

THE EYES and EARS

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

**Detachment 131 Divisional
Locating Battery RAA
South Vietnam 1966 – 1971
2024
58 Years and the Detachment
Spirit Remains**



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



FSB Lion 1967



The "delivery" service



A "repair" job required!



LP 31F FSB Coral 1968



**Bomana War Cemetery -
19 Km from Port Moresby,
Papua New Guinea...**

Photo: Terry Erbs

**Terry Erbs – the following
was extracted from his**

ANZAC Day service involvement on Facebook...

Up at 3.30am for **Bomana Cemetery PNG**, for foggy 5am Dawn service and laid a wreath on behalf LSTAA and 20th Regiment RAA.

Also honoured the service of **my father, Harry Erbs** 2/4th Field Regiment, **Uncle Cecil Hucker** 2/2nd Infantry Battalion and **Uncle Alfred Salkeld** POW 'F' Force Thai-Burma Railway.

The cemetery is the largest Australian war grave site overseas, with over 3,500 graves. **"Lest we forget."**



A brief History of the Bomana War Cemetery - 19 Km from Port Moresby...

After the Japanese landed at Lae and Salamaua in March 1942, Port Moresby became their chief objective. They decided to attack by sea, and assembled an amphibious expedition for the purpose, which set out early in May, but they were intercepted and heavily defeated by American air and naval forces in the Coral Sea, and what remained of the Japanese expedition returned to Rabaul. After this defeat they decided to advance on Port Moresby overland and the attack was launched from Buna and Gona in September 1942.

Early in 1942, and almost without resistance, the Japanese established a considerable force and developed a useful base on Bougainville, the largest and most northerly of the Solomon Islands. This they held until Americans and Australians began offensive operations towards the end of 1943, when Bougainville was the only one of these islands remaining in Japanese hands. By August 1945, when the Japanese surrendered, most of the island had been recovered.

Those who died in the fighting in Papua and Bougainville are buried in PORT MORESBY (BOMANA) WAR CEMETERY, their graves brought in by the Australian Army Graves Service from burial grounds in the areas where the fighting had taken place.

The unidentified soldiers of the United Kingdom forces were all from the Royal Artillery, captured by the Japanese at the fall of Singapore; they died in captivity and were buried on the island of Bailale in the Solomons. These men were later re-buried in a temporary war cemetery at Torokina on Bougainville Island before being transferred to their permanent resting place at Port Moresby.

The cemetery contains 3,824 Commonwealth burials of the Second World War, 699 of them unidentified. There is also 1 Non war and 1 Dutch Foreign National burials here. The cemetery was designed by Mr. A.G. Robertson and was unveiled by the Governor-General of Australia, Field Marshal Slim, on 19 October 1953.

The PORT MORESBY MEMORIAL stands behind the cemetery and commemorates almost 750 men of the Australian Army (including Papua and New Guinea local forces), the Australian Merchant Navy and the Royal Australian Air Force who lost their lives in the operations in Papua and who have no known graves. Men of the Royal Australian Navy who died in the south-west Pacific region, and have no known grave but the sea, are commemorated on the Plymouth Naval Memorial in England, along with many of their comrades of the Royal Navy and of other Commonwealth Naval Forces. Bougainville casualties who have no known graves are commemorated on a memorial at Suva, Fiji.

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Terry Erbs continues on with his journey in Papua New Guinea...

Port Moresby ANZAC Day 2024

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

There are three war cemeteries in Papua New Guinea, the largest being Bomana at Port Moresby and the others are at Lae and Rabaul with more than 8,000 Australian war graves. Those interred died in campaigns, fought between January 1942 and August 1945, to evict the Japanese from Papua and New Guinea. For most Australians the word Kokoda evokes the horror, stoicism and bravery displayed by our troops. Over three years of war, men fought and died across this rugged country, from the coastal swamps of Milne Bay over the highlands and valleys that divide the country and up to the north coast.

After the Japanese landed at Lae and Salamaua in March 1942, the coastal town of Port Moresby became their chief objective. The Japanese planned to attack by sea, and assembled an amphibious expedition for this purpose, but they were intercepted and defeated by American air and naval forces in what became known as the "Battle of the Coral Sea". After the Japanese seawards advance was defeated, they decided to advance on Port Moresby overland, across the forbidding Owen-Stanley range via the Kokoda Track with their advance beginning at Buna and Gona in September 1942. Confident, after having defeated almost every land force they had so far encountered, few Japanese could have imagined how bitter their experience on the Track would be. Months of fighting followed, initially against inexperienced Australian and Papuan troops, who retreated before the Japanese advance, stopping only to fight desperate rear-guard actions. As reinforcements bolstered both forces the fighting intensified, but when the Japanese were almost in sight of their objective, they were ordered to retreat. They had been exhausted by months of combat, by disease and by the very terrain over which they fought. They had outrun their supply lines and could expect neither further reinforcements nor provisions. Now the Australians went on the offensive, retaking Kokoda in November and driving their Japanese foe back to the point from which their advance had been launched just months before.

Kokoda may be the defining battle of the New Guinea campaign, but equally vicious battles followed, at places such as Wau and Salamaua, in the Markham Valley, at Sattleberg and at Shaggy Ridge, and on the Huon Peninsula. Across the sea on Bougainville, the largest and most northerly of the Solomon Islands group, the Japanese had established a base in 1942 and fighting continued there until 1945. By then the war had moved on and American and Allied forces were engaged in bloody battles just a few hundred kilometres from Japan's home islands, but still men continued to fight and die here in New Guinea and on Bougainville.

Those who lost their lives fighting in New Guinea and Bougainville are mainly buried in the Bomana War Cemetery. The exhumed fallen were brought in by the Australian Army Graves Service from the many smaller burial grounds where the battles had been fought.



This year we were with family for ANZAC Day in Port Moresby for the 82nd commemoration of the New Guinea campaign. We were up at 3.30am and drove 19km north from Port Moresby to the Bomana War Cemetery for the Dawn service. It is the largest Australian war grave site overseas and contains 3,824 Commonwealth graves from the Second World War, of which 699 are unidentified soldiers. We've previously visited overseas cemeteries administered by the Australian War Graves Commission and continue to be impressed by their work on our behalf, reverently maintaining the graves and grounds of our fallen.

At 5am, on a foggy morning, the Dawn service commenced with the mounting of the Catafalque Party by the Australian

The hostile nature of Papua New Guinea's terrain contributed to the large number of infantry casualties. Advancing along a narrow front, sometimes literally as wide as a foot track, progress was measured by the speed at which a man could walk. Only through vicious, close-quarter fighting were the Japanese dislodged from their well-sited and strongly defended foxholes or bunkers.





Chief of Royal Australian Air Force, Air Marshal Robert Chipman, AO, CSC (centre right), Chief of Royal New Zealand Air Force Air Vice Marshal Darryn Webb, MNZM (centre left) and Papua New Guinea's Acting Chief of Defence Force, Commodore Philip Polewara, DMS, MBE (left) along with Mrs Alyce Chipman, pay their respects at the ANZAC Day Dawn Service at Bomana War Cemetery, Papua New Guinea. [Airforce media images]



Federation Guard, under the command of Sergeant from 1st Regiment RAA. [we had met the "boys" the previous day, they were staying at the Hilton, the best pub in town!]. During the traditional service, both High Commissioner's and the Chief of Airforce from NZ & Australia did readings and gave speeches. [I think the services' chiefs rotate ANZAC Day duties. It was the Air Force's turn in PNG this year and its media staff were present to capture the event!].

Our PM was rumoured to be attending the Dawn service at Bomana, but as planned he and PNG PM attended the Dawn Service at Isurava. Our PM flew immediately afterwards to attend the traditional post march 'two up' with veterans in Townsville. [he gets around!]

The wreath laying part of the Dawn service was very moving, with several families laying wreaths on behalf of relatives. Despite providing details to the RSL, the MC announced only that the wreath I laid was on behalf of 20th Regiment RAA. However, the attached card on the wreath did include the LSTAA and that I was honouring the service of my father, Harry Erbs 2/4th Field Regiment, Uncle Cecil Hucker 2/2nd Infantry Battalion and Uncle Alfred Salkeld POW "F" Force Thai-Burma Railway.



L to R ...Harry Erbs, Cecil Hucker & Alfred Salkeld

After the service we mixed with other guests and spoke to The Federation Guard and the Australian War Graves representative, complimenting both for making the service so impressive. Also spoke to the President of the Port Moresby RSL, Glen Maitland LM ex8/9 RAR, thanking him for allowing me to lay a wreath. This sub branch is only 1 of 3 outside Australia, the others being in NZ and UK! Interestingly a team of Australian military Doctors and researchers were present for the service and they are in PNG to continue the study of Tropical diseases such as malaria and dengue fever. During WW2 some units in the Pacific suffered losses of up to 30% due to tropical diseases & dysentery which continue to be of concern to the modern Army. Also of interest were the number of trekking companies, whose clients having completed the Kokoda trek, ended the tour by joining the Dawn service at Bomana.

For those who are interested I recommend several good documentaries to watch on "YouTube"....
The story of 75 Squadron [Port Moresby A/P is named Jackson Field after 75Sqn CO KIA]
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fm0egzs8HmA>



Aust. Army Doc of the Kokoda campaign Episode 3 - Australia's Kokoda Campaign

After the service we drove back to the Royal Papua Yacht Club for a late breakfast, including a generous nip of “Bundy Rum” in the coffee. The Club has always been the traditional meeting place for colonial administrators and expats. After independence in 1975, it has gained many local affluent members and remains a favourite meeting place & “watering hole”.



The locals’ are passionate about the NRL and coincidentally there are currently discussions of having a PNG team to join our national competition by 2027.....the major stadium in Port Moresby has a capacity of 15,000 and I watched early morning training from the balcony.
Terry Erbs.

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Nui Dat Formation and History – extracts from the AWM Archives

Part 3 - Withdrawal

The Australian withdrawal started in November 1970. As a consequence of the overall US strategy of Vietnamization and with the Australian government keen to reduce its own commitment to the war, 8 RAR was not replaced at the end of its tour of duty. 1 ATF was again reduced to just two infantry battalions, albeit with significant armour, artillery and aviation support remaining.^[54] One of the New Zealand infantry companies—W Company—was also withdrawn at this time. Australian combat forces were further reduced during 1971 as part of a phased withdrawal. The Battle of Nui Le on 21 September proved to be the last major battle fought by Australian and New Zealand forces in the war, and resulted in five Australians being killed and 30 wounded. The New Zealand SAS troop was withdrawn in February and the artillery battery in May. Finally, on 16 October Australian forces handed over control of the base at Nui Dat to South Vietnamese forces, while 4 RAR, the last Australian infantry battalion in South Vietnam, sailed for Australia onboard HMAS Sydney on 9 December 1971. V Company and the New Zealand medical team were also withdrawn at this time. Meanwhile, D Company, 4 RAR with an assault pioneer and mortar section and a detachment of APCs remained in Vung Tau protect the task force headquarters and 1 ALSG until the final withdrawal of stores and equipment could be completed, finally returning to Australia on 12 March 1972.

Although 1 ATF had been able to dominate its area of operations and successfully reduced the PAVN/VC's ability to "influence and coerce" the population of the province, while affording the South Vietnamese government some degree of control, this did not last following their withdrawal, and PAVN/VC forces began to move back into Phuoc Tuy following their departure. Ultimately, despite maintaining a reputation for professionalism, the operations of the task force had little impact on the outcome of the war.

Between June 1966 and December 1971, 1 ATF recorded at least 3,370 PAVN/VC killed, the majority in Phuoc Tuy, while an unknown number were wounded.

Total Australian Army casualties during the Vietnam War were 478 killed and 3,025 wounded, the bulk of which were sustained by 1 ATF.

New Zealand casualties during the war were 37 killed and 187 wounded, the majority of which while serving in 1 ATF.

See also: Order of battle of Australian forces during the Vietnam War

1 ATF's organisation varied as Australian and New Zealand units rotated through South Vietnam and the total size of the Australian and New Zealand force in South Vietnam changed. The task force typically consisted of:

- Headquarters Company 1 ATF;
- Two or three infantry battalions;
- One field artillery regiment (with one New Zealand field battery and a US medium artillery battery attached);
- Det 131 Div Loc Bty RAA
- One field squadron (engineers): 1 Field Squadron;
- One engineer support troop: 21 Engineer Support Troop;
- One construction engineer squadron: 17th Construction Squadron;
- One APC Squadron (M-113);
- One Armoured Squadron (Centurion tanks);
- One Australian SAS Squadron;
- One Signals Squadron;
- 1st Australian Task Force Logistics Company; and
- 161 Reconnaissance Flight (Bell Sioux Light Observation Helicopters, Cessna 180s, a Cessna Bird Dog and a Pilatus PC-6 Porter)

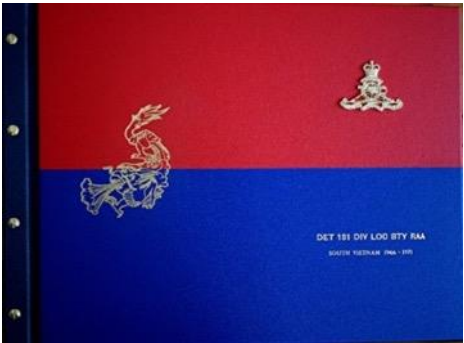
New Zealand forces attached to 1 ATF included:

- One to two rifle companies (W and V Company, Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment);
- One artillery battery (161st Battery, Royal New Zealand Artillery); and
- One New Zealand SAS troop.

The Australian Army Training Team Vietnam (AATTV) was separate from 1 ATF and reported directly to the Australian Force Vietnam (AFV) headquarters located in Saigon which provided administrative support to all Australian forces in South Vietnam.^[68] The 1st Australian Civil Affairs Unit (1 ACAU) was established in 1967 and worked closely with 1 ATF; however, it was also under the command of AFV.^[69] No. 9 Squadron RAAF operating Iroquois utility helicopters was based at Vung Tau and operated in support of 1 ATF.

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. **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”

This Project is being re-ignited for 2024.

Our current list contains the names of **96** Locators (as at 31.05.2024) that we have not had contact with since, basically, commencing communications in 2012, so, we are going to focus a little more on this programme to try and reduce this number.

Let’s have a look at May’s Birthday List, below, where there are 13 Detachment and Battery Members listed as Lost Locators – see the names below.

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

However, this doesn’t mean that we still have contact with the total number of Battery/Detachment members we have Located over time as continuing correspondence has lapsed in a lot of cases. **I have 252 recipients (Association**

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

1	Geoffrey David Sullivan	3798292	02 12 1970	03 05 1971	Melbourne 131
	" "		03 05 1971	20 10 1971	12 Fd Regt.
	Keith Edward White	2783029	17 04 1967	13 12 1967	Belmore, NSW AACC
15	Edwards John Webb T/Bdr	29964	27 01 1970	21 01 1971	Braidwood, NSW
26	Lindsay Maxwell Mead T/Bdr	3790714	27 03 1968	26 04 1968	Benella, Vic

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

Paul Dickson

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

. 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

Vic Danko sent the following article – it's a good "History" read...

The story behind the photo.. taken by Hubert Van Eis on the afternoon of 29 April 1975

"Operation Frequent Wind."

Most have seen the iconic photo of the Air America helicopter rescuing Vietnamese from the rooftop of 22 Gia Long Street (now 22 Ly Tu Trong St) which was the apartment called the Pittman Apartments, housing employees of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) with the top floor reserved for the CIA's Deputy Chief of Station.

The "back" story of this photo is a little more complex than it appears...

By April 1970 the US was well aware that Saigon was doomed and its fall was inevitable and as a result USMC Colonel Al Grey, on 6 April, had flown over the buildings leased by the US Government checking the rooftops as to their viability as landing zones for helicopter evacuation when the time came to leave..

After Grey had submitted a list of buildings Air America pilots Burke and Fillipi inspected 13 of the sites for suitability, checking for strength, obstructions etc..

22 Gia Long Street was one of those chosen and American contractors built the staircases to the top of the elevator shaft which would serve as the LZ.. these were not rickety wooden ladders but substantial staircases big enough to take four abreast if needed with handrails and the steps close enough together so they could also be used by children and the elderly.

When Ambassador Martin found out about the roof top LZ's through the city he was furious stating this sign of America's impending departure would lower the morale of South Vietnamese Troops and make Americans the possible targets for revenge shootings. The Ambassador had also refused to allow them to pre-position drums of fuel on the designated roof tops which would have allowed more rescue flights. As for the landing zone markings the Air America pilots ignored him went and painted the "H" in Dayglo paint anyway..

Now for the photo.. the man in the white shirt helping people up the last section of the ladder is Oren Bartholomew "O.B" Harnage, the US Embassies deputy air operations officer.. former USN who had been wounded at Okinawa in WW2 and now wore a black eye patch as a result.. At this time he had served in Vietnam and Laos for 7 years..

Earlier in the day, the CIA chief of station, Thomas Polgar, had ordered him to commandeer one of the Air America's helicopters to fly out Polgar's friends and senior South Vietnamese officials.. Harnage decided that this would not happen, first in, first served.. To the extent he punched out a burly Korean diplomat who had elbowed women and children aside and threw his three suitcases, heavy with gold off the roof..

This last flight shown in the photo was an Air America Huey flown by Bob Caron, a West Point graduate and Vietnam Veteran and Jack Hunter... because most of the passengers were Vietnamese Harnage could get up to 20 on board. On earlier flights when Caron was shuttling them from 22 Gia Long St to the Embassy Compound he would ride standing on the skids with the passengers holding his arms..

So the last flight is photographed..

And in that photo where Harnage can be seen reaching down to grab Dr. Thiet-Tan Nguyen who would become an anaesthesiologist in Southern California, next was Dr. Tong Huynh who would practise family medicine in Atlanta, next was Tuyet Dong Bui, a teenage girl who would earn a degree in micro biology and later become a biotech researcher... below her was her brother and below him was the South Vietnamese Minister of Defence, Tran Van Don, who recently told the South Vietnamese soldiers "In the coming hours, in the coming days, I will be by your side". The others are unknown. As they lifted off for the last time, almost out of fuel and about to head out for the US Fleet Carin looked down at those on the on the ladder who would not get the chance to fly to freedom, some destined for up to 17 years in Hanoi's re-education camps, people looking up, waiting in vain for the helicopters that would not return.



Bob Billiards – Bob is responding to a question I had as to two photos, one of which I've used into the group below the *Eyes and Ears* Banner on page one of this edition...

"Paul,
Both photos are taken at FSB Coral and the lines of LP 31F. LP 31D was somewhere else and I think the tent in the background of the photo #69 is near the FSB headquarters. That photo is of the four living quarters from R to L John Bayford, me, Stan (Pablo) Briggs and in the background Nick Armstrong. The second photo (#70) is a different view with the commencement of our weapon pit and LP behind the tree stump on the left. Nick is having morning tea while Pablo, John and I are filling sandbags for the overhead cover.
For the hydrologists in the group, Pablo's trench used to get water flowing into it but the rest of us were fine so he must have dug into the water table. We were in the lines of HQ Company infantry which was the spare company to provide replacements to all the Infantry regiments at 1ATF. The CSM of HQ Company was really impressed by our LP as we had an access trench into it. He said our WWI grandfathers would have been proud of us.

31F moved from Coogee to Coral when 3RAR moved to Balmoral with the tanks as fire support. I was a reo for Bluey Peisley who went back to Nui Dat to go on R&R so spent some time at Coogee and then at Coral. From a poor memory I went to Coogee on 16th May.

Some others who were at Coral might be able to verify that towards the end of the operation we were flown in hot evening meals and at one stage we could order two cans of beer – warm VB. On the Viet Nam Heritage Facebook site, they had a post where VB cans were excavated from the FSB Balmoral site. A few blokes posted that there was no Beer at FSB's. I posted that we could at some stage buy two cans at FSB Coral as I remember buying one and one only then the next delivery Coca Cola. Bob."

#70



#69



. Unknown Dates of Deaths continues to be updated...as at 31.05 2024 -

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	0	1	0	2	0	1	0	7
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	0	10
1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	
3	2	2	2	0	3	2	1	2	1	18
2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	
0	4	4	4	2	9	5	6	5	4	43
2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	
8	4	4	5	6	7	10	8	0	0	52
Unknowns*										2
Total										138

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 ??,??,2024.

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

This following sections have now been updated as of ??,??,2024 and show a clear picture of Battery/Detachment Members that have incomplete Date of Death details.

Here are the names and details –

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

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

Ed - As a closing thought, can 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
O'Keefe, Michael Francis	Gnr	2787168		1968-69	26.11.46	00.00.80

Ed – Michael O'Keefe, sadly, remains as the last Locator to have his details updated. Our thanks go to those that have given more meaning to those "mates" who are no longer physically with us.

. Quiz Time.



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

Bill Taggart (1st/83rd US Artillery) replies to the "Quiz Time" article in April's *Eyes & Ears* with regards to the US Draft...

"Paul, in the latest issue of *E&E* is a "Quiz Time" regarding the US Draft.

FYI, I was drafted in Feb 1966. The Lottery system which you reference was implemented later as was mentioned whereby every eligible person was assigned a lottery number. Before that time, unless you had some type of deferment it was up to your local draft board to pick who was going to be drafted. It was hardly a perfect system as it often depended on who you knew whether you would be drafted or not. I grew up with 3 other guys in the same neighbourhood and I was the only one drafted. Lucky me!! Bill."

Mail Call...

Just some Community Mail shared by some May '67 travellers...

Ernie Newbold started it off with...

"G'day Allen,

This day also became well known as "Star Wars Day" ...May the fourth be with you !

Yes the memories of May the fourth 1967 have now returned thanks to your prompt, something that was new and unexperienced, heading off into the wild blue yonder and the following day we were set to travel in cargo class, courtesy of the RAAF to land at Vung Tau. For many of us it was because we had won a prize in the National Service Lottery. We may not have realised it at the time but we were to become lifelong friends due to that experience.

Lest we forget.

Regards,
Ernie."

...Allen Morley responds...

"Grahame, Paul and Ernie

All those years ago. A Sydney day, an Ansett DC-6B, a group of diggers in greens and the farewell entourage. We didn't know what was ahead of us but were enthusiastic for the challenge.

Today, more aged, we experience a soggy Sydney day and think back to those 60th decade of 20th Century days. Enjoy your May 4th.

Best wishes
Am."

...then Grahame Dignam adds more...

"Hello all,

My thoughts turn to my family and friends who farewelled us on that May day on the journey of our lives.

As a boy growing up in the country I dreamt of going to

Sydney and Luna Park but never heard of South Vietnam, Vung Tau or Nui Dat.

Self, Dad, Mum and late brother David





The actual DC6B

My first sight of a different country was a blurred vision of the Celebes Islands from 28,000ft.

Then the time lapse fades and here we are again still engaged with old mates....I also say "May the 4TH be with you " and many more.....

Thank you for your friendship and support over the years. Very kind regards."

... I couldn't help myself to mumble on...

"Well, Ernie, what a great start to a memorial type day.

I was distracted by farewelling family to think much about the day. It wasn't until we boarded the DC6B and managed to sit in the lounge area - never done it before or since!

I think the first real shock came when the back of the RAAF flight door was opened and we were greeted by blokes in black outfits wearing coolie hats!

I'd been on a brief pre-em leave trip to Lindeman Island with Leigh Hemming (late) and Tony Goldsmith



and caught up with our families in Brisbane (together at a dinner)



then had a farewell night with (L to R) Al Adams, a friend of Peter Fetcher's, Pete Fletcher, Leigh Hemming (late) Roger McDonel, me and Tony Goldsmith.



Leigh Hemming (late) Tony Goldsmith and me at Mascot

I have to smile at the ID stuff we were given - I've now shrunk and the hair isn't brown any more.

NAME		DESCRIPTION	
NOM		SIGNALEMENT	
Paul Granville DICKSON			
Lieu et Date de Naissance			
Brisbane, Qld., Australia. 10 October 1945			
Place and Date of Birth	Height	Colour of Hair	Colour of Eyes
	5 feet 9 1/2 inches	Light Brown	Green
Occupation	Profession	Visible Peculiarities	Signes Particuliers
A.M.F.			
Children	Enfants	Date of Birth	Date de Naissance
Name	Nom		
WARNING: ENTRIES MUST NOT BE ALTERED OR SUPPLEMENTED. ADDITIONS MAY BE MADE ONLY BY AN AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL.			
PHOTOGRAPH OF BEARER			
PHOTOGRAPHIE DU TITULAIRE			
Sydney			
3 April 1967			
valid until 3 April 1969			
et valide pour cinq (5) ans à partir de cette date.			
An Officer duly authorized under Section 7 of the Passports Act 1938-1948			
SIGNATURE OF BEARER			
SIGNATURE DU TITULAIRE			

No L33689	
Army No. 1732012	Rank Capt
Surname DICKSON	
Christian Name Paul Granville	
Height 5 ft 10 in	Eyes Green
Date of Birth 10/10/45	Hair Brown
Distinguishing Marks	Blood Group
Date of Issue 22/9/66	
Signature <i>P. Dickson</i>	

But the real outcome of that two years was re-uniting with all of you in 1992 when I lived in Sydney.
Thanks for being yourselves. Paul."

...Ernie adds a little more...

"G'day Paul,

Well I do remember a photo my father took that day as we left Sydney bound for Darwin and have spent most of the day searching for it with no luck. So I have downloaded a couple of photos of Ansett DC6Bs from the internet and am attaching them for you. They have the same livery as the one I remember from Dad's photo, so may be suitable for inclusion.

I certainly have no recollection of blokes in dark outfits wearing coolie hats when we arrived at Vung Tau international airport but I do remember how hot it was when we stepped down from the Hercules and all the military aircraft on the ground and in the air.

Regards, Ernie."



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 – "G'day Paul and Helen.

Thanks for the update. Glad your operation went well, Dicko, and the prostate is still in order. My PSA hasn't risen, but those tablets you mention might lessen the nocturia! Might have to look into that.



Wow, shaving male kittens! Still have a steady hand, eh?

We've had almost no rain since early April, but there's supposed to be some over the next few days.

I enjoyed a few days with **Bruce Irvine** and family and friends at Bathurst over the ANZAC week.

I was supposed to have my winter flu vaccination yesterday, but came down with a very uncomfortable infection last Friday. (Tested negative to COVID.) So I've had to postpone my vaccination. Probably still need it, as it covers several strains of flu.

Stay well!

Brookey."



...a response to Brookey's comment (above) about yours truly's "shaving small kittens"...here's me at work on one and the black one is another finished product! We sterilized 195 cats and dogs last Saturday, 4th May, with the help of 20 vets and heaps of volunteers.



Wade Cooper – "Thanks for the update, Paul. Sounds busy times!

Same here – work, family, study, and DVA advocacy – enough to keep me busy.

Can't believe its May already..."

Nick Armstrong – "Hello Paul

Thank you for your latest news. Here in South Australia, the only 'Extreme' weather we are experiencing is 'No rain'. We are rationing our rainwater to 'drinking' only. We do have a 'Mains' water supply. Having an adequate supply of rainwater is a domestic choice. Having rainwater throughout the house is beneficial for the plumbing and hot water heater. This is the first time we have used mains water through the house since we dismantled the old house and built this one, eleven years ago. We have 51,000 litres of tank storage, which is usually plenty for domestic use. The garden usually requires some mains water by the end of summer. Long-range weather forecasters are suggesting little chance of rain before June.

News from Australia always seems to be focused on the east coast. South Australia suffers somewhat from the 'Tasmania Syndrome', and is generally disregarded. It is viewed as a vague 'No man's Land', separating Western Australia from 'The Eastern States'.

I am pleased to hear your eye operation was successful. Also, no long-term problems with your prostate. I still have mine, although it required attention about ten years ago. I take a tablet each day, to keep it from enlarging. The medication seems to be doing the job at the moment.

I had my eightieth birthday a week ago. It brought a few unexpected cards from politicians and businesses. I did not notice any differences and the face looking back at me doesn't look any younger, or older for that matter!

I am still doing relief, school bus driving. I thought it was slowing down earlier, but seems to be increasing again. Finding drivers who are prepared to do the work full-time remains the problem. My problem is earning too much money. Last year DVA managed to calculate how much overpaid pension had to be repaid. That was from the previous three years. I anticipate the problem will have to be addressed again, at the end of this financial year.

I still remain active with the North Shields CFS Brigade. Active numbers have been falling, with some members lured to FIFO jobs in mines, have jobs away from Port Lincoln, or shift workers. I live about 200 meters from the fire shed. If I am able to respond, I can get the truck out of the shed and ready to go in about five minutes. Waiting for a crew to arrive may take another five minutes, as most have to travel about 10Km to get to the shed. Depending on the location of the incident, we may collect our crew along the road.

Official fire season has ended, but people do not realise the undergrowth is still as dry as last January. They light up their rubbish heaps, which can quickly spread to the dry fuel nearby. With no good rains forecast, I expect we will have a few more fires before good rains bring safer conditions.

Your animal sterilization programme must have been hectic. Were they strays, or pets. Keeping them controlled while preparing them, must have been interesting, or were they sedated first?

I think that is all for now, keep well both of you, and I look forward to hearing from you later in the year.

Cheers,
Nick."

...An answer to Nick's "sterilisation" questions –

"were they strays?" – No, they're brought in by their owners

"Keeping them controlled while preparing them?" – initially it's amazing how they stand/sit with their owners especially when the dog owner has a cat right beside them!

They get weighed and then sedated with the dose relative to their weight.

"The Deans" – Di and Keith – "Hi Paul

Well we have just had enough rain to last us for a month. We needed rain but not that much.

Keith had his left hip replaced on 24th April, so there was no Anzac Day for him. The hospital did have a small ceremony over their intercom, which was nice. He watched the march on TV and saw his 131 mates marching in Sydney. We are all getting older and the ranks are getting thinner, but that's life.

Sounds like Hel is really involved in the animal welfare there. Good on her for helping out, and you too. What a awful job you had though!!!

Not much else happening here in Newcastle.

Thanks for the email
Di and Keith Dean."

Peter Dealy – "Hello Paul

Thanks for your email.

You are sure getting put thru the wringer at both ends. Hope all goes well.

Yes the tablets for prostate work – utter relief.

Weather – Finally getting some rain in our Goulburn Valley and up into the hills. Badly needed. Currently Australia is definitely "the land of droughts and flooding rains"

Can't say I have castrated any Dogs and Cats, but Male cattle, yes in the early days on the farm, but the castrator rubber rings put on when the Calf or Lamb was very young was the way to go. No fighting.

Sadly in the GV, we have bid farewell to 3 Vets (all ex Infantry) in the last 2 weeks. All were given a very good send off.

Vale Greg, Bill and Harry. Lest we Forget.

Our 3 GVVVA 131 blokes (**Ron Mason, Kevin Heenan** and myself) are batting on with hopefully a long way yet to go in our innings. We still see each other on a very regular basis at the meetings and Social outings. Catch up occasionally with other 131 blokes at State meetings in my role as Secretary GVVVA.

Hope to do a bit of travelling in June / July / August. Have been round Australia twice trying not to cover the same roads and so will be trying to settle in just a couple of spots this time. There are still a few places overseas we would like to visit, but that's in the future.

Well that's about it for the moment Dicko.

All the best health wise. (none of us are getting any younger)

Cheers
Peter Dealy."

Ron Evans – “Always a pleasure to hear from you Dicko.

On the first Monday of each month I lunch with about 10 other gentlemen of equal antiquity. We have an unwritten rule: don't talk health. Every one of us has some damn thing or other. Best to ignore it and just be grateful that we are meeting up one more time.

That said, I am in very good shape. Now tell me Dicko, are your medical expenses a problem? I am immensely grateful that the DVA pays for my every medical/hospital/dental expense; haven't spent a single cent since I turned 70. That Vietnam adventure turned out to be a true blessing for me.

I don't get around much these days. I see as much of the world as I need to via Youtube. And pretty depressing it is too. Trump!! Israel!! Climate change hysteria!! Putin!! FFS.

Take care old friend.”

Phil Connor – “Paul and Helen, giddyay.

Paul, I was 'speed reading' your lengthy email and I picked up 'prostate and shaving the private areas'. Hmmm, thought I had better do a proper read and it all fell into place.

We still have had a slight carry on of muggy weather, but not as tough as the earlier months and, of course, the continuation of rain here on the Sunnie Coast.

Recently, our son and family, in the States, had some close calls with tornadoes moving across their State. Dodged a bullet.

I didn't march at Maroochydhore last year due to the lengthy recovery of my spine operations. I decided to march this year at Buderim, a more simpler march, ending with the ceremony/Service at Buderim State Primary school, amongst the pine trees, each one planted to recognise the loss of service personnel, from the Sunnie Coast area, during WW1.

Miriam insisted I take my willy walker or walking stick to march, I said nobody! boy, didn't I create WW3, with Miriam saying that she would march with me, holding my hand, aahhhh, memories. Overall, a great sunny day.

That is excellent work Helen is doing, she is to be congratulated. Do the male animals say to you "careful of the private parts, please", or "short back and sides, thanks" or do both your hands and arms have a large amount of scratches.

Excellent reading the last newsletter.

That is about it here on the Sunnie Coast. I am now back at Bowls, albeit slowly.

Phil.”

Vic Danko – “Hi Paul , thanks for your note

First a little advice, this pet grooming and preparation for sterilisation you are involved in ... suggest, be careful.

One of these days you're going to get a knock on your door, a big fat cat, probably half drunk ...he starts with

"Remember me ..? You'll shrug ..."Well, have a look at this .." And he drops his pants . "Now it's my turn he shouts and takes out his razor

Etc etc .

I've had my pacemaker replaced. It had a battery life of 10 yrs. I asked the cardiologist what the new battery was like, he said fine. It too has a battery life of 10 yrs

I asked if I could get a discount on the price, I won't be needing it for that long. They could just retrieve and re- sell? No way .

I'm spending more time reading about Bhuddism. I may have mentioned, I went to southern India last year, to a Wellness retreat. Only 2 weeks, with yoga, meditation, diet, scenery, exercise, came home with some new stuff to think about.

My major issue is that I probably consume too much alcohol. I have 1 or 2 beers and a couple of glasses of white wine 5 - 6 time per week .

I argue with myself for doing so. But after golf or when I'm BBQing it's enjoyable. And when I was at the Wellness I didn't think about beer /wine at all - except to joke about opening a bar.

We too have had 2 weeks of non-stop rain. No Golf. I'm off to Thailand 5 June for 2 weeks of golf competition.

Everyone else here is fine. Our daughter has graduated from Sydney Uni with First Class Honours in Software Engineering. Job offers from all over the place Including Europe UK and NY .

Mentioning NY ...I read about stuff there ... what the hell ...I'm glad I got out ...and I hesitate about evening think of visiting ..etc etc .

This place is still better than most ...but, again, there are these darkish clouds on th horizon as to what our mad folk may do in Europe.

And it will hit us here in this land down under .

All the best.”

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

Ernie Newbold forwarded information with regards to the TPI Association , NSW which I have extracted sections which could be of interest to all and sundry...

Some additional comments from Ernie - I am just a "member" who attends meetings once a month along with **Merv Nairn & Ged Carroll**. There are about 35 to 50 Veterans who turn up once a month, mostly from the Vietnam era. Good camaraderie all round with information flowing both ways keeping us informed regarding veterans affairs etc. The TPI Assn. is a national association so we get info. from the national body, not just from NSW. My idea to send you the E-Newsletter was to share some of that info with others who may not be in the TPI loop, so to speak.

Anyone who is receiving the TPI pension is encouraged to join the Association. In NSW the office is in Sydney and the meetings are held on the fourth Tuesday of each month at the Barracks RSL Club (a.k.a. Combined Services RSL) in Barrack Street Sydney. Regional meetings are conducted in NSW from time to time.

Totally and Permanently Incapacitated Veterans' Association of New South Wales Limited

E-Newsletter May 2024

Go to the website below and wander through pertinent information...

Financial and Legal Advice for TPI NSW Members...

Energy Bill Relief for Households - DVA has provided the following advice on a rebate for energy bills...

Free 12 Month Health and Fitness Program for Returned Veterans & Peacekeepers & ADF Firefighter Scheme

Invitation: Totally and Permanently Incapacitated - (TPIs) & Special Rate (SR) Veterans

The Blacktown & District TPI Social & Welfare Club's members invite TPIs/Special Rate (SR) to come and experience our club.

Contact us -

By Post: TPI Veterans' Association of NSW, GPO Box 4429, Sydney NSW 2001

Email: editor@tpinsw.org.au Phone: (02) 9235 1466 Free Call: 1800 649 216 Website: www.tpinsw.org.au

Rieny Nieuwenhof – "Hi Paul,

Find below a copy of our (Geelong Vietnam Veterans). We recently lost another member and his son wrote the main item in the newsletter " Surviving Vietnam" describing what it was like for a child to grow up with a Vietnam veteran who had been exposed to Agent Orange. It is quite powerful and maybe of interest to other vets and their families.

Rieny"...



"THE SLOUCH HAT" – APRIL 2024

VIETNAM VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA – GEELONG & DISTRICT SUB BRANCH

"SURVIVING VIETNAM"...

In memory of my father, Gavin Perkins.

This piece was originally published in 2011: I have grown and changed in many ways since then. I spent the past few years providing care for my father who developed heart failure and faced an aggressive return of the cancer discussed in this story. In some ways, these trials brought us closer together and helped us to have the kind of father-son relationship I had always wanted. One month after his passing, on ANZAC day, I wish to honour my father by sharing his story.

As I sit down with my father to dissect the experiences that shaped his life, I recall many years of stoic, unrelenting distance. In my early years, I was never able to find the validation I sought, nor was he able to connect with me emotionally. My mother endured years of the same before he collected his belongings and hit the road. I still do not know whether to

blame his lack of empathy on the war, or accept it as a character flaw. I remember a time when I used to beat myself up over our capitulating relationship – I needed to make more of an effort, be more of a man. Now I understand that it was a defect all of his own; an emotional defect, many of our interactions simply went over his head. Today marks one of the rare occasions where my father opens up to me. I'd heard the words uttered by others before, but self-admission always bears greater weight. "When I returned", he says, "I was a completely different person." Through his story I begin to understand how.

Gavin Perkins was conscripted in 1968 but his services were deferred until the completion of a carpentry apprenticeship and technician's certificate. A part of him was hoping that the war would be over 18 months later, but alas, it was very much alive. He arrived with the first intake of 1970 in Saigon to the menacing stench of humidity and death. He served for "20 months, three weeks, two hours and six minutes", just shy of the standard 2 year term owing to a change in government. Gavin was initially attached to a field squadron, but this proved to be short-lived at only one day. He views it as a lucky development – tunnels were not the place to be. But as I soon discover, neither were the military camps, nor surrounding villages. Many of the South Vietnamese were Viet Cong associates ready to bite the feeding hands of the national servicemen. Gavin recalls one child whom his platoon had provided meals for suddenly turning malevolent and hurling a grenade in the direction of the unsuspecting soldiers. Thinking fast, two of the men dived through an open doorway, leaving another to bear the greater damage of the explosion. Such events were commonplace. Of the South Vietnamese children, Gavin says, "They were your friends during the day, and they'd be shooting at you and planting mines during the night." A daily sweep of the military parameter usually resulted in the discovery of three to five South Vietnamese bodies. Out of respect to their religious values, the cadavers were gathered by the Australian forces and laid out on the concrete for familial collection and a proper burial. Seeing the deceased's involvement in guerrilla warfare brought much shame to their families.

Unlike the lauded heroes of WWII, the Vietnam Veterans have fought for basic dignity and respect, much less public reverence. Deemed "Child Killers" by the Australian media, the national servicemen were condemned by the average citizen, ostracised by the RSL and at times abandoned by the DVA. This abandonment includes a relentless ignorance in regards to the devastating effects of exposure to the toxic defoliant, Agent Orange. No more than two weeks after spraying foliage with Agent Orange in Vung Tau, Gavin began to vomit blood profusely. Initially misdiagnosed with a peptic ulcer, he was sent to the American Force's hospital for an examination where it was concluded he was simply a hypochondriac. A referral to a shrink ensued and the psychological torment began. He was punished for his 'antics' and exported to the much more hostile warzone of Nui Dat. It would be another 30 years before the true effects of first degree dioxin exposure would manifest in the most venomous manner imaginable.

Returning from the war, soldiers were greeted at air terminals not by the welcome-home festivities afforded by-gone heroes, but by the harsh words of protestors. "How many women did you rape? How many children did you murder?" were some of their jibes. The veterans soon learnt to avoid pubs and bars where scuffles were likely to occur. Their closely shaved heads were enough of an indicator to provoke conflict in most situations. Gavin notes that the public disdain was known to soldiers during their service and consequently, Vietnam was a war fought with little pride. I can't help but feel that this is a huge factor when my father answers my question, "Would you do it over if you had the choice?" with an emphatic "No!" He elaborates, "And I don't know anyone who would, because of the way we were treated when we got back here." Indeed, the Vietnam Veterans still have their detractors to date. Gavin brings to my attention a recent ANZAC day incident which made local headlines where an RSL member openly and aggressively questioned the right of Vietnam Veterans to march alongside the veterans of 'honest wars'.

Diagnosed with oesophageal cancer at the age of 50, surgeons offered Gavin an optimistic one in three chance of survival. He is "100% certain" that the carcinogenic toxin found in Agent Orange, known as dioxin, was responsible for his ailment. Contrary to all medical evidence suggesting this was the case, support from the Australian Federation of Totally and Permanently Incapacitated Ex Servicemen and Women was hard to garner. Indeed, fellow veteran and then DVA employee AJ Brown (real name not used) all but sacrificed his position to secure government support for Gavin in a timely manner. A letter formally acknowledging Gavin's successful application for TPI eligibility simultaneously denied all responsibility for his war-related incapacitation. But was there ever any doubt? In 2008, an independent researcher identified a tenfold increase in cancer rates in the town of Innisfail, Queensland, where Agent Orange testing was secretly conducted during the Vietnam War. The Queensland Health department saw red and swiftly denied the allegations. Negative health implications from Agent Orange exposure continue to surface in the children and grandchildren of Veterans today.

As time passes by and the veterans grow increasingly weary, more guarded truths will inevitably find their way out from under the rug. Gavin believes that in 20 years' time, greater responsibility will be taken on the government's part regarding the health of the waning veterans. But the financial burden is great; so great that it will most likely be another 50 years before the government bows to medical science and acknowledges the damage dealt to other generations too. As a sufferer of the chronic inflammatory bowel disease, Ulcerative Colitis and an autoimmune liver disease called Primary Sclerosing Cholangitis, the issue is particularly close to heart. But the effects are more devastating for some still. Miscarriage was all too common among returned veterans' wives. Photographs depict severely disfigured and still-born babies – the result of prenatal dioxin exposure. One wonders how the more subtle effects can be denied.

As any soldier will tell you, the perils of war continue long after the gunfire has ceased. Some never made it back. 521 Australian soldiers were killed in action. One of these was Gavin's close friend Johnny Niblet, who suffered a fatal headshot just 3 weeks before homecoming. As an infantryman, Niblet was undertaking a routine clearing task when he encountered

a bunker system and came off second best. Gavin is saddened by the circumstances surrounding Niblet's death. "They didn't have to be there, but they didn't want them sitting around camp for three weeks," he says. The official cause of death disclosed to Niblet's family was less traumatic. Gavin watched many of his surviving comrades succumb to alcoholism in the years following the war. "For a lot of the blokes, alcohol was their forget-me-not – to help them forget about it. They didn't conquer their demons," he deduces. I ask him if he conquered his; "99.99 percent," he smiles.

My father does not speak of the war often, but when he does, I see an unmistakable glimmer in his eye, a transparent ghost of a tear yearning to reveal itself, and I hear that telling dip in his voice. I see a young man – just my age – thrown into the deep and left to fend for himself, to see sights that no man should ever see, acquaint himself with a fear that no man should ever know and desensitise himself to the loss of not one life, but thousands of lives. The fond stories he tells of mateship, drinking, the rebellious diggers at basic training, the joyous flight home; they're like diamonds in dust, somehow filtered through the chapped hands of a boy made stern, serious, a completely different person by the incomparable terrors of war. I admire his strength, I understand that I will never truly comprehend his ways, but I now know why he is the way he is, and this is enough.

In the weeks after my father's death, I reflect on the effects war had on his final days. There were the physical effects: most obviously the return of his cancer and its possible connection to dioxin exposure all those years ago. But beyond the physical, the fierce independence and resilience he developed to survive Vietnam was detrimental to receiving care from those around him towards the end. As he pushed family, friends and carers away, at times it felt as though he was left in a state of neglect. I know he wouldn't have wanted us to blame ourselves or feel any guilt: he would have wanted us to soldier on, as he always did.

At my father's funeral, veterans lined up to place poppies on his coffin. Here were many proud veterans, with their own physical and emotional wounds, putting this aside to commemorate someone they understood deeply, in a way we never could: it was a touching show of comradeship and solidarity. The affinity of the returned servicemen remains strong, even as they dwindle in health and in numbers. Lest we forget.

...That is an amazingly heart-felt "memory" diagnosis covered with regards to his father. It tells an all too common misunderstood post-Vietnam Story.

Paul Dickson

AN INVESTIGATION 181 Days



. The Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal (RVCM)

Richard Barry has sent in the following notice and request for those members who were not awarded the RVCM...

"Australian national Servicemen who served in Vietnam for at least 60 days, but fewer than the 'required' 181 days, and who left Vietnam due to their national service obligation ending please contact Richard Barry OAM (richyvon47@hotmail.com).

This message does not refer to those who have been awarded the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal."

Paul Dickson

"Nothing ventured, nothing gained."



Committee Members:

President:

Allen Morley

Vice President:

Bert Blink

Treasurer/Secretary:

Grahame Dignam

Public Officer:

Gordon Malcolm

Webmaster:

Bob Billiard

Research Officer:

Ernie Newbold

Design Development Officer:

Nick Proskurin

Eyes and Ears Editor:

Paul Dickson

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

Regional Representatives: ACT- Bert Blink, Qld – Terry Erbs, SA – Geoff Blackwell, Vic – Alan Adams,
Vic Nth: Ron Mason, WA – Barry Guzder

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



Presidential perambulations

Recently Sydney 131ers went sailing. For some time now your Committee has looked at alternatives to our monthly meetings.

A trial alternative was planned. The first attempt failed due to only limited planning and timing constraints.

Gordon Malcolm lives in Mooney, a small town located on the Hawkesbury River, about 50 km north of Sydney. Gordon explained that there is a Mailboat which collects and delivers residents' mail along the river. The Mailboat also takes passengers for a cruise up the Hawkesbury while delivering the mail.

So, early in May a dedicated group from 131 climbed aboard the Mailboat at the small village of Brooklyn (a half-horse town) and set out for the river trip. Past Hawkesbury sandstone outliers, under the railway bridges, by houses of all descriptions, to jetties for mail drop and pickup then back to Brooklyn where we boarded the Mailboat. It was a relaxing and most enjoyable journey.

Regards

Allen

58 Years

April 1966 – April 2024



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

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

Canley Heights RSL & Sporting Club

26 Humphries Rd, Wakeley NSW 2176

and via Zoom internet

on **Tuesday 14 th May 2024**

Attendees were:

Allen Morley, Grahame Dignam, Gordon Malcolm, Ged Carroll, Nick Proskurin and Ernest Newbold.

Zoomed members were:

Ron Mason, Paul Dickson, Terry Erbs, Bert Blink and Barry Guzder.



Apologies: George Lane, Rieny Nieuwenhof Bob Billiards, Steve Wynn, Jim Fitzgerald, Ian Amos, Merv Nairn, and other State Reps.

Financial Membership is currently...**127**, plus Associates **2**, plus Affiliates **14** Total **143**

Plus Lapsed as at 1/5/2024 **33**

Presidents report.

Allen referenced.

- . Anzac Day March proceeded with fewer attendees, but some not seen for a time joined in.
- . The LSTAA meeting will be held on Thursday 16th May .
- . The Riverboat Postman cruise sailed on 7 th May with 12 131 members and family.
- . The RHC newsletter "Airburst" reports that there is proposal for the Canungra plaque to acknowledge all Artillery units who served in Vietnam. There will be more to come on this issue.

Public Officer Report.

Gordon reported that it was all quiet in his area of operations.

Health Report:

- . We were advised that ex Gnr **George Lane** had a fall near his premises. He was aided by a passer-by who dusted George off and got him mobile again. Luckily George suffered only surface damage. The notable part of this incident was that the aid-giver returned later in the day to check on the victim. The younger generation does have some good points!
- . We also heard that **Harry Lynas** was in care after a dustup. He was only badly bruised and is on his recovery road with the support of his Arty comrades.
- . While on falls, Gnr **Spike Chase** came a cropper recently and is feeling a bit poorly. Get well Spike from all the "Pioneers" and other Locators.

General Business and around the grounds:

Discussions ensued on the following:

. As general business and “around the grounds” has been widely covered in the above section we will only comment that: We need to be more careful as we are not getting any younger”!!!

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 June, 2024 at 1100hrs Venue: to be advised

Also, available via Zoom link to be advised



Birthdays in the Battery...June –

Date	Name	Regt No	SVN In	SVN Out	Comments
1	Geoffrey David Sullivan	3798292	02 12 1970	03 05 1971	Mwelbourne 131
	" "		03 05 1971	20 10 1971	12 Fd Regt.
3	Allan Maclean Capt.	32203	24 05 1967	28 06 1967	RAEME † 24.06.2013
5	Peter Leonard Dealy L/Bdr	3411983	18 02 1968	21 02 1969	
5	James Douglas Lockhart T/Bdr	6709144	03 06 1969	21 02 1970	† 12.04.2014
5	Vito Angelo Ciccolella	2791669	16 12 1969	17 12 1970	
6	John Paul I'Anson	2787424	12 04 1968	16 04 1969	† 18.01.2023
7	Bruce David Irvine L/Bdr	2783695	04 05 1967	20 02 1968	
8	Edwin Alfred Field Sgt.	242577	22 04 1966	31 07 1966	RAEME † 20.07.1996
10	Darryl Raymond Jenkins Bdr	46634	N/a	N/a	131 & 16 AD † 01.01.2024
	Keith Edward White	2783029	17 04 1967	13 12 1967	Belmore, NSW AACC
12	Ian Robert Amos L/Bdr	2785676	12 09 1967	17 09 1968	
12	Lawrence Reginald Sawyer	3787393	04 05 1966	03 03 1967	
13	John Joseph McNeill	18814	16 04 1968	14 05 1969	† 14.11.2020
14	Paul Buss	2781443	22 04 1966	28 04 1967	† 28.09.2011
15	Karl Heinz Doehrmann Sgt.	38119	{20 05 1966	29 04 1967	† 10.08.2009
	" "		{28 01 1970	27 08 1970	
15	Edwards John Webb T/Bdr	29964	27 01 1970	21 01 1971	Braidwood, NSW
16	Ralph William Pearce	214806	22 04 1966	30 04 1967	† 20.03.2022
18	Roger John Whittaker	2184592	19 08 1970	05 08 1971	† 01.12.2008
20	JOHN CHILTON	215855	09 12 1968	03 12 1969	
23	William John Prenter WO1	64258	22 04 1966	07 06 1967	RAEME † 01.10.1997
	" "		20 08 1970	09 06 1971	4 Fd Regt
25	Paul Anthony Butcher Bdr	3411454	01 04 1969	25 03 1970	
26	Lindsay Maxwell Mead T/Bdr	3790714	27 03 1968	26 04 1968	Benella, Vic
26	Gerard John Carroll	2781311	20 05 1966	29 04 1967	
28	Barry John Collins	2793213	20 08 1970	20 08 1970	131
	" "		20 08 1970	07 03 1971	4 Fd Regt.
	" "		08 03 1971	09 06 1971	12 Fd Regt.
29	Neil Fawcett-Smith Sgt	17732	12.04.1967	12.03.1968	131/ROAAC † 02.02.1991
	" "		08.07.1970	08.07.1971	2nd Ord Dep

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

Ed – 4 blokes not highlighted isn't all that flash. Ok, let's get into it and actively get out there locating a few more!

. **Locator Profiles** – we've received 176 and we've sent out 176. 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 Dignam:sectreas131locators@gmail.com and he could forward you the relevant forms to join - Memberships are available for 1 year or longer deposit a DONATION direct (add your name) to the associations account at "A/c Name: 131 Locators Association Inc. Bank: Westpac, Kingsgrove NSW BSB No: 032 166 A/c No: 264133"

Hope we hear from you?

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

. Other related sites...

. Locating, Surveillance & Target Acquisition Association...



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

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



Australian Artillery Association – www.australianartilleryassociation.com



www.artilleryhistory.org



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

. VETERAN'S AFFAIRS WEBSITE

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

. 1st Battalion 83rd Artillery...



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



We also welcome our Australian and New Zealand Allies to whom we owe so much.

It is also dedicated to those members of the 1/83rd who did not return. We will never forget their sacrifice. Website: <http://www.1stbn83rdartyvietnam.com>



The Royal New Zealand Artillery Association

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

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