

THE EYES and EARS

"FIRST PUBLISHED 22nd JULY 1967 in Nui Dat, South Vietnam".

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Detachment 131 Divisional Locating Battery RAA

**Unit Citation for Gallantry (UCG) awarded to the Detachment and those who served at
The Battles of Coral/Balmoral in South Vietnam, 1968**

2019 – 53 Years and the Detachment 131 Spirit Lives On 1966 – 1971



Sensor troop lines, SVN 1971

. Insights and Recollections...

The series continues on the receipt of the following Insights and Recollections, so if you would care to contribute, please send your Insights and Recollections –

Paul Dickson at - 131eyesandears@gmail.com

This topic/s has raised so much interest – we're still in the middle of some really great discoveries with some remarkable memories being brought to life.

“How did the Detachment change its activities over time in SVN? We now expand on the
SENSOR PROGRAMME



Original Australian Unattended Ground Sensor / Sensor Course Participants - ARVN Signals School, Vung Tau. Back-Standing-Lto R:Pfc Ryder, USA; Pfc Rosenfeldt, USA; Cpl John Arnold; Captain Norm Gomm; Gnr Stuart Telford, Bombardier Albert Jacka; Gnr John Lucas; Gnr Laurie Mion; Major Cooper, USA; Gnr Warren Jaenke; Frontrow squatting-L to R:Pfc Patterson, USA; Gnr Geoff Carthew; Sgt John Brewer; L/Bombardier Jeff Bassard; Gnr Gary Navas; L/Bombardier Richard Edwards; Sergeant, 1st Class Oliveri, USA. Taken 10/11 July 1970 - Vung Tau.

*Please note in the photo above that on the second last line it should read L/Bombardier Jeff Bassford.

Kevin Browning sent in the following as part of the **Sensor Programme** article which was commenced a couple of month's back and has expanded and incorporated **John Brewer's** interaction with the late **Jeff Evans**. I certainly support John Brewer when he said the sensors deserve a greater recognition and where better to start than *Eyes and Ears*. This information was the result of work **Jeff Evans** was compiling on "Gunners in Vietnam". Unfortunately, his passing saw it fall into limbo.

As a result of John's work with sensors he was awarded a **Mention in Despatch** (MID) and I think inclusion of the citation is well warranted in *Eyes and Ears*. Interestingly the citation includes John joining 4 Field Regiment on 5th February 1969, this would have been directly from Detachment 131 where John had been the Survey Sergeant. I was fortunate to have served with him there.

Sergeant John Andrew Brewer enlisted in the Australian Regular Army on 27 June 1961 and was allotted to The Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery. He joined 4th Field Regiment on 5th February 1969 and arrived in South Vietnam with the Regiment in March 1970.

The photo at right is of John, taken in late 1968 in the Sound Ranging Command Post when he was the Detachments Survey Sgt.



Since the acquisition of sensor devices by the 1st Australian Task Force, Sgt Brewer has been largely responsible for the installation of the unattended ground surveillance sensor program within the Tactical Area of Responsibility of 1st Australian Task Force.

He has personally led many of the sensor laying teams and has volunteered for several ambush patrols deployed as a result of information gained from the sensors. In one particular ambush, he initiated an action which resulted in the deaths of three enemy. During this action, he also acted as an artillery forward observer and adjusted the fire of field and medium artillery onto likely enemy withdrawal routes. By his devotion to duty and his professional competence Sergeant Brewer has brought great credit upon himself, his Regiment and the Australian Army.

John Brewer's story -

Just a brief history prior to this period. I enlisted in June 1961 and had previously served in Malaya and Borneo during 1963/65. I first served in South Vietnam as the survey Sgt with Det 131 Bty in 68/69. I was also the survey Sgt with 4 Fd Regt on deployment in Mar 1970. As you would be aware the Regimental Survey Section was employed in Arty Tac leaving me with not a great deal to do apart from making a nuisance of one's self. This situation comes about by having great officers and young soldiers doing their tasks the way they should be done without interference from me. This situation made me available for anything. It's hard to keep the personal side out of things and I have only just started.

The sensors came into being as part of McNamara's barrier along the DMZ and Uncle's Ho's trail. The program was known as IGLOO WHITE. In III CTZ it was controlled by HQ 2FFV and named DUFFLE BAG. I can only assume that during May/Jun 70 this HQ has made a request through HQ AFV or 1ATF to take part in this program. One can also assume that due to the Vietnamization Program they had an abundant supply of sensors that they wanted to offload.

As one knows with the Americans they are extremely generous when it comes to supporting their allies. Nothing was too much in regards to training, support, technical advice and supply of whatever equipment one needed.

The first sensor section consisted of myself and nine soldiers from the now or soon to be defunct radar detachments. I was selected due to not only my availability but I think the CO, (Lt Col Forward), wanted to keep things firmly in his back yard.

The course was conducted at the 2FFV training school at Vung Tau during the period 6-10 July 1970. It consisted of our group, a Cpl from G INT and a couple of hangers-on from HQ AFV or 1ALSG. There I go again. The course consisted of all aspects of operating, maintaining, laying and arming of all the sensors available to us. Also included were the various reporting procedures. These included the monthly reports via signal to 2FFV which informed them of numbers of sensors deployed, activations, tactical information derived etc. Others were requests for equipment, problems in general etc. At no time did they deny us anything. The course was conducted by four US personnel and I thought they were excellent.

Just a few general points before I proceed to the individual sensors themselves. We trained on what was known as the phase 2 equipment, phase 3 was in service and being used by the US. It should be noted that phase 1 gear had a self-destruct capability when tampered with resulting in obvious injuries to US personnel when testing, disarming and changing batteries etc. Once again with the availability of phase 3 this would have meant a surplus of phase 2 equip. (Just an assumption).

For your interest, WO Keith Charlton RAA (AATTV) was a province or higher advisor on the sensor program. I know that he had some phase 3 equip at the school in the early 70's. In reference to the equipment in the infantry museum (this was transferred to the Artillery Museum), I am sure a lot of other advisors came into contact with it. In the mid 70's I had a call from Capt John Burrows from the Infantry Centre enquiring about capabilities. He happened to be the platoon commander of D&E platoon of who I had extensive dealings with in SVN. The plot thickens.

In general, apart from the PSID, all sensors had a line of sight range, under ideal conditions, of 75km. They came in numerous channels which the user requested when ordering equip. In our case, we restricted ourselves to the 1 channel to cut out the complexity involved in monitoring i.e. less equipment and manpower requirements. Each sensor had either a pre-set or a capability to set your own TONE CODE. When the sensor was activated this code number was displayed on a monitor and or displayed on a graphic readout. More about this later.

The equipment we trained on and operated are as follows:

PATROL SEISMIC INTRUSION DEVICE (PSID)

This sensor system consisted of 5 components, 4 transmitters and a receiver. Each was plastic moulded and powered by an ordinary 9-volt battery. The transmitters came with a leaf aerial, approx 50 cm, a geophone on a short cable and raised indents indicating their individual tone code ie 1 to 4. The receiver was the same size and all parts fitted into a cloth bandolier which was draped around the shoulders. The detection range was about 10 m and transmission about 200 m depending on the conditions.

Patrol Seismic Intrusion Device (PSID)



It was an extremely easy and effective way of providing protection in ambushes and early warning positions. The transmitters were laid out along an approach or both sides of an ambush in numerical sequence.

The geophones were pressed into the ground with the heel of the boot and when activated passed their tone code, either 1, 2, 3 or 4 beeps, to the small headphones on the receiver. Knowing the sequence in which they were laid out you could tell the direction of movement. The only problems encountered were false alarms caused by animal movement or climatic conditions i.e. wind moving tree roots etc. having said that, if you were receiving timely activations in sequence, something was coming.

I considered the kit well worthwhile and never travelled without one. Training was given to 7RAR and they were provided with the equipment but I never received any feedback from them.

It should be noted at this stage that consideration was never given to the maximum activation range of any given sensor. Our SOP was to place them as close to the track, river crossing or bunker system etc without compromising their concealment i.e. come in the back door.

MINI SEISMIC INTRUSION DEVICE (MINISID)

Seismic Detector

This device was a transmitter and geophone encased in a metal box, approx 23 x 20 x 15cm and weighed about 3kg. The external aerial was about 25cm. It came with a set channel but with the capacity for the user to set any tone code he wanted. It worked on the system of AAA, AAB etc. It had a test, arm/disarm knob and had an inlet for auxiliary equipment. Incorporated was an anti tampering system that activated when it was tilted or opened without the correct disarm code being entered. Unlike phase 1 this unit shot a piston squib through the transmitting crystals. The detection range was about 30m for personal and more than 100 m for vehicles depending on ground conditions. Battery life was about 3 months and they could be changed, hence the disarm capability. Our SOP was never to recover or change batteries due to the problems with booby traps.



The unit was buried, tested to ensure transmission was received, packed tightly within its hole and then armed. The sensors were laid out in strings of 3 or 4 about 30 to 50 metres apart along tracks, river crossings etc. False alarms were a problem but you were always looking for that sequence. Animals were a problem. Just to explain a sequence, if you could imagine a string of sensors, the first sensor is activated and keeps going then the second then the third starts while the first two are still going the third builds into the other two and then decreases until there is nothing. Confused. I am.

This was our mostly used sensor as others types could be deployed into the string to confirm activations.

MAGNETIC INTRUSION DEVICE (MAGID)

This device consisted of two solenoids about 40cms that were joined by cable to the minisids. A special tool was used to bury them so as to get as neat a hole as possible. I am not too sure if there was a switch on the minisid to activate it or if the cable coupling done the deed. Whatever once it was connected we had a magnetic device rather than seismic.

The solenoids produced a magnetic field around the sensor that when broken by something carrying metal transmitted its tone code.

If one of these was placed in each string a sequence could be confirmed because something is carrying metal. The only bugbear was the extra weight of the solenoids and the tools required. Everything had to be carried.

AIR DELIVERED SEISMIC INTRUSION DEVICE (ADSID)

The ADSID - Aerial deployed seismic intrusion device

This device was designed to be flung out of aircraft. It was ballistically made to drop like a bomb. The aerial was made to look like a small tree. It armed itself when it hit the ground and a metal brake system between the body and the fins prevented it from burying too deep. It came with a set channel and tone code. We initially received 12 of these and set to practice dropping with 9 Sqn in the range area behind the Infantry Battalions. The practice devices were inert. Unfortunately the RAAF wanted to control the show and decided that the best drop height would be 600 ft, I thought it should be higher as the angle of entry wasn't steep enough. They won.



Three track systems were selected in the Long Hai foothills for 3 strings of 4 ADSIDS. The drop system was calculated on the old time and motion theory to space them out at about 50 to 70 metres apart. I had no control over the drop apart from handing the sensors to the crew chief. We only ever had activations from 2 of the units dropped. The problems that came to my mind were, did they hit the ground at the right angle and or did they hit rock or very hard ground, arm, then fall over useless without bedding in. I am telling you this now because we never used them again. They were obviously a good piece of kit but really designed for saturation applications around places like the DMZ, Khe Sahn, the Trail etc.

ACOUSTIC SENSOR(ACOBUIOY)

This was a long cylindrical sensor that looked something like the devices launched from PC3's to detect submarines. It too was flung out of aircraft. When launched a parachute deployed which armed the sensor before entangling its self in the foliage. It was equipped with a diurnal lens which with the cap removed only operated during the hours of darkness. It was sound only and had the capability to drown out unwanted background noises. Once again, we considered this to be a saturation sensor and saw no use for it.

Acoustic Detector



MINI ACOUSTIC SENSOR

This sensor was only half the size of the above, about 45cm, and was just to our liking. It had the same capabilities but was hand emplaced. The aerial was linked to the sensor by a long cable which could be mounted in a tree. Once the sensor was activated the sound transmission was sent to the base station and tape recorded. The activation range varied due to the conditions as well as the quality of sound. SOP, place them as close as possible. These were excellent value when placed with a string of minisids as a confirmation device or singly at base camps, river crossings track junctions etc. Our GINT Cpl even ventured out with the SAS once and placed one over the entrance to a cave in the Nui Dihn hills.

It should be noted that all the above, except the PSID, sensors had anti tamper capability.

MONITORING EQUIPMENT

The receiver was called PORTATELL. It was about half the size of a 77 set and had the usual volume controls, channel selectors, audio out puts, speaker, squelch control and most importantly a tone code display and inputs to accept a tape recorder and a graphic display device. It was hooked up to 292 aerial mast and had its own Omni directional aerial. As discussed, we only ever requested one channel as this addressed our space and personnel limitations. When a sensor was activated its tone, code was displayed on the monitor. Connected to this was a graphic real time paper recorder which made a mark for that particular tone code at the specific time of activation. This was when you could sit back and look for that sequence you were after. We knew and the machines knew where every single tone code was situated and where in each string.

A tape recorder also hooked into the monitor so that we could pick up and record speech from the acoustic sensors. Sometimes the results were barely satisfactory as we went on the cheap as far as the purchase of a decent tape recorder was concerned.

OPERATIONS

As soon as the course was finished we had received our sensors and preparations were commenced to build a bunker on Nui Dat as a monitoring site. The radar position across from the water tower was converted to our stores area. This position had air conditioning and a refrigerator as all batteries had to be kept cool. As you would imagine it was quite popular but we restricted this to essential people only.

Planning commenced with allocation of sensors to strings, the setting of tone codes, and testing of all equipment. The omni directional aerial was set up on the hill and a simple comms plan initiated with Arty Tac. Meetings were held with them as well as G INT in reference to passage of information etc. It was decided that all activations would be passed to the Arty Int duty personnel and paper readouts were delivered to G INT every morning. ZULU target numbers would be allocated to each string or individual sensor. No great dramas eventuated.

Myself and Capt B Kennedy were able to visit the 25th and 1st US divisions to have a look at their operating procedures. Mind boggling would be an understatement. They were set up in demountables which had banks upon banks of computers and monitors capable of receiving as many channels as they wanted to use therefore a vast amount of sensors could be deployed. They had no problems with range or line of sight as an aircraft was used as a relay. To be honest I switched off because it was just too huge for my comprehension. Besides we knew how we were going to operate.

At no stage can I remember being involved in the planning stage. We were told where strings were to be deployed and we decided what equip would be used and once in the area exactly where they were to be placed. At no stage were sensors deployed near built up areas. There was obviously a reason for this but I was not told nor did I question it.

The maximum numbers of sensors deployed at any one time was about 50. These were in strings or individually placed on track systems, river crossings, bunker systems etc. These strings were placed west of Hoa Long up along the foothills of the mountain range up to about to Ap Sui Nghe, in the Long and Light Green to the crossings on the Song Rai and the track systems at the foothills of the Long Hai's.

I personally planted all the sensors myself. Sometimes I took a sig along but because I could be out for a week or more manpower restrictions prevented this. The protection party more often than not was D&E platoon commanded by Lt John Burrows. They were a fine infantry unit who rapidly understood my requirements and we got along just fine. The only complaint I got from them was having to cart these heavy toys around the province. I also acted as their FOO. RF/PF with advisors were also used around the Long Hais but they proved virtually useless. I won't go into that as it is a story on its own.

As far as results were concerned we knew we were getting plenty of activations but these disappeared into G INT and into their int summaries. I realized after the event that I should have pushed harder in that direction. We achieved several recordings from our acoustic sensors but without an interpreter we as a section didn't get the feed-back we would have liked. On one occasion about mid-afternoon I was summonsed to Arty Tac as a matter of urgency because one of these sensors west of Hoa Long was being constantly activated. I was immediately dispatched by Possum to investigate. On arrival at the site both the pilot and I detected movement. I as well my M16 saw two pers near the sensor which was now uncovered and clearly visible. As it was close to the civil access area and no weapons were seen we went home. I went out by M113 the next day and recovered the device. Only time I ever did that.

We were certainly picking up confirmed movements but nothing of any size to worry about. This changed during the period 6-8 Aug 70 when a string situated in the vicinity of GR 349701 picked up significant confirmed movement. The sequence we were looking for. D&E Platoon with me in tow as their FOO deployed during the hours of darkness on the 8th to set up an ambush. During the night of the 9th one of the PSID transmitters, set either side of the killing ground for early warning, constantly activated for 5 minutes. Myself and the PI Comd checked the area the next morning and found that a new track had been made at right angles to the ambush site within 1 metre of the sensor. Having seen this, he moved the ambush a short distance to cover this area.

At approx 0830 on 11 Aug a large group of the enemy entered the rear of the ambush which resulted in 2 KIA, 3 WIA, 3 weapons captured and 1000 lbs of foodstuffs and equipment. Of course, on the morning of 12 Aug 8RAR had their successful ambush near Hoa Long. In these two actions Chau Duc Company was decimated.

I went into this in as short a detail as I could but I wanted to get across that the system does work when all concerned work together. It should be noted that this action came together barely one month after we finished our course.

During the rest of my tour we got on with doing our thing and provided valuable information to 1 ATF.

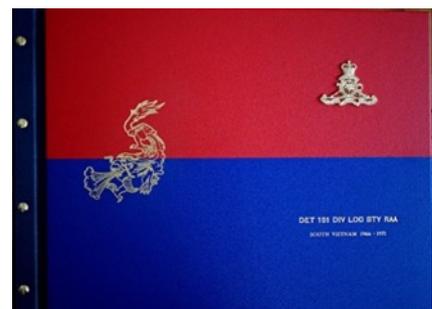
John was replaced by the incoming survey sergeant for 12 Field Regiment, Sgt Mick Allwright, and looks like they had a two-week hand-over period. Mick had previously served with 1 Field Regiment (Sep 66 to Apr 67).

This series will continue on the receipt of Insights and Recollections, so if you would care to contribute, please send your Insights and Recollections –

Paul Dickson at - 131eyesandears@gmail.com

This topic/s has raised so much interest – we're still in the middle of some really great discoveries with some remarkable memories being brought to life.

. The “Detachment Album Project” – This project is sponsored by the 131 Locators Association and is in need of some photographic and by-line input from our members/Readers.



. The “Lost Locator Project”

Ed – The Project continues on relentlessly so, we need to be vigilant and keep our minds active as who knows who, where and how we might stumble on, discover someone etc be it by accident but even more so by design. Paul

Get in touch via 131eyesandears@gmail.com

. Here’s the next in the “Unknown” series...



This photo is extracted out of **Ian Finlay’s** archives and interestingly enough **Ed** recognises one of the “suspects”! The bloke on the right is **Allen Keeble** from Brisbane.

But who are the other two?



. An “Unknown” revealed from last month -

Keith Ayliffe – owns up - “G'day Paul,

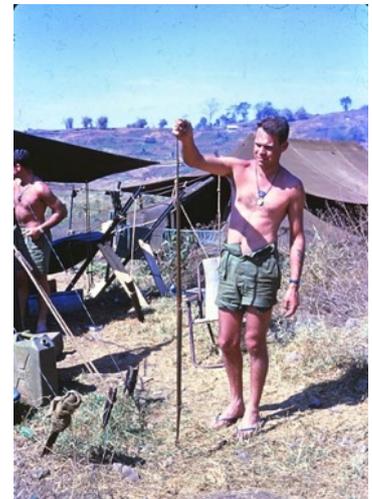
Thanks for an interesting *E&E* - please pass on 'my thanks to Allen Morley, Bill Taggart, Trevor Bryant on their efforts with the UCG for the Yanks as my approach was met with "It will be dealt with through official channels" - same for Kiwis.

The photo of the unknown “Snake” man, was easy for me, my first enemy 'Contact' in SVN Dec 68 Radar Site at the Horseshoe.

Sad news of Warwick for many.

Regards, Keith Ayliffe”

Gordon Malcolm – confirms the identity – “Paul, the photo in the last *Eyes & Ears* of the bloke and the snake was Keith Ayliffe as I imagine many have told you. G”



. **Grahame Dignam** is requesting some help as the following email explains –

" I have been handed a problem I can only solve with your help and maybe some others.

I have received a request from Mellissa Bohl, the daughter of Michael Bohl.

Bohl, Michael Owen	Gnr	1411182	LP	1968	28/10/48	15/06/93
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She relates how the family split up while she and other siblings were quite young and she is now searching for info and pictures of her Dad trying to fill in some of the blanks in their lives. I said I would do what I could.

Mellissa is also interested in any pictures of her father you may have locked away in the album ".

So far, I have one at the front of the James Menz club with Lt W Wight and another (Michael in the middle), but there must be more.

Please send any info and/or pics to:

Grahame Dignam

sectreas131locators@gmail.com

and I will pass it on to Mellissa.

Graham”



From the Advocate's Desk...



Our professional Advocate's contact details: -

Peter Piro JP - email contact: piorowp@ozemail.com.au

Ken Foster OAM JP - email contact: khfoster1@bigpond.com

Disclaimer: Please note that all correspondence submitted will be treated with the total confidentiality between the sender and our Advocates. Printed submissions and responses that may be published in *Eyes & Ears* will be completely anonymous, just used as examples of help.

A chance meeting – Ed happened to meet a bloke named **Mike Keefe** – US Marine in the '60's – he was lucky enough to avoid SVN. During our conversation, he told me that he was a newspaper cartoonist for the Denver Post at one stage, for several years – won a Pulitzer Prize and so on – check him out on Wikipedia. It's a fairly amazing tale. He replaced an Australian Cartoonist at the Denver Post called Pat Oliphant and he's related to Sir Mark – all interesting stuff.

I sent Mike a copy of *Eyes & Ears*.

Mail Call...

Ron Boaler – “Hi Paul, I would like to get hold of Geoff's (Carthew) contact information if you still have it.

I am catching up on jobs I have meant to do but in the aftermath of my stroke and the disastrous floods we had in Townsville in February, contacting Geoff went through to the keeper.

As of last Friday, I have a laundry again and don't have to go to friends to do my washing but am in better condition than most of my neighbours who are still to return to their homes that are under repair.

Ron Boaler”

John Blake – after reading John Vitkovsky's Locator profile sent this in –

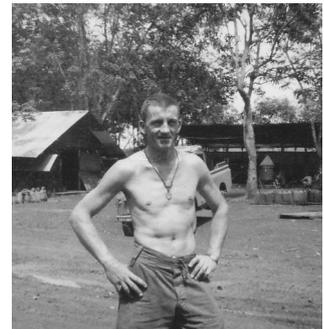
“Dicko and Vitkovsky

Well fellas that was one of the easiest reads I have had. Most enjoyable thanks guys. John B”

. Vale - Warwick Hamilton continues...more memories –

Ken Osborne – “Dear Paul, very little has been happening here in Portland. We have had a volunteer to take over the task of secretary to the Sub-Branch which I have been doing off and on for thirty years so you might have heard the big WHOOPEE from me not that I will disappear all at once just a gradual fade out. It was sad to hear that **Warwick** died, he was the OC of the detachment when I went to Vietnam and who left a month or so before I did in April 1968. He will be missed by quite a few.

I have attached a photo (at right) of myself in Vietnam in 1967. One of my nieces in Tasmania was after photos of our family and as I appear to be the family historian I went through my files and found photos going back to around 1920. My relatives back in the old days let the kids draw or cut up photos so not many survived but in my case I keep everything, photos, slides, newspaper clippings etc. I did send a CD at one stage of a lot of the photos I took in Vietnam to the Association but this one of myself was in my mother's album and I could not recall ever seeing it in my files. People don't believe it is me as I am now a little



heavier than I was then - the traditional ten stone weakling. They used to label me as 'all prick and ribs' then and what they call me nowadays is quite different.

Anyhow, enough of my ramblings, keep well, regards Ken Osborne.”

Dave Crowther – “Hi Dicko, it is with sadness that I give my condolences to Warwick’s partner and his ex- troops. I served with Warwick at the School of Arty, Radar Troop. He was Troop Commander and a great bloke. An officer I held great respect for. He had a full knowledge of the electronics trade and we had a 4mk6, 3mk7 anti-aircraft and a locating mode conversion. The late “**Bones**” **Gordon** was also in the troop and had a curiosity to look in Warwick’s drawers. Warwick was an avid model plane builder and had them hanging from the class room roof. He realised someone was checking his drawers but “Bones” didn’t own up. Warwick set up a small cap detonator, which when it went off “Bones” turned whiter than white and went very pale. No more problems with the drawers. He had a very good sense of humour and was a great leader and also gave me my first promotion. Warwick R.I.P. Dave.”

Peter Fletcher – a late piece on Warwick Hamilton’s Vale – “Hi Paul,
I know it is late but this is one of the photos I had which Warwick was in.
Cheers, Fletch.”



John Temperly – “Paul,

Bert Blink, a recipient of your *Eyes & Ears* newsletter, encouraged me to send you my short description of one or two experiences I enjoyed thanks to **Warwick Hamilton**.

I had some idea Warwick was not well but none of what ailed him, nor how serious it was. Last time I saw him was a couple of years ago. My wife and I enjoyed morning coffee with Warwick and Kate at “*Poppy’s*” at the War Memorial. He seemed well at the time or hid any health problems effectively.

I have great memories of 1990s dealings with Warwick in both the personal and business worlds. We visited CeBIT in Hanover three times over four years, each time after much planning and preparation involving early-stage IT companies in which HDS, my employer at that time, had made small investments. I happily share a few details with you and perhaps your readers, if appropriate. On the first of those trips, a side visit to Brussels proved to be quite a highlight. Several years ago, I wrote the attached story about a couple of “interesting” aspects of that side visit.

Enjoy,

John Temperly
Canberra”

Warwick Hamilton and a Belgian Cultural Experience John Temperly Canberra March 2012

Hitachi Data Systems (HDS) occasionally used the services of Warwick Hamilton of *Events Unlimited* to assist in the planning and staging of events, particularly start-of-sales-year extravaganzas. Between 1991 and 1996, I directed the operations of an HDS subsidiary and in that capacity, I engaged Warwick to help stage our exhibits at CeBIT in Hanover, Germany. Together we made an initial reconnaissance of CeBIT in March 1994 to determine the requirements of exhibiting there.

An extra-curricular highlight came after CeBIT. I had arranged a business meeting in Brussels and once I had dealt with that commitment, Warwick and I enjoyed about 36 hours of “down time” in that beautiful and expensive city. We toured the automobile museum where I was surprised to learn the extent of Belgium’s participation in the early days of motor manufacturing.

Our attention then turned to adult book and video emporiums where we indulged in a minor survey of trends and comparisons on behalf of Warwick’s sister, or so he said. She owned a Canberra video business (*The Mature Media Group*) that specialised in X-rated material. Her business occasionally commissioned the making of X-rated films and on one occasion, Warwick received an invitation to “a shoot”. He suggested a rephrasing of that invitation.

Using local knowledge gained on previous visits to Brussels, Warwick guided us to the café-brasserie *Mort Subite* (Sudden Death). This establishment enjoyed fame among locals and tourists alike for its extraordinary beers. Because of the beers, *Mort Subite* served as a Belgian prince’s favourite haunt in the early twentieth century.

We ordered the house speciality, large glasses of Warwick’s recommended nectar, probably the *Lambic White Beer* *Mort Subite* still on the Brasserie’s drinks list today. It tasted like a mix of lager and cider, very pleasant indeed. Brewed on-site in Champagne bottles because they were the only containers strong enough to handle the gas pressure generated during fermentation, it did not travel for sale anywhere else.



We enjoyed our first sample so much we each ordered another large glass, sat back and absorbed the ambiance a little longer. Feeling quite mellow but not registering any intoxication, eventually we stood up to leave the restaurant and found that “our legs were drunk”, to steal an expression from Scottish comedian Billy Connolly.

At about this point, we discovered the alcohol content of our chosen thirst quencher, 12 or 13% by volume. We had imbibed plenty of volume and its effects snuck up on us. Did we only just avoid sudden death?



Enjoying a “special” beer with Warwick Hamilton at Mort Subite in Brussels 1994

Please note - Warwick's Celebration of Life will be:

Date and Time: Friday, 15 November, 1130hrs – 1500hrs including lunch

Location: The Sergeants' Mess, Chowder Bay Rd, Mosman NSW 2088 in Sydney.
(It was Navy rather than Army but it is a lovely function centre now and on one of our favourite coastal walking tracks with a great view of the harbour so will suit Warwick perfectly.)

Responses: If people would like to come, would you please ask them to email me to kandw@live.com.au no later than Friday, 18th October.

I will then be able to send them an invitation as I will need exact numbers for seating, food and beverage.

Peter Ravelje – forwarded in the following “Media Release” –

MEDIA RELEASE - 20 September 2019 VETERAN PENSIONS SET TO INCREASE

Veteran pension payments will increase in September in line with the biannual indexation process. Pension recipients including veterans, their partners, war widows and widowers across Australia will see the increase from 20 September 2019.

Due to the calculation of pension rates on a daily basis, the first pension paid after the indexation on payday 26 September 2019 will comprise a component of both the old and new rates.

The new pension rates will be fully effective from pension day 10 October 2019.

The table below highlights the new fortnightly rates.

SERVICE PENSION	Old rate (fortnightly)	New rate (fortnightly)	Increase (fortnightly)
Single person	\$926.20	\$933.40	\$7.20
Couples (each)	\$698.10	\$703.50	\$5.40
Single person – transitional	\$775.50	\$780.10	\$4.60
Couples (each) – transitional	\$625.70	\$629.40	\$3.70
WAR WIDOWS			
War widow(er)'s pension	\$941.60	\$949.10	\$7.50
Income support supplement	\$278.50	\$280.80	\$2.30
DISABILITY PENSION			
T&PI (Special rate)	\$1,423.40	\$1,434.70	\$11.30
Intermediate rate	\$966.50	\$974.20	\$7.70
EDA	\$786.50	\$792.80	\$6.30
100 per cent	\$506.10	\$510.10	\$4.00

Pensions are indexed twice a year in March and September. For a full list of pension rates, please visit www.dva.gov.au or call 133 254 or 1800 555 254 from regional Australia.



Mail Out



I started this in September, 2017 and have decided to continue running down the alphabet of names and sending some emails to blokes in general to say g'day and just to generally keep in touch. A lot of the blokes I've never met, so it's just to keep some connection alive. Plus, it's good to keep in touch, even sporadically, it may help to avoid any unpleasant unforeseen surprises.



Mail In - Here are the responses...

Jim Townley – “Hi Paul -thanks for the note.

Yes, winter woollies are heading for the trunk. Five days into Spring and the Qld bushfire season is in full swing. Some biggish fires just west of here in the Gold Coast hinterland around Canungra.

Wendy and I have also been having a bit of BCC and SCC surgery, though not as severe as yours sounds. Ours were nose jobs and ear jobs. I must say plastic surgeons seem to do rather well for themselves here. Thank the lord for DVA.

We spent some time on a driving trip through south western Qld last month, out through Roma, Charleville, Cunnamulla, St George, Goondiwindi, Texas and Stanthorpe. The extent of the drought is alarming, the country brown and bare, with no stock to be seen in the paddocks; a considerable contrast to your greenery. The other alarming aspect was the apparent prevalence of “ice” in the country towns. Although we saw no first-hand evidence many locals were a bit “doom and gloom”.

Enjoy your trip to Chiang Mai. I don't think I have another long-haul flight left in me.

Thanks for keeping in touch.

Regards, Jim”

John Richmond – “Hi Paul

Well looks like the start of a very hot dry spring and summer down in my neck of the woods. Was watching the weather on ABC breakfast this morning. The forecast for parts of NSW and Qld is for extreme fire danger for today at least.

A little story I like to tell - Last year (and again this one) I am a volunteer at the ANU Medical School as part of a program where I am interviewed by Year 4 (final year) Medical students. Had one of them ask me what they needed to ask me about. Well the answers were

1. At my belt level I have been operated on for prostate cancer. Still under treatment
2. Have a very badly injured back
3. At the top end was operated on for a heart quad bi pass about 15 years ago.

I think that set him back on his haunches. I told one of the specialists this story and he cracked up.

I was talking the other day with a former member of 131 - Rod Liddell was one of the orderly room clerks. We were discussing that it is heading towards 52 years since we were freed from the service. I am still trying to work out where all those years have gone.

I've just remembered that the 2 most senior NCOs (when we arrived at 131 in 1966) live or did live just down the road from me:

Keith Cossart – BSM, He died a couple years ago (you may remember as the bald headed WO2)

Andy Anderson - Still going strong at 83 or 84. Still assists the scouts with his grandson (you may remember as the 5 foot, one-eyed WO2)

4. Just one quick question how is your brother Jim these days?

Regards, John."

Terry Westerway – “Hahaha, surgery as a “weight loss procedure?” Since my laminectomy in March I have lost around 30kg in weight and around 5cm in height. Talk about the “Incredible Shrinking Man”!!! Summer is coming here in Oz – thank God. I couldn’t have taken much more of last winter. Anyway, with Spring and much warmer weather the “dolly birds” are out in numbers – much appreciated by a Life Member (in good standing) of “Birdwatchers Unanimous”. Sitting in the coffee shop having a nice cup of coffee and watching the passing parade is so much better than huddled up next to the heater. Love watching the gluteus maximus muscles wiggle up and down and the “frontal furniture” jig and bob. I know, I know, I’m a dirty old man – but then I have been one since I was about 15 years old.

Had an interesting talk to my chiropractor the other day – she is Vietnamese born in Ho Chi Minh City within the last 30 years – she still calls the city Saigon and refuses to refer to it by its current official name – and doesn’t like the mention of “Uncle Ho” (may he rot in Hell according to her). So the northern conquest of the south has not been as thorough as they perhaps imagine.

By the way, you might recall that the Vietnamese referred to us as “Uc Dai Loi” – that is not how Google translates “Australian” – Google translates it as “người Úc” and does not translate uc dai loi at all. I must ask my chiropractor when I next see her. Maybe it means “stupid western d***h**ds”?



. The following are responses to our ...

Mail Out



Mail In section...



John Vitkovsky – “G’day Paul,

Cold winter down here in Western Victoria. Just been away in our caravan for a month up north, see piccie at right.

Still own and run Southern Grampians Wilderness Resort (www.grampiansresort.com.au) as a life-style thing, although, after 16 years we have it on the market so I can cash in my superannuation. Built the resort when I retired in 2003 from my construction company.

Radical prostatectomy last year and ongoing radiation therapy, which put things on hold for many months, but otherwise fit as a fiddle. 74 next month... married to Naomi - 36 years. Still into cars (used to race Mini Coopers in younger days) Now long-time driver of BMWs (M5, X5, Dakar motorbike, V12 BMW).

I read the *Eyes & Ears* with interest, but am in a bit of a remote location, and committed to the Resort to be able to participate. Vice President of Balmoral RSL. Other than that, all cool.

Cheers, John V.”



David Pires – “Hi Paul, great to hear from you again.

As a matter of interest, we have only been back in Perth for about 5 weeks now, following our trip across the country to Victoria, South Australia and spending 3 months in Tasmania. All together we’d been away for 7 months.

On arriving back in Perth arranged to have a knee replacement on the 13th of August, so just over 3 weeks ago. Touch wood, so far, all good although exercises are pretty daunting and painful, but vital for full recovery I am told.

Unable to drive for 6 weeks, so will be biting at the bit to hit the road again later this year if possible. Already booked a North-West WA trip for July next year for 3 months, which should be ideal to get some fishing in.

Will need to catch up with **Neville Davis** in the next week or so for a coffee, as we have a reunion planned with some Nasho guys in October, which will be interesting.

Weather is now starting to improve as we are in Spring, with 23 degrees today and getting warmer hopefully, as had enough of the rain and cold for a while, although the country is in dire need for more rain, especially inland.

I will try and attach a couple of photos of our car and caravan at a couple of spots in South Australia, so hopefully they will come out.

Thanks again Paul for keeping in touch, keep well and enjoy life. Kind Regards, David”



Port Lincoln and Streaky Bay area in South Australia



Michael Quinlan – “Hi Paul

Good to hear from you and your exploits especially Chiang Mai, what a confronting history. Over the past twelve months I have had my prostate removed and both hips replaced with titanium implants. Never to be put off in mid-May Helen and I took off in our caravan heading into mid NSW then south along the “*Painted Silo Trail*” to Victoria, then across to Mount Gambier (great place). Following this we headed north through the SA wine country and visited many estates. We bypassed Adelaide then ventured to Port Pirie whose RSL has an outstanding Vietnam memorabilia exhibition. We then motored to Whyalla and headed down the York Peninsula...very beautiful. Having completed the York, we then went down the Eyre Peninsula to Port Lincoln for a taste of their seafood and in particular to the “*Line and Label*” restaurant, just magnificent!! We were getting a little sick of the cold windy weather so off we took to central Queensland via Broken Hill Cobar and Bourke. We then made our way then to the coast staying a Dicky Beach Caloundra, then Hervey Bay. In the process, we met up with two 131ers, **Brian Smythe** a native now of Noosa Heads and **Peter Creedon** coming South from Karumba. After three months, away we decided to call it a day and head back to Sydney. What do they say “**Adventure before dementia?**”.

Regards, Michael”



Two pics one of silos near the Grampians Vic the other was taken half way down the East side of the Eyre Peninsula with Helen on the pier.



Ed – after reading Michael’s email I just had to go and give Google the once over with regards to “*The Silo Art Trail*” – I’d never heard of it. It’s amazing as it’s not only confined to NSW, but extends into Victoria, SA and WA and encompasses “*Tower Art*”.

Do yourself a favour Google it and have a read and peruse some of the photos – the following below are just a random sample –

The **Silo Art Trail** is Australia's largest outdoor gallery. The **trail** stretches over 200 kilometres, linking Brim with neighbouring towns Lascelles, Patchewollock, Rosebery, Rupanyup and Sheep Hills.

The Australian Silo Art movement all began in Northam Western Australia in 2015.



The Snowtown Water Tower Art – South Australia



Ed. again – I can't help myself after reading and looking at the "Nomad" photos and reading the stories – we're an amazing lot. Into our '70's, getting medical stuff done and we're out and into it! I'm amazed that we don't have a travel/tour business combined with a human spare parts manufacturing company!!!

Keep it up everyone – it's fabulous! Paul

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

Next month it'll be 32 years since we were "Welcomed Home"

– don't forget the anniversary of the

Welcome Home Parade October 3rd

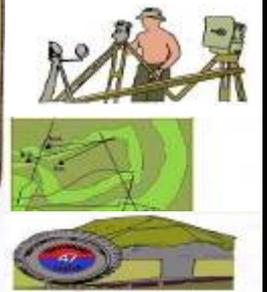
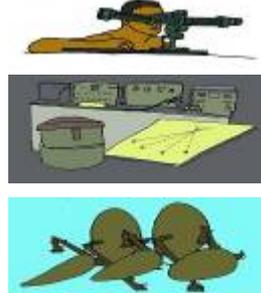
Ed would like to hear a few memories of the actual day.



. A reminder that the **AGM for our Association** will go offsite on the **12th November 2019** and will be held at the **North Head North Fort site.**

The AGM will commence at the normal **11.00AM** start time followed by a general meeting before breaking for a BBQ lunch. A Tour of the Site is to be arranged to round out the day which will included a brief ceremony at the Association Memorial Paver.

A general call to arms for this event will be made to all Locators far and away to attend.



Committee members:

President – Allen Morley, Vice President – Bert Blink, Treasurer/Secretary – Grahame Dignam, Webmaster – Bob Billiards, Research Officer – Ernie Newbold, Designs and Development Officer – Nick Proskurin, Eyes & Ears Editor – Paul Dickson

General members – Ian Amos, Ged Carroll, George Lane.

Regional Representatives: ACT – Bert Blink, Qld – Terry Erbs, SA - Geoff Blackwell,

Vic – Alan Adams, WA - Barry Guzder

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

Presidential perambulations

Today I received some advice from DVA regarding an appeal I am making to the Veterans Review Board (VRB) about a DVA assessment.

My first interaction with VRB some years ago saw a decision that was negative to me. So, I began, with Granville's assistance, to organise a hearing before the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT). However, that approach came crashing down. Why, you may ask? The legislation quaintly meant that because in my last ten years of my career my employment was part employee and part self-employed I was not able to appeal via the AAT. How stupid and short sighted was that? Despite correspondence to the then Minister and my local MP I was told nothing could be done to change that. Subsequently, several Ministers later the legislation was changed 'to reflect the changes that had occurred within the workforce'. As Homer would intone, "D'Oh!"

After comparing notes with some other ex-131 Gunners I made another application for a hearing at the VRB. I received advice two weeks before the now scheduled date in February this year. Immediately I advised VRB that the date was not suitable as I had scheduled that time to help out my daughter who lives in Auckland. Xin loi (translated from the English) was effectively the VRB response, so my application had to be withdrawn.

About this time, I thought, "Bugger it, I won't try again". But, for sheer cussedness I decided to try again. I have now received a shipload of documents.

One letter, sent by email today, trumpeted "DVA is undergoing major change and as part of this transformation now operates within a digital environment." Nevertheless, at the end of the correspondence the zinger was, "Please note, if after consultation with your representative, should you wish to withdraw your application at any stage you must do so in writing." Go figure that inconsistency.

Cheers, Allen.



. Upcoming Events Calendar –

131 Locators Association Committee Meeting Date: Tuesday, 8th October, 2019 at 1100hrs

Venue: Canley Heights RSL & Sporting Club, 26 Humphries Rd., Wakeley.

Ph (02) 9604 9975 and for directions - <http://www.canleyheightsrsl.com.au/contact-us/>

You're all welcome.

. **Pertinent Points** – extracted from the 131 Locators Association Committee Meeting Date: Tuesday, 10th September, 2019 at 1105hrs...

Attendees were: Allen Morley, Bert Blink, Grahame Dignam, Ernest Newbold, Kev Browning, Ian Amos, Gordon Malcolm, Nick Proskurin, Bob Billiards, Merv Nairn and George Lane.

Financial Membership is currently ...119, plus Associates 2, Affiliates 9. Total 130. Lapsed 38 members

Presidents report.

Allen advised that -

. We have been offered the option of applying for a Community Grant by DVA. At this time, a grant will be sought to fund the Pictorial History of 131 DLB photo Album project which has been in prospect for some time.

. A memorial function of the life of **Warwick Hamilton** will be held on 15th November 2019 between 11.30 - 3.00PM at the "Sergeants Mess Chowder Bay Rd Chowder Bay NSW. More detailed information will follow.

. A reminder that the AGM for our Association will go offsite on the 12th November 2019 and will **be held at the North Head North Fort site**. The AGM will commence at the normal 11.00AM start time followed by a general meeting before breaking for a BBQ lunch. A Tour of the Site is to be arranged to round out the day which will included a brief ceremony at the Association Memorial Paver. A general call to arms for this event will be made to all Locators far and away to attend.

Public Officer Report. There are no changes or developments that will have any effect on our association that I am aware of. However, a reminder that Committee nominations and Agenda items for the AGM will need to be in the hands of the Secretary seven clear days before the date of the AGM and can only be made by a financial member of the Association.

. **webMaster Update** - The Face book page we produced (131 Battery Royal Australian Artillery) will be hibernated while we evaluate the activity on the existing 131 Div Loc Oldies face book page.

Health - No reports of any serious complaints have been received apart from the normal change of season ailments.

General Business.

Discussions ensued on the following:

. Kevin Browning mentioned that he had seen our interest in the Horn Island Memorial as he was instrumental in accessing the 3.7In coastal gun which had recently been gifted to the site and relocated from Darwin.

. Kevin also paid tribute to the work of Keith Ayliffe on the recognition of the eligibility of 131 DLB to wear the recent UCG awarded for the battle of Coral/Balmoral. He has asked if we would garner support from the Locator community by asking veterans to write to their MP requesting that 131DLB be specifically included in the list of units represented at that battle. An email request will be made followed by an item in our Newsletter to seek our Locator community support.

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.

. Birthdays in the Battery...October –

Date	Name	Regt No	YOB	SVN In	SVN Out	Comments
1	IAN BRIGNELL	2789405	1946	20 01 1969	21 01 1970	
2	TERRY BRUCE	2783213	1945	05 05 1967	30 01 1968	
2	PETER TEATHER	3790242	1945	12 04 1968	06 08 1968	
2	LESLIE ROBINSON	217662	1949	09 12 1968	28 11 1969	
3	WELCOME HOME	ALL	1987	1966	1971	Det 131
4	LEIGH HEMMING	1732039	1945	04 05 1967	11 12 1967	†02.03.18
4	MICHAEL LUFF	2783725	1945	02 01 1967	27 09 1967	
4	DAVID LAHORE	3791183	1945	02 09 1968	04 03 1969	
5	JAMES MERCHANT	2788817	1945	18 12 1968	28 11 1969	
7	GARY CHILLINGSWORTH	313477	1951	29 11 1970	05 08 1971	
8	JOHN O'NEILL	243505	1949	09 11 1970	11 11 1970	
	" "			11 03 1971	12 05 1971	RAEME
9	BRIAN SMYTHE	1201484	1946	02 09 1968	03 12 1969	
10	BRIAN KENNEDY Capt.	213488	1942	02 03 1965	11 03 1965	3 RAR
	" "			26 08 1969	27 08 1970	131
10	PAUL DICKSON	1732012	1945	04 05 1967	12 12 1967	
10	BARRY BONSER	37661	1941	03 01 1967	27 09 1967	† 03.09.98
11	PAUL JONES	216324	1946	22 04 1966	30 04 1967	† 09.09.68
11	JEFFREY EVANS Maj	3789164	1945	10 02 1971	02 06 1971	† 23.12.11
	" "			02 06 1971	02 11 1971	12 Fd Regt.

12	ALAN CLEASBY WO2	36053	1937	02 12 1968	10 12 1969	131
	" " "			11 06 1972	20 11 1972	AATTV
12	BARRY FOUNTAIN	3798485	1949	03 03 1971	20 08 1971	131
	" "			21 08 1971	30 10 1971	12 Fd Regt.
13	PETER SALI	1735560	1948	24 02 1970	18 02 1971	† 2016
13	DENNIS AVERY	4720906	1948	19 08 1970	09 06 1971	4 Fd Regt.
14	ANTHONY DODDS	16776	1944	04 05 1967	02 04 1968	
14	NORMAN LINDROOS	3410957	1939	20 05 1968	24 05 1969	
14	PETER McGANN	55672	1950	27 11 1969	19 11 1970	
16	WILLIAM THOMAS	16727	1944	{07 01 1967	19 03 1967	1ARU
	" "			{20 03 1967	26 09 1967	
17	TORIN WHITE	218372	1945	21 02 1969	25 02 1970	
18	HELMUT LEMPA	38120	1946	20 05 1966	06 12 1966	† Unknown
18	ARTHUR JUX "TED"	2792371	1948	29 04 1970	18 03 1971	
19	IAN FINLAY	2412363	1948	27 11 1967	19 11 1968	
20	ROBERT HARRIS Sgt	213514	1942	10 02 1971	29 07 1971	
23	JOHN VITKOVSKY	4718271	1945	02 03 1967	12 03 1968	
23	NORMAN BULLEN	214545	1944	20 05 1966	11 12 1966	
22	IAN BOARD	213879	1943	22 04 1966	11 12 1966	
25	MICHAEL DELANEY	2789205	1947	17 02 1969	28 11 1969	† 17.02.13
28	MICHAEL BOHL	1411182	1948	08 02 1968	17 12 1968	† 15.06.93
28	DAVID DOYLE Sgt.	17760	1943	{22 04 1966	11 12 1966	
	" "			{24 09 1970	08 02 1971	
28	IAN MURLEY	38503	1946	12 04 1968	23 04 1969	
28	PAUL TYS Lt.	235362	1946	17 03 1969	18 03 1970	
29	JAMES "ZEKE" RITCHIE Sgt	2411899	1940	21 05 1969	09 04 1970	
29	PETER LARKIN	3793067	1946	08 11 1968	19 11 1969	
30	GRAHAM O'TOOLE	61497	1943	20 05 1966	11 12 1966	

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

Ed – 9 blokes not highlighted is a bit too many and needs some work. Ok, let's get into it and actively get out there locating a few more!

. **Locator Profiles** – we've received 160 and we've sent out 160. Ed – how long is it going to take to get to 165?

. **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.



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...**

Artillery Surveyors 131 Div Loc Bty...



ARTILLERY SURVEYORS 131 DIV LOC BTY

"Elements of 131 came wandering in from the bush" (A quote whose origins are lost, yet the sentiments expressed will not be lost on many who served with 131 Div Loc Bty SVN.)

. Locating, Surveillance & Target Acquisition Association...



LOCATING, SURVEILLANCE & TARGET ACQUISITION ASSOCIATION

The Eyes and Ears of The Battlefield



Australian Artillery Association – www.australianartilleryassociation.com



www.artilleryhistory.org



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

Website link - <http://www.dva.gov.au/Pages/home.aspx>

. 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](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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