

THE EYES and EARS

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

Editor: Paul 'Dicko' Dickson email: 131eyesandears@gmail.com Vol 16 No 09 September 2023 No 182
Official newsletter of the 131 Locators Association Inc ABN 92 663 816 973
web site: <http://www.131locators.org.au> Supported by the Department of Veterans Affairs



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**

2023 – 57 Years and the Detachment 131 Spirit Lives On: 1966 – 1971



A Friendship to last forever...
Bruce Irvine, John McFadden and
Warwick Brooker.
Vietnam Veterans Day, 2023,
Bathurst.
The full story continues...

A friendship forged through tragedy

Amy Rees

A BANKER, a survey drafter and a teacher who had nothing in common, now share a very special bond.

They served together in Vietnam.

And upon returning to Australia, the trio have had each others backs, catching up every year in Bathurst on August 18, commemorating the end of the Vietnam War.

Bathurst resident Bruce Irvine was joined by Warwick Brooker from Canberra and John McFadden from Ashford on Friday at the War Memorial Carillon for the annual commemoration service.

This year marked the 50th anniversary of the official ending of the Vietnam War.

But as the gentlemen reflected on their return to home, it's clear they left one war just to fight another battle.

"Before we got off the plane they said, 'Welcome home gentleman, you'll find the climate a little bit cooler. When you get off this plane get out of your uniform and into civvies [civilian clothing] and tell no bastard where

you've been'," Mr McFadden said.

"That's what we were told, so that's why we stick together."

The three men, who were aged 20, 21 and 22 at the time of conscription, served together as artillery surveyors.

While none of them wanted to go, they said they were picked out and had no choice.

"We were all conscripted, we all had jobs, we were all working and then we got balloted in and you had no say in it, you had to go," Mr

McFadden said.

"That's what draws us together."

The commemoration on Friday was especially important to the gentlemen, not only due to it being the 50th anniversary of the end of the war, but it's the first

time since 2019 the they have been able to get together to honour themselves and the other Vietnam veterans since COVID.

Bathurst mayor Robert Taylor also attended the service at the Carillon on Friday morning, paying his respects

We got balloted in and you had no say in it, you had to go.

John McFadden

to the men who fought in Vietnam.

"I was actually called up in the ballot, my name came out, and I went for my medical and failed the medical," Cr Taylor said.

"But I had friends who went to Vietnam, so I've got memories of them leaving in fanfare and coming home in the dead of night and being told to virtually take your uniform off, thank you, see you later.

"That's the part of the Vietnam War that I feel was a wrong from our government [at the time] and a wrong from a lot of people."

Following the commemoration service at the Carillon, those who attended made their way to the Bathurst RSL, catching up with old friends and sharing stories.



Bruce Irvine, John McFadden and Warwick Brooker stood by each other during the Vietnam war and have continued to do so ever since. The group caught up on August 18 in Bathurst for the 50th commemoration of the end of the Vietnam War. Picture by Amy Rees

Ed – A true friendship that's not only survived time, but flourished.

Congratulations telling our RTA as it was.

Ed – See more from Warwick's notes below in Mail In.



Give me a Name?

The "Lost Locator Project"

This Project is being re-ignited for 2022.

Our current list contains the names of **117** Locators (as at 01.01.22) that we have not had contact with since basically commencing communications in 2012, so, we thought this year is as good as any to try and reduce this number.

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.

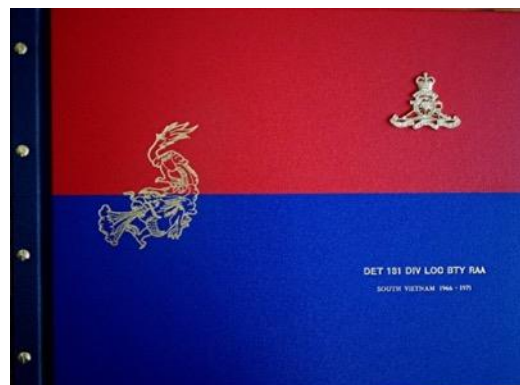
We regularly check bereavement/funeral notices and this does not locate members in the way we really want to. So, we're appealing for YOUR help in scouring all sorts of sources – local RSL's may not a good starter.

I can send you the total list of names or, if you prefer, by years in SVN to give you a starting point. I will keep an update and publish monthly results in *Eyes & Ears* and the Associations Facebook page on the web site.

Paul Dickson

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

. **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.



. **Insights and Recollections...**

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

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

Paul Dickson at - 131eyesandears@gmail.com

Peter Ravelje forwarded in the following – *A poignant Memory ...*

“VALE: Lt. Col. Harry Smith SG. MC

Approx. 20 members of the V. Vets & Vets Motorcycle Club rode to Buderim Q. to pay our last respects to Harry Smith. OC D Coy 6 RAR Battle of Long Tan. SVN. 18 August 1966.

Between 600 - 700 Family, friends and members of the public were also in attendance, apart from a large ARMY contingent.

R.I.P. Harry.....



. Quiz Time – well possibly, “Humour Time”...



This is certainly not necessarily a typical (whatever that means) “Quiz Time” article but one that has a humorous touch, so let’s get started...

Do You Remember?

Ed’s apologies for this article, but it does hit a “funny bone” or maybe several. I extracted out of a friend of mines’ Facebook...



Heavens to Murgatroyd!

The other day a not so elderly (I say 75) lady said something to her son about driving a Jalopy; and he looked at her and said, “What the heck is a Jalopy?” He had never heard of the word jalopy! She knew she was old ...But not that old.

Well, I hope you are Hunky Dory when you read this and chuckle.

About a month ago, I illuminated some old expressions that have become obsolete because of the inexorable march of technology.

These phrases included: Don’t touch that dial; Carbon copy; You sound like a broken record; and Hung out to dry.

Back in the olden days we had a lot of moxie. We’d put on our best bib and tucker, to straighten up and fly right.

Heavens to Betsy! Gee whillikers! Jumping Jehoshaphat! Holy Moley!

We were in like Flynn and living the life of Riley; and even a regular guy couldn’t accuse us of being a knucklehead, a nincompoop or a pill. Not for all the tea in China!

Back in the olden days, life used to be swell, but when’s the last time anything was swell? Swell has gone the way of beehives, pageboys and the D.A.; of spats, knickers, fedoras, poodle skirts, saddle shoes, and pedal pushers.

Oh, my aching back! Kilroy was here, but he isn’t anymore.

We wake up from what surely has been just a short nap, and before we can say, “Well, I’ll be a monkey’s uncle!” Or, “This is a fine kettle of fish!”

We discover that the words we grew up with, the words that seemed omnipresent, as oxygen, have vanished with scarcely a notice from our tongues and our pens and our keyboards.

Poof, go the words of our youth. Where have all those great phrases gone?

Long gone: Pshaw, The milkman did it. Hey! It’s your nickel. Don’t forget to pull the chain. Knee high to a grasshopper.

Ed - A Mystery sighting – sitting in my golf cart I happened to note “Vietnam” on the pencil used to record scores on the score card. I think it was the background colour that struck an accord – I couldn’t resist taking a photo. Actually amongst this it wasn’t a bad round.



AN INVESTIGATION 181 Days

. The Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal (RVCM)



Richard Barry is still convalescing, but that doesn’t mean his eye is off the target. He, along with the rest of us, wait with bated breath for finality to come.

Paul Dickson

“Nothing ventured, nothing gained.”

Unknown Dates of Deaths continues to be updated...as at 12.09.2023 -

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.

10 Year Detachment/131 Battery Death Periods

										<u>Total</u>
1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	
1	0	2	1	2	0	3	0	1	0	10
1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	
0	1	1	0	1	0	0	2	0	1	6
1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	
0	0	2	2	2	1	2	1	0	1	11
1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	
3	2	2	2	0	3	2	1	2	2	19
2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	
0	6	4	5	3	9	6	6	6	3	48
2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	
8	4	5	5	6	7	11	5	0	0	51
Unknowns*										3

Total **148**

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 **12.09.2023**.

***Unknowns** – Sadly, we have only been advised of the Members' passings only.
Here are the names and details –

Name	Rank	Regt No	Section	SVN	DoB	DoD
Lempa, Helmut	L/Bdr	38120	Radar	1966-67	18.10.46	Unknown
Robinson, Marcus Lee	Gnr	2791229		1970	14.02.48	Unknown
Robinson, Edward "Ted"	WO2	1411329	Radar	1968-69	11.08.49	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 we give some thought to completing Locator Profiles, which do add a personal background and also keeping in touch as it keeps us up to date with you and mates.

However, as a continuation. This has been extended to cover more Unknown details... such as Rank, Regt No (not an easy discovery), Section, DoB and then day.month for DoD's.

Ok, detectives, here's more homework – 7 gaps to go!

Name	Rank	Regt No	Section	SVN	DoB	DoD
Douglas, Alan				N/a		00.00.09
Farr, Lawrence Joseph	Gnr	1734257		1969-70	27.08.47	00.00.09
Foley, Charles Anthony	WO2	212687	Survey	N/a		00.00.18
O'Keefe, Michael Francis	Gnr	2787168		1968-69	26.11.46	00.00.80
Todd, Geoffrey Thomas	Bdr	54254		1967-68	18.12.67	00.00.12
White, Robert Barnett	Sgt	311537	Radar	1966-67	08.12.37	00.00.92
Yerbury, Ian Michael	Lt	43129	Survey	'67-'68/71	05.02.44	00.00.89

Ed – It's interesting that some of the members listed above had some affiliation with the Battery, yet we have serious blanks with Alan Douglas, and Sections in the Battery not known for Michael O'Keefe and Geoffrey Todd?

...a continuation –

Grahame Dignam – supplied the Regt No for **Charles Foley** via some good detective work – Thanks Grahame!

COLD CASES

SUPER SLEUTH - John McGovern –

"Hi Paul, I have some fill-ins info for you..."

Kenneth Henry BORGES served from **21 May 1966 to 13 Sep 1966**. **Merv DART** date of death **6 Mar 2001**.

John DAVIES date of death **25 Apr 2004**.

Unable to assist with Lempa, Robinson, Marcus or Robinson, Edward

Keep up the good work mate, John McGovern

Note: Both the Honour Roll and Birthday List have been able to be updated. Thanks to John.

Mail Call...

. **Ernie Newbold** – "G'day Paul & Bert,
Late news. Recently a photo appeared on a Facebook page relating to Australian Vietnam matters.

The photo showed a Gunner (named as Ben Lombardo) on top of Nui Dat, looking to the west through a pair of binoculars, the photo from the Australian War Memorial was taken in 1967 by Army photographer, Mike Coleridge. I checked the Vietnam Nominal Roll and found that Ben Lombardo is not listed !

Then when Suzanne Harms re-posted the same photo on our facebook page I decided to go back into the Nominal Roll of Vietnam veterans for another look, still no mention of Ben Lombardo. So I was intrigued to try again so I searched for the name "Lombardo" using the timeframe for when the photographer, Mike Coleridge was in Vietnam. This time, Bingo!!! there were two Lombardos listed and one of them served with Det 131 Div Loc Bty... Our guy was Ezio Bernard Lombardo and he served with the Detachment from 20th May 1966 to 3 Mar 1967. He is on our birthday list as Ezio Lombardo, born on 1st Mar 1946. It appears that the photographer used the wrong name or he could have been nicknamed "Ben".

Whatever, he served with our pioneers and I am sure some of them will remember Gnr. Lombardo and we now have a copy of his photo.

Having lived on top of Nui Dat for the second half of my tour of Vietnam the scenery shown in the photo was still very familiar to me and I am sure everyone else who was posted to 31-A would recognise it too.

Ernie."

...then Ernie adds more -

. **Ernie Newbold** - adds comments to his articles in August's edition of *Eyes & Ears* –

"G'day Paul,

Well that was different. Far too much about me though, I do hope it may help others though who may have gone through similar experiences since returning from Vietnam all those years ago. I suppose that we all believed for a long time that



we were unaffected by our war service, I know that I thought that I was as normal as I would have been if I hadn't gone to Vietnam all those years ago.

Regards, Ernie."

. **Derek Hinde** – "G'day Paul, I'm attaching the Order of Service from Vietnam Vets Day at South Tweed Heads NSW. Both myself and **Joe Losiak** laid wreaths. There were a large number of attendees, both young and old. The Guest Speaker was Colonel Guy Bagot. He served in Infantry from 1964-1984. He was in 9RAR when Coral and Balmoral were attacked.

He spoke to me how 131 DLB was able to give support to his Company and many others.

Also I attach the local Forster newspaper story of our Vigil held on 3rd Aug this year.

The grave of Sapper Peter Bramble, is located in the Forster cemetery. He was KIA on 22/05/69.

Kind Regards. Derek Hinde."

Vietnam Veterans Day Memorial Service



Held on the 57th Anniversary

"Battle of Long Tan"

Vietnam Veterans Memorial Garden

South Tweed Sports

Friday 18th August 2023
11am



Official Wreath Layers

- Steven Crockett 3 Cav Regiment
- Ray Payne OAM 1 Battalion RAR
- Bob Meehan 4 Battalion RAR
- Ian Campbell 6 Battalion RAR Long Tan Association
- Brian Vickery 8 Battalion RAR
- Brian Goff 9 Battalion RAR
- John Thurgar 1 Squadron SAS
- Bob Austen 1 FD SQN RAE TUNNEL RATS
- Derek Hinde 131 Locators Association RAA
- Joe Losiak Rotary
- Vince Corwell 17 Construction Squadron RAE
- Patricia Corban 26 Transport Company Nui Dat
- Eve Corban 5 Company RAASC
- Max Jessop Medical Corps
- Jim McCure 9 SQUADRON RAAF
- Mal Terare Royal Australian Air Force
- Chris Cherry Royal Australian Navy
- Geoff Provost MP Mayor for Tweed Shire Council
- Russell Boyd Federal Member for Tweed
- Max Greber Charman South Tweed Sports Club
- John Coggan Tweed/Coolangatta RSL Sub Branch
- Tania Saunders Tweed Heads/ Coolangatta Legacy
- Representing the late Stanley Saunders 4RAR

IF THERE IS ANYONE ELSE WHO WOULD LIKE TO LAY A WREATH, PLEASE COME UP NOW

National Anthem – Advance Australia Fair

Vietnam Veterans Roll of Honour

2412214	SGT PW Crockett	R94425	CFO DH Gibbons
2783071	LCPL RL Halloran	2795565	PTE RC Appo
2783982	CPL GV Grimmond	R5921	MEI M Doust
147935	PTE LJ Van Bockel	311194	SSGT DR Sawyer
2786015	PTE L Abernethy	48639	PTE TC Steart
54756	CPL SCE Saunders		

BIO OF GUEST SPEAKER

Colonel Guy Bagot LVO

Colonel Bagot served in the Australian Army (infantry) from 1964-1984. He commanded both an Infantry Platoon and Company, in 9RAR, in the Vietnam War from 1968 through 199. He was also a Company Senior Advisor with the

At left is a photo at the Vigil for Sapper P J Bramble in Forster.

Community News

Vietnam Veterans Vigil



Above: Back row (L to R) Joe Plapp, Derek Hide, Micheal, and Peter Jameson.

Front row - John Hahn, Anne Cromie, Barbara Cather, Barbara and Peter McTiernan.

Vietnam Veterans Vigil held a Service of Remembrance at every grave and commemorative plaque site across Australia and overseas at 1100 local time on 3 August 2023, starting with a Dawn Service in Canberra and a last service held in Birkhill Cemetery,

Scotland. 2023 marks 60 years since the arrival of the Australian Army Training team in South Vietnam in 1962, and 50 years since the withdrawal of combat troops in 1972.

2789684 Sapper, Peter John Bramble, was born in Taree on 15th April 1947 and was called up



for National Service in the 1st Field Squadron Royal Australian Corps of Engineers in December 1968. The 1st Field Squadron was tasked with providing engineer support of construction, maintenance and water supply, and the clearance of tunnels, improvised explosives devices, mines and booby traps to the Australian Task Force at Nui Dat. On 22nd May 1969 P.J. Bramble died of wounds at the 1st Australian Field Hospital, Vung Tau, five and a half hours after he was injured in a mine explosion in Phuoc Tuy Province. Australian Sappers suffered a 36% casualty rate (killed and injured) in Vietnam due to their necessary roles and from operating constantly in a high-risk environment.

Story and photo by Geordie Yule.

Information sourced from: www.vvv.org.au and www.vwma.org.au

. **Ernie Newbold** posted the following photo, taken at the Horseshoe in 1967, on the 131 Locators Association website.

Sad to note Jeff (Reid) passed away 21st October, 2022. May he Rest in Peace.

If you want to view more photos, then visit the website at - <http://www.131locators.org.au>



"A quiet morning on the Horseshoe" LP / OP Bravo
L to R Gnr.J Reid, Gnr. A Goldsmith, Gnr. R. Gunnell, Lbdr. V Danko
Long Hai hills in background to the south



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...

. Warwick Brooker (a continuation from the Page 1 of ?) –

"G'day Paul & Helen.

We're well thanks. Hope you are too. Good to hear you're both still active in one way or another.

COVID cases have reduced over here, but I guess flu is about usual for this time of the year.

For Vietnam Veterans' Day, I had to choose between the Canberra reunion or the commemoration at Bathurst with Bruce, Kanga and other mates. As we'd already planned that after a long break during the COVID precautionary years, I chose to travel to Bathurst. They have two services up there, one on VV Day and another on the nearest Sunday to VV Day, which enables greater attendance. Bruce, Kanga and I also laid wreaths at the Yetholme Memorial.

Following a photoshoot by a young journalist at the Friday service at the Bathurst Carillon and quite a lengthy interview with her at the RSL Club (because it was too cold outdoors), the attached article appeared in the Western Advocate on 19 August.

Safe travelling. Sounds exciting!

Best wishes, Warwick."

. George Clark – "Good day Paul, always good to hear from you.

My general health has improved and I am a lot happier than I was 6 months ago. I am afraid I have had to give golf away because I have severe arthritis now in just about every part of my body. I have it in my back, my hips, my hands, and my neck, but the medical fraternity said there is stuff all they can do about it. So I just suck it and see.

The one thing I am annoyed about is that I have had a couple of falls at home and in one case I knocked my two front teeth out. I asked the dentist to have implants put in but she informed me that the DVA does not pay for that. I had a plate made, but it is awful and hurts and I cannot eat with it because food collects under it, so I don't wear it.

I am booked to fly to Hong Kong, and China in December and will be away for about three months. I would have liked to have gone for a bit longer but the DVA said I risked losing my pension.

It appears to me, and I am sorry for being so cynical, but once you have served your country, you become a prisoner in it, with restrictions placed on you .

I hope you and Helen have a wonderful trip mate and just remember to keep it safe, there is a lot of unrest in this world at the moment.

All the best to both of you mate, and I look forward to hearing from you soon .

Best wishes, George Clark."

. Peter Creedon – "Hi Paul

Thank you for the catch up note. I did answer the last one you sent but it would not go, so I am hoping that this one leaves home base.

Most everything with Pauline and I are going reasonably well for our 76 trips around the sun. The weekend before last we were down at Wagga Wagga watching our grandson march out of Kapooka, he is going into artillery.

Still playing golf a couple of times a week when my back allows it. But all in all things are pretty good.

Regards Peter."

. Keith Ayliffe – "G'Day Paul,

Thanks for your note, you appear to have an interesting future mapped out, I hope there is no need for plan B. I am cutting back on adventure at the moment - I don't think, I know that age is catching up with me, beginning to slow down everywhere. Hip never really recovered from replacement. Surgeon told me he had done such a wonderful job. Well the Centenary of "Locating Artillery" has been accepted by RAAHC for 2025 and will go on the Army Calendar. Our Assoc will not be holding its reunion next year but go for an all-out reunion in 2025. The army has a fairly new Artillery setup called 9 Regt RAA which has their HQ in Sydney and and its units (Battery's) spread throughout Aust. It is using in one of the units Surveillance and Target Acquisition and flying UFV,s. I'm investigating them at the moment> It is an Army Reserve Unit making contact is not that easy. Originally it was set up to fire mortars but this is now changing.

so I'm still keeping my interest in locating moving on.

all the best mate enjoy your trip.

Keith."

. Ron Evans – "Hello again Dicko. I continue to be in awe at your energy.

I see that you are always on the move and I often wonder if Interpol is not the cause of this. If you ever head off to North Korea I will know for sure.

I congratulate you on using the correct name for Turkiye. Proper nouns have been a source of annoyance to me for ages. Why oh why can't we call Deutschland "Deutschland"? Why complicate things? But, that said, did you know that Greeks call Greece Elatha? Strange don't you think? And the French call the United States, Stats Unis - just to be bloody difficult.

Very pleased to hear that you are well and enjoying life to the fullest Old Friend. Take care and give my love to the missus. XX, Mook."

. Peter Fletcher – "Hi Paul,

Good to hear that Helen and yourself are fit and well.

Veneice and I are both well. Both playing golf and walking on other days.

Enjoy your trip overseas. Stay safe my friend.

Cheers, Fletch."

. Keith Dean – "Good afternoon Paul

Good to hear from you. We have recently returned from Canberra where we attended the Commemoration of 50 years since Australia withdrew from the Vietnam War. It was quite a great memorial. We were able to catch up with some of the guys from the unit at our accommodation and also at the Dinner on Friday night. There was about 47 in attendance including Barry Campton, I had not seen him since 1967. He looks well.

We wanted to say a huge Thank You to Graham Dignam for organising our accommodation and dinner, a huge job and very well done. Thank you.

Hope you enjoy Turkey. We went there in 2015 and absolutely loved it. We visited Gallipoli just after the 100th anniversary of WW1, It was a real experience for us."

. Nick Armstrong – "Hello Paul and Helen.

Thank you for your recent email. I was wondering whether the recent hurricane influenced your weather too much? I assume your good rainfall may have been a result of the hurricane. I have never understood whether Cyclone, Hurricane, and Typhoon are different names for the same phenomena, or are different meteorological activities.

I hope all goes well with your journey to the eastern Mediterranean. How much flying and travelling time will be required? Will your journey be a direct flight, or several stops? Google suggests the travel time is about 15 hours. That is not as bad as 17 hours from Perth to London, but still a long flight!

Bus driving jobs have been quiet recently, with only one two-week relief job while a driver had a knee operation. Weather conditions suggest harvest on Eyre Peninsula could begin early this season. If bus driving remains quiet, I may look for some harvest driving.

Weather conditions are also suggesting a high fire risk this summer. I have been involved with the local CFS for ten years. During that time, I have not experienced any serious fires. Notwithstanding any climate changes, the law of averages would suggest a bad summer may be due!

Covid and Influenza are in the community, but neither Robin nor I have had any infections. We are fully vaccinated, which probably helps.

I have not had the boat out much during winter. I am probably getting soft in old age! The trailer is due for annual brake maintenance. Keeping the trailer roadworthy costs more than keeping the boat seaworthy. It is a nuisance having to keep the trailer roadworthy when the journey from home to the launching ramp is about eight kilometres. I have not weighed the boat and trailer, but it probably exceeds two tonnes. For that weight, I need a tandem trailer with independently operated brakes on all wheels, including a 'Break away' system.

I think that is about all for now. Best wishes for your approaching journey.

From Nick and Robin."

. Peter Bruce – "Hi Paul.

Glad to hear you are getting some quality time off for yourself.

Well-deserved and enjoy. Attached is a photo of Larry Bridge and myself at the Laurieton RSL Sub-branch Vietnam Veterans Service and luncheon held on 18 August. Larry and I are both members of the Sub-branch. Unfortunately on that day, the wind played havoc with the set-up of our normal Service location at our local memorial and we moved inside at the last minute. The Sub-branch President, Buster Beatty, OAM, gave an excellent address during the service, emphasising Veterans and activities post-Vietnam.

Larry and I are both doing well and Larry is still shooting at a local rifle range once a week. His knowledge on small arms and in fact on many weapons, is outstanding. I think one would struggle to find a more astute authority on all aspects of small arms. I have stepped down from RSL Sub-branch duties and will step back from Legacy duties towards the end of the year. It's time to look after me and spend more time with family. Like many ESOs, the Sub-Branch and Legacy Clubs, find it hard to attract younger Veterans to the fold.

One question that was asked recently at a Gunner Dinner hosted by the Australian Artillery Association, was where was the Detachments Command Post in Nui Dat? I worked for most of my tour in Arty Tac and recall we had a 131 Detachment Signaller near us. Perhaps someone could elaborate a bit?

Best wishes from Lake Cathie and enjoy your holiday.

Peter

Peter Bruce, OAM, JP President, 4th Field Regiment (SVN) Old Boys"



. Phil Connor – “Giddyay, Helen and Paul.

Great to hear from you both and your combined activities, well partially combined, with the lone figure of Paul walking down the 18th, trying to find another lost ball, and looking over, in keen anticipation, to the 19th.

As I said previously have had a torrid time with the 3 separate spine operations over the last 16 mths and with a long recovery for the final one. Just returned to driving, slight gardening, little jobs around the house, but not back at bowls, ATM. Neuro said "head in too many scrums".

Still maintaining my Headland golf club membership, however do not think I will return to golf. Miriam is good at the moment especially given her ongoing conditions.

Sunny and clear here on the Sunnie Coast and 28 degrees today. Last Sunday we had a massive thunder storm with lightning (very, very frightening) and torrential rain, filled up the gardening water tank. A lot of development going on up here, residential, commercial and industrial, with the slow grinding infrastructure of local and state governments doing or not doing the usual band-aids. They just do not get it right.

Enjoy your holiday. Have a great time.

Cheers Miriam and Phil.”

Phil continues...Harry Smith - Paul, sending this on to you for possible inclusion in newsletter. Met Harry on a number of occasions here on Sunnie Coast at various attendances, Anzac day, Vietnam memorials at Cotton Tree cenotaph.

A gentleman. UBIQUE. Phil

...the following is a Footnote -

Lieutenant Colonel Harry Arthur Smith, SG, MC (25 July 1933 – 20 August 2023) was a senior officer in the Australian Army, seeing service during the Malayan Emergency and the Vietnam War. He was the Officer Commanding D Company, 6th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (D Coy, 6 RAR) during the Battle of Long Tan on 18 August 1966. He passed 20th August, 2023 (aged 90) in Buderim, Queensland.

. Mike Butler – “Hi Paul

Thanks for your latest note.

Well things are looking up as Spring is on the way !! Attended a service at the local Box Hill RSL on the 18th August - cold, windy and wet but a good ceremony. Several RSL members went to Canberra and reported that it was a well organised event.

Not doing a lot at home except gardening and a few of the usual medical appointments.

As mentioned previously, six ex-131rs met at Bendigo between 4 - 7 Sept for a get together. Four of our six wives were able to attend. All of us were from 70/71 and have not met since 2019 due to Covid and other issues so we were interested to know how much we had all changed !! We attended the usual tourist attractions in Bendigo such as the Chinese Museum, Bendigo pottery, Buddhist temple and had lunch on the last day at the historical Shamrock Hotel. Those attending were Pete and Fran Saint, Les and Helen Falkai, John and Vicki Jaggard, Joe Molenkamp, Rieny Nieuwenhof and Mick and Michelle Butler. I have attached two photos taken at the Shamrock Hotel - one of the 6 blokes and one of blokes and wives.



At left: Back Row L-R: Joe Molenkamp, Les Falkai, Rieny Nieuwenhof.
Front Row L-R: Pete Saint, John Jaggard, Mick Butler.



At right: Back row - Joe Molenkamp, Les Falkai, Rieny Nieuwenhof.
Middle Row - Pete Saint, John Jaggard, Mick Butler.
Front Row - Vicki Jaggard, Helen Falkai, Michelle Butler, Fran Saint.

We all had a great time and agreed to meet next year, somewhere !!

All for now. Cheers, Mick Butler”

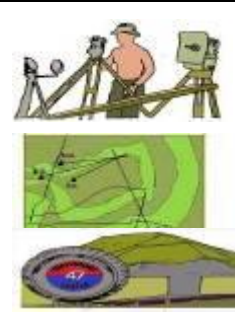
Notice Board – Hey, see what's coming up?

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

Pete Ravelje sent in a correction - An update of a notice in August's Eyes & Ears –

“A local QLD reunion is being proposed by G Williams for 131 guys at the Gold Coast “Greenmount” on 10/9/2023.

It should have read – 10th November, 2023



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, Vic Nth – Ron Mason, WA - Barry Guzder

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

50 Years
April 1966 - April 2016



find us on

Facebook

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

131 Locators Association Meeting Date: Tuesday, 12th August, 2023 at 1105hrs...

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

Attendees were: Allen Morley, Grahame Dignam, Gordon Malcolm, Bob Billiards, Ernest Newbold, Ged Carroll, Merv Nairn and Ian Amos.

Zoomed members were: Brian Campbell, Bert Blink, Ron Mason, Terry Erbs, Barry Guzder and Rieny Nieuwenhof.



Apologies: George Lane, Paul Dickson, Iain Kennedy, K Browning, Nick Proskurin, Steve Wynn, Warwick Brooker other State Reps and Jim Fitzgerald.

Financial Membership is currently ... **128** plus Associates **2** plus Affiliates **16** Total **146** Plus Lapsed as at 1/09/2023 **36**

President's report: Allen advised.

. **He and the Grahame Dignam** had attended a Vietnam Vets day at Canterbury Hurlstone Park RSL on Sunday 13 August. The focus of the event was Our Gunner **Ernest Newbold** who featured in a Presentation and reflection on his war service in SVN.

. Allen also advised that as he is moving to a new location the postal address for the Association needs to be changed. This will be addressed at the AGM.

. Allen advised he had issues when he notified the DVA that he was travelling overseas. Consequently, he was provided with a list of his pertinent pension details. On inspection, all the details were incorrect. He advised caution if anyone takes the same course of action.

Public Officer Report. Gordon had a quiet period with no issues to report.

Webmaster Update: Bob advised Facebook members are stable around 370 and that the Newsletter has again been the main feature. A couple of members have been managed out due to inappropriate postings and another couple have been barred due to attempts to sell merchandise to our membership.

Health Report:

. **Merv Nairn** reported that he his operation went well and will have a yearly follow up. The surgeon removed 1 of 4 glands in his throat causing the problem but the others are functioning OK.

. **Terry Erbs** was advised by **Jesse Owen** that **Russell Jackson** and **Michael Quinlan** were not so well and could do with a cheerio call from mates.

. Most other members are in manageable health with no serious on-going concerns.

General Business and around the grounds:

Discussions ensued on the following:

. Canberra reunion event discussed-. The Sec/Treas, **Grahame Dignam**, was embarrassed by the positive comments which were noted and appreciated.

. **Terry Erbs** advised a local QLD reunion is being proposed by **G Williams** for 131 guys at the Gold Coast "Greenmount" over 10/11 November2023.

. **Grahame Dignam** advised that **Dave Doyle** had gifted a number of printed photos depicting equipment used by the Battery over time. We have some 27 unique photos suitable for inclusion in the Album that need to be identified and described. More to come on this subject.

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, 11th October, 2023 at 1100hrs

Venue: to be advised

Also, available via Zoom link to be advised



. Birthdays in the Battery...October –

Date	Name	Regt No	SVN In	SVN Out	Comments
1	IAN BRIGNELL	2789405	20 01 1969	21 01 1970	
2	TERRY BRUCE	2783213	05 05 1967	30 01 1968	
2	PETER TEATHER	3790242	12 04 1968	06 08 1968	
2	LESLIE ROBINSON	217662	09 12 1968	28 11 1969	
3	WELCOME HOME	ALL	1966	1971	Det 131
4	LEIGH HEMMING	1732039	04 05 1967	12 12 1967	†02.03.18
4	MICHAEL LUFF	2783725	02 01 1967	27 09 1967	
4	DAVID LAHORE	3791183	02 09 1968	04 03 1969	
5	JAMES MERCHANT	2788817	18 12 1968	28 11 1969	
7	GARY CHILLINGSWORTH	313477	29 11 1970	05 08 1971	
8	JOHN O'NEILL	243505	09 11 1970	11 11 1970	
	" "		11 03 1971	12 05 1971	RAEME
9	BRIAN SMYTHE	1201484	02 09 1968	03 12 1969	
10	BRIAN KENNEDY Capt.	213488	02 03 1965	11 03 1965	3 RAR
	" "		26 08 1969	27 08 1970	131

10	PAUL DICKSON	1732012	04 05 1967	12 12 1967	
10	BARRY BONSER	37661	03 01 1967	27 09 1967	† 03.09.98
11	PAUL JONES	216324	22 04 1966	30 04 1967	† 09.09.68
11	JEFFREY EVANS Maj	3789164	10 02 1971	02 06 1971	† 23.12.11
	" "		02 06 1971	02 11 1971	12 Fd Regt.
12	ALAN CLEASBY WO2	36053	02 12 1968	10 12 1969	131
	" " "		11 06 1972	20 11 1972	AATTV
12	BARRY EDWARD FOUNTAIN	3798485	03 03 1971	20 08 1971	† 12.05.22
	" "		21 08 1971	30 10 1971	Det131/12 Fd Regt.
13	PETER SALI	1735560	24 02 1970	18 02 1971	† 10 03 2016
13	DENNIS AVERY	4720906	19 08 1970	09 06 1971	4 Fd Regt.
14	ANTHONY DODDS	16776	04 05 1967	02 04 1968	
14	NORMAN LINDROOS	3410957	20 05 1968	24 05 1969	
14	PETER McGANN	55672	27 11 1969	19 11 1970	
16	WILLIAM THOMAS	16727	{07 01 1967	19 03 1967	1ARU
	" "		{20 03 1967	26 09 1967	
17	TORIN WHITE	218372	21 02 1969	25 02 1970	
18	HELMUT LEMPA	38120	20 05 1966	06 12 1966	† Unknown
18	ARTHUR JUX "TED"	2792371	29 04 1970	18 03 1971	
19	IAN FINLAY	2412363	27 11 1967	19 11 1968	
20	ROBERT HARRIS Sgt.	213514	10 02 1971	29 07 1971	
22	STEPHEN WYNN	2251369	CMF 130 BTY		
23	JOHN VITKOVSKY	4718271	02 03 1967	12 03 1968	
23	NORMAN BULLEN	214545	20 05 1966	11 12 1966	
22	IAN BOARD	213879	22 04 1966	11 12 1966	
25	DEREK SMITH	1108315	N/A		131 1990'S
25	MICHAEL DELANEY	2789205	17 02 1969	28 11 1969	† 17.02.13
28	MICHAEL BOHL	1411182	08 02 1968	17 12 1968	† 15.06.93
28	DAVID DOYLE Sgt.	17760	{22 04 1966	11 12 1966	
	" "		{24 09 1970	08 02 1971	
28	IAN MURLEY	38503	12 04 1968	23 04 1969	
28	PAUL TYS Lt.	235362	17 03 1969	18 03 1970	
29	JAMES "ZEKE" RITCHIE Sgt.	2411899	21 05 1969	09 04 1970	
29	PETER LARKIN	3793067	08 11 1968	19 11 1969	
30	GRAHAM O'TOOLE	61497	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 isn'tt great, maybe time will solve this problem.

. **Locator Profiles** – we've received **175** and we've sent out **175**. 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.



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 Dignan: 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



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>



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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