 1966, some Trick-or-Treat that was!! We sat on deck that night watching tracers fly in the distance, thinking what the heck are we getting into!!

The photo at right is me on the beach the day we got off the ship (Nov 1, 1966)
Bill."



Mike Butler - "Hi Paul

Thought I'd combine "catch - up" with VVA Day.

Today, the local Box Hill Vietnam Veterans Association conducted a ceremony at the local cenotaph and the RSL provided finger food. It was a good turnout and the special guest speaker was a nurse who served in Vietnam from early 1965 with SEATO and started by administering to the local population - I didn't realise that we had Australian nurses there so early in the 60's. A couple of photos are attached



Cheers,
Mike."

Geoff Blackwell - "Spent Vietnam Veterans Day in Hobart at the Lindisfarne Vietnam Memorial and then at the Cenotaph. A bit chilly, but clear skies. Friendly people and got to chat with Barb Baker, Governor. Geoff."



Kevin Thornton - "Paul Dickson

Attached is a report of Vietnam Veterans Day conducted at Harrington.

Kind regards

Kevin Thornton."

KEVIN THORNTON – ALPHA RADAR – MAY 1966- JANUARY 1967

I attended the Vietnam Veteran's Day at the Harrington Memorial Hall conducted by the President of the Harrington-Crowdy Head RSL Sub-Branch. Also in attendance were members of the Sub-Branches of the Old Bar RSL, Wingham RSL, Taree RSL, Manning Valley National Service Association, School Captains from Harrington Public School, members from the RAAF base at Williamstown and the Reverend Helen Quinn. The catafalque party was from the Army Reserve, Taree.

A Brief history of the Battle of Long Tan was given, followed by the Battle of Coral-Balmoral, the Royal Australian Navy and the RAAF activities in Vietnam.

The service concluded with the laying of wreaths, the National Anthems of New Zealand and Australia. Most members then went to the Harrington Hotel, where members enjoyed a quite ale, finger food and a raffle.



Top picture: Kevin laying a wreath.



At right picture: Vietnam Veterans at service.

Peter Ravelje - forwarded the following which continues this almost never-ending activity...

Seeking justice for Vietnam nashos

Latest News By Julia Abbondanza NSW RSL 16 Aug 2025

A technicality has meant many national servicemen have been denied recognition for their service in Vietnam. A new campaign driven by RSL NSW members strives to amend that injustice.

When Richard Barry OAM was conscripted into the Army in 1967, he didn't ask about medals.

Like many young men called up under the National Service scheme, he accepted his orders, trained in jungle warfare and served alongside regular soldiers in the chaos of Vietnam.

"We did our lawful duty honourably," he explains. "But unlike others, we were never fully recognised."

More than half a century later, Barry is the public face of a renewed campaign to correct what he and many others see as a deep injustice: the exclusion of around 2,500 [Vietnam veterans](#) from receiving the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal (RVCM).

The reason? A rigid technicality that required recipients to have served at least 181 days in-country, which many nashos didn't meet.

As Barry explains: "In many cases, their shorter tours were the result of fixed terms of national service, not personal choice or a failure to serve."

The result has been decades of quiet shame, anger and heartbreak.

"It was a severe knock-down. These men suffered enough coming home to mobs of protesters and a hostile media. Then to be called 'second-class veterans' or 'short timers'... it was devastating."



Barry in June 1969, taking a rest in a gun pit after an all-night ambush in Phuoc Tuy Province.

Over the years, many nashos stopped marching on [ANZAC Day](#). Some fell into silence, others into despair. A number [died by suicide](#), says Barry. "Their government had sent them to war, then denied them full recognition. It was unconscionable."

Barry, who has received the RVCN, has dedicated years to advocating for these forgotten veterans. His campaign, long supported by families, fellow veterans and even the Vietnamese Australian community, has gained new momentum thanks to backing from RSL NSW and legal support from Queensland Senator Paul Scarr.

Following [Vietnam Veterans' Day](#) on 18 August, Barry is urging the federal government to act swiftly and honour these men before time runs out.

"We don't want sympathy – we want justice," he says. "It's not too late to do the right thing."

Haunted by a word

For **Bruce Elder**, a Vietnam veteran and former infantryman with the 5th Battalion, the weight of being called a "malingeringer" in 1968 still hasn't been lifted.

"I was medically evacuated because of foot issues," he recalls. "I pleaded to stay, even offered to serve as a driver. But they sent me home. When I got back to the lines, a regular corporal called me a malingeringer. We had a fight over it, and that word has haunted me ever since."

Despite serving as a frontline rifleman, being awarded the Infantry Combat Badge and being medically evacuated by Hercules, Elder didn't meet the 181-day requirement for the RVCN.

"I've got PTSD from it all," he says. "I hear that word in my head every day. It broke me."

The exclusion meant more than missing a piece of ribbon and metal. Elder stopped marching on ANZAC Day with his unit. "I was afraid someone would ask why I didn't have the medal. I never wanted to be singled out again."

"I want my eldest son to be able to wear my full set of medals. That would mean the world to me." – Bruce Elder

The injustice still stings, especially knowing that others with less exposure to combat qualified simply because they stayed longer.

"You could have been sitting at a typewriter for 181 days and got it. I was an infantryman. I bled for it. And I got nothing."

Now in his 80's, he says he doesn't fear death, but he does want to leave something meaningful behind.

"I want my eldest son to be able to wear my full set of medals. That would mean the world to me."

Just a few days before Vietnam Veterans' Day this year, Elder was informed he had at last been awarded the RVCN.

"[Now that I have] that medal, I might even march with the 5th Battalion again."

New perspective

Darryl Stuart hadn't been born when his father, **Bernard 'Bernie' Stuart**, deployed to Vietnam with the 6th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment.

He served in Support Company as part of the anti-tank tracker unit, working alongside dogs to detect enemy movement. He returned to Australia but never spoke to family about the war.

Our current list contains the names of **71** Locators (as at 31.08.2025) that we have not had contact with since, basically, commencing communications in 2012, so, we are going to focus a little more on this programme to try and reduce this number.

Let's have a look at **September's Birthday List**, below, where there are **5 Detachment and Battery Members** listed as **Lost Locators** – see the names below.

So, we've done some great discoveries with **Members Dates Of Death**, I'm hoping we might muster some enthusiasm for this difficult task. I've added some more details as to full DoB's and places of birth according to the **DVA Nominal Roll** for, maybe, some help.

However, this doesn't mean that we still have contact with the total number of Battery/Detachment members we have Located over time as continuing correspondence has lapsed in a lot of cases. **I have 225 recipients (Association)**. We regularly check bereavement/funeral notices and this does not locate members in the way we really want to. So, we're appealing for **YOUR** help in scouring all sorts of sources – local RSL's may be a good starter.

Date	Name	Regt No	DoB	SVN In	SVN Out	DVA Location
1	Eric Raymond Thompson T/Sgt	44153	1948	19 02 1968	18 02 1969	Whiston, Lanc. England
	" "			13 05 1971	04 06 1971	VISIT
7	Gary William Bester	3411737	1948	08 01 1968	03 12 1968	Hobart, Tas
17	Ernest Robert Galloway T/Bdr	216708	1948	08 01 1968	22 04 1968	Wollongong, NSW
19	Phillip Henry Wapshott	3793468	1947	27 11 1969	18 03 1970	Melbourne, Vic
22	Ian Leslie Bubb C/man	2792358	1948	13 05 1970	11 03 1971	Ashfield, NSW RAEME

I will keep an update and publish monthly results in *Eyes & Ears*.

Paul Dickson Get in touch with me via 131eyesandears@gmail.com

. Unknown/Known Dates of Deaths continues to be updated...as at 31.08.2025 –

A continuing Reflective Thought with regards to Vales as we progress on in years.

The following table reflects Members passings over the years since our 'journeys' into South Vietnam which began back in May 1966.

It reflects on 10 year periods since, and including, 1966. The figures speak for themselves, and if you exclude deaths in SVN, of which there were two, the initial period does show a dark period considering the ages of our mates.

Sadly, we've added **John McDonal Pollock** to the list below as he recently passed. **(See Vale below)**

10 Year Detachment/131 Battery Death Periods

1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	Total
1	0	2	0	1	0	2	0	1	0	7
1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	
0	1	1	0	1	0	1	2	0	2	8
1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	
0	0	2	2	2	1	2	1	0	0	10
1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	
3	2	2	2	0	3	2	1	3	1	19
2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	
1	4	4	4	2	9	4	6	5	3	42
2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	
9	4	5	5	6	8	11	13	10	7	78

Unknowns*

1

Total

164

Please note that these figures represent data provided by Members, from what was, and is stated to be reliable sources (official notices/family/mates etc). Data as at **30.07.2025**.

***Unknowns** – Sadly, we have only been advised of the Members' passings only.

This following sections have now been updated as of 31.01.2025 and show a clear picture of Battery/Detachment Members that have incomplete Date of Death details.

Here are the names and details –

Name	Rank	Regt No	Section	SVN	DoB	DoD
Robinson, Marcus Lee	Gnr	2791229		1970	14.02.48	Unknown

If you can help in any way to update this data it would be greatly appreciated – You can send information to Paul Dickson at email 131eyesandears@gmail.com Subject: Vale update

Ed - As a closing thought, can YOU give some thought to completing YOUR Locator Profile, which do add a personal background and also keeping in touch as it keeps us up to date with you and mates.

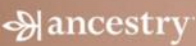
Ok, detectives, here's more homework – still one more to find!

...a continuing investigation –



131 Locators “Cold Case Division” The Eyes & Ears of the Force

Peter Meaney, Detective Inspector, with more thorough investigation has, sadly, found notice of **John McDonald Pollock's** passing - see more details in Vale below.

 Your spit has something to say about you. [Learn more](#)

John McDonald Pollock

BIRTH	15 Jul 1939
DEATH	11 Oct 2023 (aged 84)
BURIAL	Bunurong Memorial Park Bangholme, City of Greater Dandenong, Victoria, Australia Add to Map
MEMORIAL ID	261630232 · View Source

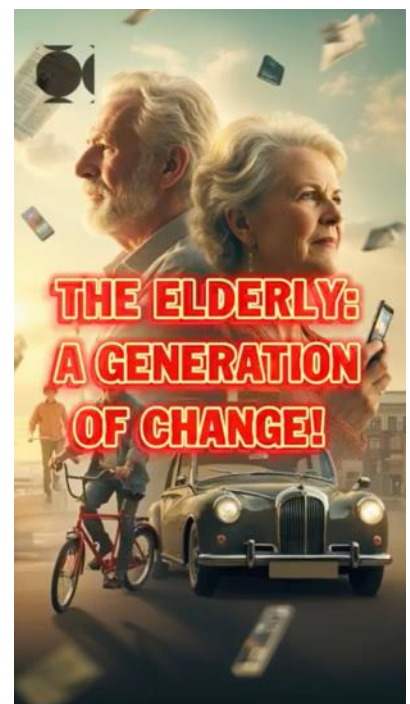


.Odessey Time.

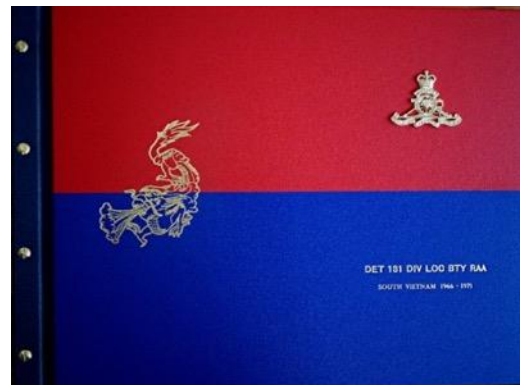
This is not necessarily a typical (whatever that means) “Odessey Time” article but one with questions included, so let's get started...

Peter Ravelje - Peter forwarded the following link to a fun and thought provoking almost 3 minute watch - it's worth watching as it's interesting - it'll make you smile... **"They call us the Elderly"**

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0?ui=2&ik=55f192afee&attid=0.1&permmsgid=msg-f:1838799648316867841&th=1984ba89ab0a4501&view=att&zw&disp=safe>



. **The "Detachment Album Project"** – This project is sponsored by the 131 Locators Association and needs some photographic and by-line input from our members/Readers.



Mail Call...

Terry Erbs - "Hi Paul,
Derek sent this photo taken after the "Centenary Parade" at Gallipoli Barracks on Saturday 21st June 2025 .

Note: it's the 131 Detachment banner paraded on ANZAC Day in Brisbane and normally resides in the Menz Club and thanks to the Regiment it was displayed on the day.

Unfortunately, the photo arrived too late for inclusion in the "Centenary" article I sent you but it's still worth publishing - left to right.... **Peter Pioro, Derek Hinde & Joe Losiak**
Cheers,
Terry."



Jef Schafer - "Hi Paul,
I'm not sure why anyone would be interested in who was at LP Bravo at the Horseshoe in 1969!
Anyway, I WAS there (as per the list in Eyes and Ears) and I recall sharing the dugout with:
Tiny Little (BDR) who organised the roster, The band: TC White (on Guitar), Jock Maclean (on Five-string banjo),
(Saint James Infirmary Blues was a knockout!)

As I recall, at various stages, I was joined by: Neville Atkinson, Graeme Owen, Pete Szabo and George Clark.

The photo shows Pete (RIP), TC and Nev (RIP) in the living room at 31 Bravo.

I'm more interested in who made the dugout for the LP. It was quite elaborate with an underground passageway to the bunk room and a ladder up to the sandbagged LP. Graeme Owen has some photos of the passage and bunk room.
Was it dug out by hand by 131 or by a backhoe by the Engineers?
Someone should know?
Cheers, Jeff."



David Dougherty - "Hi Paul,

Following on from the passing of Clive (Dreis) a couple of more photos including the original of the one submitted by Bob B, being one of mine. The 3rd person to right being Keven Bush.



Above: Bob Billiards, Clive Dreis, Keven Bush



Above: Clive Dreis, Keven Bush, Geoff Holden



Above: Keven Bush, John Greenaway, Bob Billiards, Clive Dreis



**Above: Vietnam 131 Nui Dat Survey at 31D
Pete Teather, Clive Dreis**

The first three taken in 131 lines (dry?), 4 and 5 being at the 1/83rd compound after they had left, they are on top of one of the two-gun crew quarters and the original 31D.

Geoff Jebb wanted Clive and myself to go for a stripe but to do so he wanted us to do star obs. I took one look at them through a theodolite and said not for me. Clive went on to obtain his and obtained his rank of Lance Bombardier.



**At left:
Vietnam 131 Nui Dat Survey
at 31D - Teather, Clive Dreis.**

Above: Clive did get two stripes as a Lance Bombardier so was that a temp rank through the Nominal Roll

Regards, David D."

Bert Blink - "Hi Paul

First this came up on ABC News

https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-08-19/vietnam-memorial-walk-opens-edithburgh-south-australia/105670432?utm_source=abc_news_app&utm_medium=content_shared&utm_campaign=abc_news_app&utm_content=other

and this second

The second person featured was **Pattie Amphlett** who was on-stage during Long Tan but whisked away shortly after it was realised the battle was significant, and then her account of a soldier she met at the Hospital in Vung Tau.

<<<<<<<<>>>>>>>>>>



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[illegible]

Shared from the 8/21/2025 Australian Army eEdition

by Capt Tadek Markowski



**Capt Fletcher Unwin develops surveillance mission packages for teams operating the Integrator UAV during Exercise North Queensland Warfighter.
Photo: Sgt Tristan Kennedy**

These three simple words reflect an increasingly complex role for Army's only artillery surveillance and target acquisition unit.

Among those helping embed the new aircraft is veteran gunner Capt Fletcher Unwin.

Seeing a new adventure and better weather, he moved to Australia with his wife and three daughters in a lateral transfer two years ago.

Capt Unwin travelled to Townsville with 132 Bty to support 3 Bde in Exercise North Queensland Warfighter recently, a multi-national integration activity, where the drone operators worked alongside soldiers from half a dozen different countries for three weeks.

He said the exercise provided the battery's gunners and bombardiers the chance to test new skills.

"It was a good opportunity to do a few things for the first time, like attach an Australian ground control station operating Integrator to a United States Marine Corps battery," he said.

"The feedback that we've received from the brigades we've supported so far is that it [Integrator] is a valuable asset."

20 Regt recently re-raised 133 Bty, a testament to the unit's expanding role.

Capt Unwin suggests that growth will continue in order to keep pace with developing technologies, especially around drone warfare.

"From new self-propelled guns to new uncrewed aerial systems, new deep strike platforms, and everything that's going on in the targeting space, there's a lot of investment going into artillery," he said.

That investment includes a concerted campaign to recruit more drone operators to the unit.

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Mail Out



Ed - I started this section in September 2017 and have continued to write to a quarterly basis, by breaking down the names alphabetically into groups of one letter. The list has diminished over time, but, in general, there is a good core of names that I regularly to say g'day and just to generally keep in touch. A lot of the blokes I've kept some connection alive. Plus, it's good to keep in touch, even sporadically, it's a pleasant unforeseen surprises.

Total Mail Out Members = 222 & Total Quarterly “Catch Up” Member Responders = 55

Mail In



- Here are the responses...

Peter Fletcher - "Hi Paul.

Hope all is well with you and Helen.

Veneice and I are fit and well, travelling along nicely health wise.

We spend a lot of time walking and both still play golf twice a week when the weather allows us. Plenty of exercise in this family.

We have not been doing any travel this year. Venice is off to Japan in February with friends of hers. I am staying at home to hold the fort and mow and maintain things as I am the elected gardener.

I am currently sitting on our front deck looking out to sea enjoying the sun, watching the waves roll into Wamberal Beach.

We have had east coast lows along the Central Coast causing much erosion the last few months. Hopefully the weather settles down and we can all dry out.

That is all I have to report.

All the best to you both, stay safe.

Fletch."

Phil Connor - "Hi Helen and Paul,

Great to hear from you.

An excellent newsletter last, you and the items/authors included make a great read.

Last time I mentioned that we had bucket loads of rain, however we have had a dry spell. But as I write this weekend are to receive 90m on both this Friday and Saturday.

Also, as I write I am in the throes of a 2nd bout of Covid, struck down last Tuesday. Positive test and onto my GP who prescribed a new antiviral. This new antiviral caters for older people with co-morbidities.

When he said older people, I said 'thanks, mate.' Feeling a lot better since taking this medication (4 capsules twice a day).

Have seen news articles relating to houses built so close to the seaside/beach with dire consequences.

Had a laugh. Recently a northerly section of Bribie Island (near Caloundra) separated, by ocean waves to create a breakthrough into the Pumistone passage. At our Buderim bowls club, following a game, the secretary advised that there was to be a large competition at Bribie Island Bowls Club, and I said was "that to be at the new North Bribie Island or South Bribie Island?"

I have to have constant checkups, via DVA, re Solar Keratosis and have had a considerable number of the little buggers removed. So, I know what you are going through. A combination of Aussie lifestyle and walking around bear chested and only the giggle hat protection.

My dermatologist found one on the sole of my right foot, hello!

Been having full body checks for a number of years now.

It is great to hear of your travels. River Nile would be a great trip.

Then Paree, sacre bleu, ces't magnifique.

Cheers

To both of you.

Phil and Miriam."

Ron "Mook" Evans - "Dicko,

I continue to be in awe at your energy. All this flying and cruising and looking at stuff can't be healthy. But here you are, still flying and cruising and looking at stuff. Beats me.

Also, your limitless source of funds has me perplexed. I don't want to mention fentanyl as emails are monitored by you-know-who and you might find your front door being kicked in one night by the Federales.

Anyway, Old Friend I rejoice in your good health and good fortune.

And as for me, well, I am still here. Still bugging on, (as Churchill was fond of saying.) Can't know how long sound health will continue, but as long as it does, I will continue to be amused by humanity.

Hasta la vista Baby.

Mook."

George Clark - "Good day Paul,

I hope you enjoy your Nile cruise. I went on one years ago when I was still married!

I should have swapped her for a camel; I would have got a lot better result.

Paul the way things have been going lately, we won't have anyone around to run the 131 Associatio. We will all be gone.

My GP who is also a good friend of mine said to me one day when I asked him "how long he thought I had left?", his answer was: "George you are far too ugly to live forever!".

I am very sorry that you are having so much trouble with your skin Paul, I hope that you can keep on top of it.

I hope life is kind to both you and your good wife, and that you have a very enjoyable time on your travels.

My best wishes to you and your boss, enjoy yourself and I look forward to catching up whilst you are gone.

George Clark."

Warwick "Brookey" Brooker - "G'day Paul and Helen,

No flooding rains here in the ACT; so, we're OK in that regard.

Nancy and I are babysitting our daughter's 20-month-old boy 24/7 these days. He's been with us since June and will be here until mid-September if not longer. Our daughter and her partner (or ex) are relocating from Melbourne to Adelaide and have parked the child with us until they work things out down there. Looks like my retirement is over!



Sorry to hear of the skin issues. My dermatologist said he'd put a mask on my face next time I visit, but I'm considering my options. I'll probably get a second opinion. I don't know what kind of chemical he wants to use. Do you know what your dermatologist used?

The Nile cruise sounds exciting. Hope you both enjoy that thoroughly.

Best wishes for Australia's Vietnam Veterans Day!

Warwick (aka Brookey)."

John Bayford - "Hi Paul

Nice to hear from you.

We are all well although I do share some of the outcomes that you have had with your skin. Years of neglect and too much sun have taken their toll.

We are currently holidaying in Port Douglas which has been a regular event for this time of year for us. I think you are far more imaginative with your holiday planning than us.

You do a great job supporting the association.

Cheers,

John."

Steve "Boots" Boutlis - "Hi, Dicko.

Please forgive this slack-arsed digger for not replying to your earlier catchups.

If you keep up the dermatologist's visits, there'll be nothing left of you.

We are in our dry season here (huh!). At least the grass only needs a mow once a month.

Fran is on her two-yearly visit with her sister in New Zealand until middle of October. Her sis visits us next winter, which feels like summer to her.

Stupid, stupid man that I am, promised that I would paint the whole unit while she is away!

My son Craig and daughter Lynn gave me an early 80th Birthday and Fathers' Day present by shouting me an all expenses paid weekend to Melbourne. It coincided with my older sister's 79th Birthday on the Saturday. MCG the next day, drizzle all arvo.

At her afternoon tea, my sister's neighbours from across the road whom she has known for many years, were there.

Take care,

Boots."

Vic Danko - "Hi Paul,

Good to hear from you.

Yes, I remember very well one day when I was about 16 yrs, at school, the maths teacher was writing something on the board and then he turned to the class and said ..."one day you'll find it curious the older you get, the faster time seems to pass."

I thought, what a strange comment.

Sept 6, I go to Da Nang for 3 weeks. Golf and tourism. I'll probably make my last visit to Nui Dat.

Next year Katya wants me to go to southern India to a health and wellness place. I went a couple of years ago and liked it. Then we'll go to Bali and that's about as far ahead as I want to plan.

I like your Nile idea. I worked in Cairo for a couple of months teaching one of their banks how to set up foreign exchange trading room. Had a couple of fascinating experiences - take me too long to type now. Ask me when we meet again.

Golf is a great substitute for me. Sometimes I play well, other times simple things go wrong. But I'm always optimistic.

August 18 is Viet Vets' Day. I have an extraordinary story of coincidences...

As I've told you before when I was born on the Austrian /Italian border, in a Cossack camp, nobody issued a birth certificate. Some 6 months later when my parents were in a U.N. refugee camp and names were being taken my mother, rather than state that my DOB was 30/12 / 44, said it was 01/01/45. There was a very good reason. In the Soviet (which they were expecting to be returned) conscription starts in the year in which you turn 18. So, I would have been the youngest conscript in my draft. Well, Australia, she didn't allow for. Conscription started for us, who turned 20 from 1/1/65. And I was caught and the rest is history.

What you would not have known is that my mother's birth date was 18/08/21. 18 August, Vietnam Vets Day!!!

Yes, I've had surgery on head and chest as well. They tell me I need check-ups each 3 months. The tumours were benign.

Our daughter Katie is an exception. Seemed like an average student. But just "blossomed" at Sydney Uni. Graduated with First Class honours in Software Engineering. Always gets 98% in Maths. At the Graduation there were only 2 adult Chinese guys ahead of her. Had job offers in Europe and the US. But has stayed in Sydney (local boyfriend). Now a "senior engineer " in an IT company. Just returned from a lecture engagement in India in the field of AI (artificial intelligence). She talked; they listened.

All others well here. You're two stay healthy also.

All the best.

Vic."

Mike Butler - "Hi Paul

The weather here has been very cold so not a lot going on in the garden. Just getting ready for Spring! Took the caravan to Warrnambool a few weeks ago for a family birthday as my son lives there - but now waiting for weather to improve before we take a trip to South Australia in Oct/Nov.

We are going to a black-tie dinner next Saturday 23 August at the Box Hill RSL to commemorate VVAA Day and the guest speaker is Mark Donaldson VC - so it should be a good night.

Not a lot else to say.

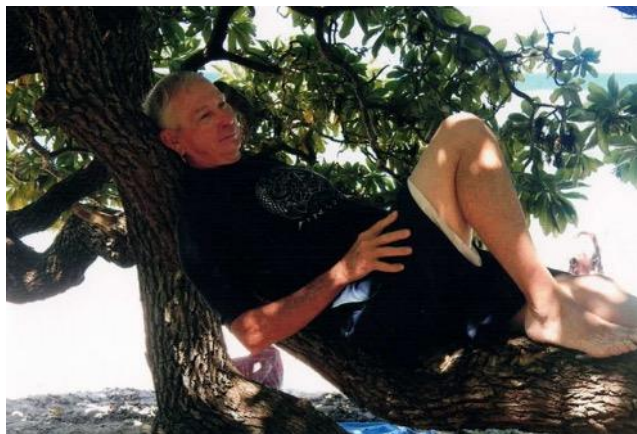
Cheers, Mike."

Kevin Browning - "Hi Paul,

Sorry for the delay in responding but have been away for a couple of weeks.

Sorry to hear about your weight loss program and hope it is now over. I go through the same process each year but sunscreen wasn't available back then, probably in the same cupboard as hearing protection.

Apart from attending funerals, latest was for Max Vandyke who was the BSM 104 Bty in 1971, have done little here because of the weather. So headed off for a cruise and some snorkelling. I promised myself I would get to the gym on the ship each day but the best I could do was to visit Jim the barman, but more than once each day.



As you can see by the photo life is tough.

On another matter. A book has just been released on Long Tan. It is looking at it from a different angle and I would recommend it to those interested. The author, Kevin O'Brien, is a retired Brigadier and was an FO in 1970. He has since served on the Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal where, during one review, he 'realized that some very critical aspects of the battle [Long Tan] narrative differed in secondary reports.' The result is this book Long Tan Memories, Myths and Reality. Details can be found www.longtanbook.com

Hopefully we will speak before you head off up the Nile. But if not have a great trip revisiting the building you put up
Regards, Kevin."

Nick Armstrong - "Hello Paul

Thank you for your recent email. I notice two weeks ago. How the time rushes by! Living 100km west of the Australian east coast, our weather is unlike the east coast weather. South Australia, including the western districts of Victoria has had several years of 'Below average' rainfall. Living on the Southern Eyre Peninsula, recent rainfall has caused farmers crops to begin to grow. My daughter farms 100km north, and while they have also had enough rain to germinate their crops, rainfall has been insufficient to raise sub-soil moisture levels. Years ago, there was a general belief that the weather in Perth would progress to Adelaide. The past three or four years have seen the systems moving east from the west coast to reach the WA/SA border and then collapse and move south into the Southern Ocean. I believe droughts still tend to follow the cycles over several years. Climate change is another aspect of weather systems.

It seems you have a few issues with skin cancer. Considering my many years working outdoors, I have managed to avoid the scourge of skin cancer. I have had a couple of suspect growths removed. My most recent was not cancerous. I think the biopsy before the removal is the most painful part.

I note you are planning another international trip. I travelled to WA in July to undertake 'Childcare' duties for my son near Narrogin. I went alone, so flying was more economical than driving. I really can't say that flying economy domestically is an activity of choice. As an international traveller do you have any tips to make air travelling more comfortable? Apart from two trips to the UK, I have not travelled commercially in recent years. My strategy has been to get on the aeroplane, put brain in neutral and tell myself that it will be all over in less than 24 hours.

My relief bus driving work has been quieter this year, although I have been busy since late June. I anticipate this current spell will last until the end of September. In September, Robin and I will be driving to Narrogin to spend the school holidays with son and grandchildren. The income from recent bus driving will help pay for the trip. This year seems to have been a year for travelling, having visited our other son in Tasmania in early May.

With the various interstate journeys and the recent bus driving, I have not had the boat on the water for several months. I am hoping to have more boating time following my return from WA in October. The weather should be warmer and days longer. Currently there is a type of Algae active around extensive parts of the coast of South Australia. The algae have caused extensive fish kills. Governments, both State and Federal seemed slow to respond. The cynic in me believes the Federal Government is unaware there is a state between Sydney and Perth. South Australians are wondering what the response would have been if dead fish a thick brown foam were washing up on Sydney beaches?

I think that is about all for now. Best wishes from
Nick."

Notice Board – Hey, see what's coming up?

There's plenty of room for notices – has anyone got or getting any events planned?

Just send an email and I'll post it. Ed

58 Years
April 1966 – April 2024



Have you tried to source us or your mates via Facebook?

Why not give it a go, if you haven't already, just click onto the Association's Facebook via the link below, then let us know what you think...

Hey, you don't have to have a Facebook page of your own...

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/131divlocbtyraa>

Ernie Newbold forwarded in the following link – copy paste and read August's edition -

SALUTE

Official Journal of the Totally and Permanently
Incapacitated Veterans' Association of New South Wales Limited
Winter 2024

The link below will take you to the TPI NSW's latest Newsletter – It's a worthwhile read as it contains information from DVA and some great stories...

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0?ui=2&ik=55f192afee&attid=0.1&permmsgid=msg-f:1802742395713089188&th=1904a0a85603eea4&view=att&disp=safe>

RAA National Memorial extension project...

Kevin Browning -

"Hi Paul,

On another matter, not sure it has been raised in the Association yet. The RAA is upgrading its **National Memorial in Canberra** to include the recent conflicts. They are seeking donations to help with the costs. It is something all Gunners should be proud of. Below is the message sent out by the Head of Regiment. If it can be added to the next *Eyes and Ears*.

Regards

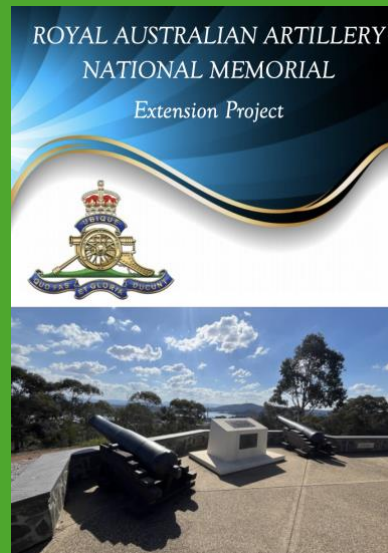
Kevin."

Please see below a link to a 'flip book' e-brochure about the RAA National Memorial extension project. It provides information on why the RAA is extending your Memorial, a little about the history of the Memorial, and some details about the ongoing project. Please could I ask that you give this the widest possible distribution by forwarding it on your social media accounts to all your network of family, friends and colleagues, and ask them to do the same on theirs too.

We need to increase awareness and generate as much support and as many donations as possible for this important endeavour.

Many thanks. Your support is very much appreciated.

<https://www.australianartilleryassociation.org/raanm/brochure/Royal-Australian-Artillery-National-Memorial---Brochure/index.html>



Grahame Dignam forwarded the following link - copy and past and read August's edition -

Wednesday, August 20, 2025 Latest: [crepus up on Ukraine, army profession, mission command](#)



[HOME](#) [NEWS](#) [POETRY](#) [PODCASTS](#) [FITNESS](#) [VIDEOS](#) [ARCHIVES](#) [SUBSCRIBE](#) [WRITE TO US](#)



<https://www.contactairlandandsea.com/2025/08/13/who-killed-the-sallyman/>



Committee members:

President: *Allen Morley*

Vice President: *Bert Blink*

Treasurer/Secretary: *Grahame Dignam*

Public Officer: *Gordon Malcolm*

Webmaster: *Bob Billiards*

Research Officer: *Ernie Newbold*

Designs and Development Officer: *Nick Proskurin*

Eyes and Ears Editor: *Paul Dickson*

General Members: *Ian Amos, Ged Carroll, George Lane, Merv Nairn*

Regional Representatives: *ACT - Bert Blink, Qld - Terry Erbs, SA - Geoff Blackwell, Vic - Alan Adams, WA - Bary Guzder, Shepparton Area (NSW) - Peter Dealy*

<http://www.131locators.org.au>



Presidential perambulations

Diane and I decided that it was time to visit Melbourne for a long weekend earlier this month. I had lived there only briefly since my callup and both our families have moved their locations since. We decided not to hire a car, better to use an Uber or public transport. The Uber driver from the airport, who was originally from Somalia, was chatty. He explained where he lived with his six children, and after a bit of questioning it was interesting to find out that his house was in Tyler St, which is only two streets from my old family home.

First item after checking in to a new hotel was the National Gallery of Victoria - why does Victoria assign a National to their state-based buildings? The gallery has an exhibition of Impressionist paintings from the Boston Gallery. The venue was quite crowded and the paintings were excellently displayed. After the Gallery visit we wandered around the city which had changed a lot since our previous visit. Not necessarily for the better. Dinner was at an interesting Trattoria in Carlton, followed by a stroll back to the hotel.

Next morning at breakfast a visit from the fire brigade disturbed the ambience. However, there was no fire so we were allowed back to bacon and eggs. Our excursion for that day was to Bonbeach, located on Port Phillip Bay. It was a visit to an old school friend of Diane's, who is also a 2nd cousin of mine. After a delightful lunch it was back on the train, with the destination Princess Bridge station. The signs were confusing so our hotel return was longer than it should have been. The heavy rain and cold wind did not make the return walk enjoyable at all. Dinner was at an expensive Little Collins Street restaurant. Nevertheless, the night was excellent as we were joined by a couple whom I had worked with on my Nasho return in 1968. Umbrellas were the order of the day for our hotel return.

Our last day started sunny but that did not last. It was a wandering around town experience after packing our bags and heading for the local train. Lunch was with a couple, where the wife and Diane had worked together whilst I was holidaying at Nui Dat. Time for another Uber to the airport for the return to Sydney after a great weekend.

Regards

Allen

59 Years

April 1966 – April 2024



find us on

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/131divlocbtyraa>

Minutes for the General Meeting of the 131 Locators Association Inc.

Canley Heights RSL & Sporting Club
26 Humphries Rd, Wakeley NSW 2176
and via Zoom internet on Tuesday 12 th August 2025

. **Pertinent Points** – extracted from the 131 Locators Association Committee meeting...

Attendees were: Zoomed members were Paul Dickson, Terry Erbs, Bert Blink, Allen Morley, Grahame Dignam and Steve Wynn

Apologies: George Lane, Rieny Nieuwenhof, Bob Billiards, Ged Carroll, Merv Nairn, Peter Dealy, Ian Kennedy, Kevin Browning, Jim Fitzgerald, Gordon Malcolm, Ernest Newbold, Warwick Brooker and other State Reps.

Financial Membership is currently ...**118**, plus Associates **2**, Affiliates **15**. Total **145**. Plus Lapsed as of 1 Aug 2025 **37** members

Presidents report.

Allen referenced.

. Support for the Vietnam Veterans day at Bankstown Sports is weak with more veterans observing the occasion locally with family members.

. Allen was contacted by Joe Kaplan, and it was agreed that any expenses for a Xmas gathering this year would not be supported by either LSTAA or 131 Association but would be a personal expense.

. A few steps forward were taken regarding the Photo Album project with more detail to be provided. More questions arose than were answered.

. RSL Sydney ran a survey re the Anzac Day March which found that

1. seating was needed for older vets
2. Timing for "step Off" needs attention (flexible ?)
3. other appropriate age issues are a concern.

Public Officer.

Gordon called prior to the meeting and reported no issues.

Webmaster Update.

The report was delivered by G Dignam due to Roberts absence.

. We currently have 537 members with only a few posting regularly.

Health Report:

. Allen Morley advised he was to undergo a PET Scan with regard to his "P" issue previously advised.

. We are concerned that not all vets can/ have availed themselves of DVA help with medical claims. With this in mind, we agreed that we should support as far as we are able with letters, facts and figures, any claims we come to know of where extra heft would assist the association member claimant.

General Business and around the grounds:

Discussions ensued on the following:

. Paul Dickson will contact Peter Dealy for any update on the National Vietnam Vets Museum.

. Paul also reminded all to provide photos of personal commemorations for Vietnam Vets day observances.

**If you've got more photos that you want added, just send them to: - Paul Dickson – web Photos
131eyesandears@gmail.com– BUT DON'T FORGET TO ADD TITLES/NAMES ETC.**

. Upcoming Events Calendar –

131 Locators Association Committee Meeting

Date: Tuesday, 9th September, 20253 at 1100hrs **Venue:** to be advised

Also, available via Zoom link to be advised



. Birthdays in the Battery...September –

Date	Name	Regt No	SVN In	SVN Out	Comments
1	Eric Raymond Thompson T/Sgt	44153	19 02 1968	18 02 1969	Whiston, Lanc. England
	" "		13 05 1971	04 06 1971	VISIT
2	Philip Arthur Mulgrew	3411756	29 04 1968	07 05 1969	
3	Mills Robin Buckley L/bdr	16950	20 05 1966	03 03 1967	† 02.04.2007
3	Kenneth Henry Borgges Sgt	13543	21.05.66	13.09.66	† 08.11.2018

3	Peter Raymond Saint Bdr	45033	04 11 1970	29 07 1971	
6	John Victor Dellaca	3791355	29 01 1968	28 01 1969	
7	Steven Boutlis	3787962	02 01 1967	27 09 1967	
7	Gary William Bester	3411737	08 01 1968	03 12 1968	Hobart, Tas
7	Ivan Mills Treavathan S/Sgt.	213051	31 01 1969	05 11 1969	† 09.01.2023
8	Willian Gordon Edward	2789911	21 02 1969	21 02 1970	
12	Barry Edward Nugent L/Bdr	1411039	03 01 1967	12 12 1967	
12	Larry William Bridge L/Bdr	2786506	15 03 1968	18 03 1969	
12	Philip David Johns	4719086	16 09 1968	18 03 1969	
12	Steven Francis Voss	1735605	29 04 1970	18 03 1971	
12	Kevin Donald Geoghegan L/Bdr	219351	16 12 1970	02 06 1971	131
	" "		02 06 1971	23 12 1971	HQ AFV
13	Victor Leonard Claxton	4410991	17 01 1968	23 12 1968	† 07.02.2022
14	Mervyn Francis Dart T/Bdr	37821	03 01 1967	09 01 1968	† 06.03.2001
14	Frank John Ipsa	3786657	04 05 1967	12 12 1967	
14	Russell Kimsley Hewitt	2792435	03 06 1970	04 03 1971	
16	Francis Gordon Pepper L/Bdr	216683	12 09 1967	17 09 1968	† 27.12.1989
16	Ronald Keith Dean L/Bdr	215527	20 05 1966	29 04 1967	
16	Brian Francis Black L/Bdr	2786469	27 11 1967	26 11 1968	† 18.01.2011
16	Allen 'Big Al' Keith Wheatley	2790305	16 09 1969	04 06 1970	† 02.07.2018
17	John Thirlwall Blake	1731550	04 05 1967	13 12 1967	
17	Behram "Barry" Jijibhoy Guzder	5714500	10 06 1967	21 05 1968	
17	Maurice Leonard Arch Bdr	43350	02 01 1967	14 11 1967	† 26.08.2017
17	Ernest Robert Galloway T/Bdr	216708	08 01 1968	22 04 1968	Wollongong, NSW
18	Robert Charles Wilson	3791425	27 11 1967	19 11 1968	
18	JAMES FREDERICK LAWLER Sgt.	28523	18 12 1967	03 12 1968	† 14.08.2020
19	Robert David Gow	61644	20 05 1966	03 03 1967	
19	Hubert Anthony Andrews	2790121	21 02 1969	21 02 1970	
19	Wesley Lloyd Hindmash L/Bdr	2791313	30 09 1969	13 08 1970	
19	Phillip Henry Wapshott	3793468	27 11 1969	18 03 1970	Melbourne, Vic
21	Garry James Leplaw L/Bdr	217182	05 02 1968	11 02 1969	† 06.12.1983
22	Ian Leslie Bubb C/man	2792358	13 05 1970	11 03 1971	Ashfield, NSW RAEME
23	Gregory Charle Tommasi 2Lt.	3791966	10 03 1970	25 08 1970	131
	" "		25 08 1970	11 03 1971	4 Fd Regt.
	Gordon Campbell "Jock" Gunn Sgt	16915	11.03.69	11.03.70	† 23.09.2013
24	Robert Allen Billiards	2785702	12 09 1967	17 09 1968	
24	Geoffrey Stephen Carthew	2793339	03 06 1970	09 06 1971	
26	Kennth Francis McNamara	2783740	04 05 1967	12 12 1967	† 24.10.2022
26	John William Davies Sgt.	29351	07 10 1966	30 04 1967	† 25.04.2004
26	Ronald Frederick Boaler	130230	20 02 1970	11 02 1971	
28	Leonard Alan Walker	3798942	16 12 1970	30 06 1971	Det 131 † 29.01.2007
	" "		30 06 1971	30 10 1971	12 Fd Regt.

*Above colour background coding explanation – Red – financial Locator, Yellow – located Locator, Black – passed Locator, Blue – honorary Member, White – NOT Located Locator.

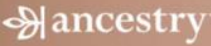
Ed – 8 blokes not highlighted is looking decidedly better, but still not acceptable! Ok, let's get into it and actively get out there locating a few more!

. Locator Profiles – we've received **181. Ed** – Maybe we need to draw in a deep one so as to hold our breathes for a while longer.

. Located...

Have a look at the Association's web site - <http://www.131locators.org.au> – you might find some lost mates or get in touch with us and see if we can for you.

Peter Meaney notifies us of the passing of **John McDonald Pollock**.



Your spit has something to say about you.

[Learn more](#)

John Mcdonald Pollock

BIRTH	15 Jul 1939
DEATH	11 Oct 2023 (aged 84)
BURIAL	Bunurong Memorial Park Bangholme, City of Greater Dandenong, Victoria, Australia Add to Map
MEMORIAL ID	261630232 · View Source



Name: Pollock, John McDonald

Service No: 53860 Rank: Bombardier

SVN In: 17 04 1967 SVN Out: 24 05 1967
05 02 1971 07 04 1971
(12 Fd Regt)

DoB: 15 08 1939 DoD: 11 10 2023

Lest We Forget



Bill Taggart (1st/83rd USA Artillery) -

"Paul, as always, please pass along the condolences of the 1/83rd to John's family if possible. Lest We Forget. Bill. "

May He Rest in Peace, and Never be Forgotten.



Vales and Locator Profiles...

This is just a request to all and general, that we need to complete, and perhaps, update Locator Profiles, because as of times past and as time moves forward we have lost and will continue to lose mates.

Let's keep a memory alive.



The Vale section in *Eyes & Ears*, can at times be very scant of personal and service details, yes, there is the DVA Nominal Roll which contains tour dates, but supplies nothing for those who did not serve overseas, and contains no personal details.

Is it possible that we can have Locator Profiles completed with photos, where possible, and/or updates to make this section more honouring to those mates who pass and may be unknown to others to help make the Unit and Detachment archived history have more heart?

Take 10 minutes, please, to complete a Locator Profile as it is important to all of us.

For a blank Locator Profile contact Paul Dickson at 131eyesandears@gmail.com



131 Locators Association is always on the lookout for new financial members. With the establishment of the web site we continue to be burdened with the ongoing cost of maintenance etc and we need to be able to support this effort equally.

So, if you're a non-financial Associate receiving emails and the *Eyes & Ears* regularly you could bite the bullet and email Grahame Dignam:sectreas131locators@gmail.com and he could forward you the relevant forms to join - Memberships are available for 1 year or longer deposit a DONATION direct (add your name) to the associations account at "A/c Name: 131 Locators Association Inc. Bank: Westpac, Kingsgrove NSW BSB No: 032 166 A/c No: 264133"

Hope we hear from you?

Website: <http://www.131locators.org.au>

. Other related sites...

. Locating, Surveillance & Target Acquisition Association...



LOCATING, SURVEILLANCE & TARGET ACQUISITION ASSOCIATION
The Eyes and Ears of The Battlefield

Website: <https://www.locatingartillery.org>



Australian Artillery Association – www.australianartilleryassociation.com



ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ARTILLERY HISTORICAL COMPANY

www.artilleryhistory.org



Website link - <http://www.vvaa.org.au/>

. VETERAN'S AFFAIRS WEBSITE

The Dept of Veteran's Affairs has launched a new mental health initiative to assist veteran's experiencing the affects of mental illness and their families. Providing information and fact sheets about understanding mental illness, links and contact information for accessing support, and online resources for health professionals, this website focuses on helping veterans identify early warning signs of mental illness to effectively manage their mental illness and seek treatment. For more info or to access, please visit www.at-ease.dva.gov.au

. 1st Battalion 83rd Artillery...



Dedicated to the men of the 1st Battalion 83rd Artillery who served in Vietnam from 1966-1971. We left Fort Sill in October 1966 for Vietnam. We originally were at Bear Cat, Nui Dat and Xuan Loc. We later were in many other locations in Vietnam.



We also welcome our Australian and New Zealand Allies to whom we owe so much. It is also dedicated to those members of the 1/83rd who did not return. We will never forget their sacrifice. Website: <http://www.1stbn83rdartyvietnam.com>



The Royal New Zealand Artillery Association

<http://www.rnzaa.org.nz/>

Editor contact email: 131eyesandears@gmail.com Ed – Paul 'Dicko' Dickson

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