

THE EYES and EARS

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



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The message above, hung up in 1968, is still relevant to ALL of YOU and YOURS!

Hope you had a great Christmas and are going to have a fabulous NEW YEAR!

The two pictures above were sent in by **David Dougherty** who added these words – “Hi Paul, Attached photos (above) of SR Lines Dec 68, not sure where the decorations came from or who put them up at the time. David”

...then the same day...we received the following from **Graeme Owen** -

“I’ve attached a picture which appeared on the front page of the Sun News Pictorial in Victoria in December 1988 (not sure of the exact date).

I was on the roof of one of the huts in the survey lines doing the ‘Chrissy’ thing, and this bloke in ‘civvies’ yelled out to me and asked if he could take the photo. He told me who he was, but I didn’t think any more of it until my wife sent me a cutting of it in her next letter.

Apparently it came as quite a shock when family and friends bought their morning paper that day.

I hadn’t been ‘in country’ that long at the time, hence the ‘puncie’ hairdo and the fairly new ‘greens’.

The only thing I remember about that year’s Christmas Day was that lunch was held in the 104 Bty mess served by the officers. I can’t recall any of them (the officers) looking particularly happy!?”



...then...you’ve got to ask what the...? Here are the serious Survey mob putting the antlers on Rudolph so to speak! **Bruce Irvine** got back with some oh-so-typical shots of a bunch of young blokes slowly unwinding – “Hi Paul, Hope this finds you as well as I am.

Being Christmas I couldn’t refuse your request to share my in-service Survey Christmas photos with everybody.

The attached are of our Survey lines on Christmas Day in 1967 (plus one of the concert).

The photos are a bit blurry but considering they were taken with my little box camera they have survived pretty well in an album. I wasn’t aware that I had written the details on the back until I removed them from the album earlier today.

Bit of a bonus!

Have a great Christmas Paul and thank you for the fantastic job you are doing with the E&Es - much appreciated.

Kind regards Bruce”

...now on with what looks like an orderly day, shirts off, sunshine, some party hats, cordial, food and more cordial...



Survey Section '67 Xmas Day L – R Standing - Yerbs (Lt Ian Yerbury), Brook (Warwick Brooker), Irv (Bruce Irvine), Jack Heyes, Sandy (Saunders), Rog (McDonnell), Jim Menz, Webby (Ron Webb) , Nick (Armstrong ?)
Sitting - Blue Holden, Scotty (McNicoll?) T.J. (Bruce), Woody (Ken Woodbine), Dutchy (Van Driel).



L to R. - Rog McDonnell, Geoff Holden, Jack Heyes, Jim Menz, Terry Bruce, John Greenaway, Bruce Irvine, Dutchy Van Driel



Blue's Bed-Space Xmas Night '67. L – R

Dutchy Rog (McDonnell), Blue (Geoff Holden), Irv (Bruce Irvine), Lowey (??) the cook under the bed. Nui Dat SVN

Christmas Show 1967

L – R

The New Chord Trio, Bev Harrell
 Luck Starr, Lorae Desmond,
 Lucky Groul (think I meant Grills!!)
 Jim Gussy ABC Dance Band
 behind



Bruce has some question marks – can anyone help fill in the "?’s"

. Keeping in the Christmas spirit...



Bob Retrot...looking relaxed in preparation for this Christmas 2012!

. Ed has met an interesting person, **Jill Nieglos**, and discovered a very unique story that is really worthwhile relaying...

The following story sequence has taken a lot of coaxing from Jill, who finds reliving some of the memories of her time flying with military personnel to and from South Vietnam pretty tough.

I've met Jill since living in Mexico. She is one of a band of fascinating "Gringos" ("Gringa" in her case) who has had a "live" connection with us in the Vietnam War era.

Jill and her husband, Don, have a real love of dogs. They have lived a good portion of their lives fostering, training and educating dogs for the blind and they still do. I believe what she has written will bring a flood of similar memories back to all of us who took that fateful step off Australian shores...

Jill began her career with Pan Am and flew the R & Rs out of Saigon to San Francisco from 1969-71...

"It has been painful writing this and I have spent a lot of time crying actually - I had no idea I would become so teary about those years and those flights Paul. I was young, but they were younger, and going to die perhaps. The fun times were taking them to Sydney via Darwin about a million times. I had one trip, if you can even believe it, which was 17 days long!!!! Holy catfish!"

Jill went on to become Japanese qualified (she speaks the language fluently and is pretty darn good with Spanish) and was based in Honolulu in February of 1972 and didn't fly the R & R's after that. She flew out of Japan for many, many years.



Jill in uniform, 1969

The following is the first episode in a series written by Jill and I hope you find them as heart wrenching, fun and another side of the war from a person who unwittingly became involved in it as you'll read –

“Memories from a Pan Am Stewardess – circa 1969” by Jill Nieglos

Night fog swirled as I stood at the top of the ramp in my Pan Am uniform, sporting my jaunty blue hat and ready to greet our passengers. I watched as a familiar scene unfolded below me. I looked down as a four-year-old girl reached for her father, shrieking "Daddy, Daddy, Daddy, don't go, please Daddy, don't go!" I saw raw emotion on the young father's face and tears in his eyes as he reluctantly pulled away from her. His wife was holding their daughter's hand, while bravely wiping away her own tears. She waved slowly as her soldier husband walked away through the cold fog. This was at least my twentieth replay of this scene. No matter how many times I watched it, it still seemed surreal and each time I saw it I was deeply touched.

The young soldier walked towards the ghostly white plane with the sky-blue stripe running down its length, the Pan Am logo emblazoned on its tail. The logo represented the lines of latitude of the world, Pan Am's world. To most people it represented excitement and the adventure of carefree travel; however, I am sure this was not on this soldier's mind that night. Just glancing at the large blue logo surely would have caused fear and sadness to stir in his gut.

This plane was taking him to a war zone: Vietnam, a world away from Travis Air Force Base in California, America, and his family. The year: 1969. Drafted. Shafted.

As I watched other soldiers hugged their crying mothers, telling them "don't worry, Mama, I'll be ok." In fact, there was much to worry about. Fathers were clapping their sons on the back reassuringly, desperately trying to hold back their own their tears. The saddest scene in my mind was a group of several GIs standing in a group apart from the others. There were no loved ones to send them off. They were nervously shooting the bull and smoking cigarettes while watching the smoke disappear into the fog. They were joking with one another, trying to be brave and not show their fear.

As a 23 year old working for Pan American, I had been looking forward to a life of fun and luxury, seeing the capitals of the world. For these flights, however, it was necessary that I carry papers identifying me as a 2nd Lt. should I become a prisoner of war. This scene was not even remotely in my mind when I had applied for the coveted job of Pan Am Stewardess."

...to be continued in February...

. Geoff Blackwell gets in touch with regards to a recent trip - "Hi Dicko. I was recently in Seoul, South Korea, where I went to their military museum. It was quite impressive, especially the Vietnam section.

I thought I would send you this photo of the 175 and 8 inch for all those 31D boys. The Koreans were issued with them in 1970.

I also went to the Australian War Memorial at Gapyeong, (pronounced Kapyong by us.) It is an impressive little reflective park, immaculately cared for close to where the 3 RAR and Kiwi gunners fought their Anzac Day battle.

I thought I would sit on the plinth and have a beer with the 3 RAR boys left behind, (seemed to be an Aussie thing to do,) when a Korean group came up, knowing I was Australian, lined up in front of me and all bowed deeply and kept thanking me profusely for our involvement in their war.

Unbelievable, the respect and friendliness was quite daunting. Anyhow Regards, Darkshaft."

...and continues in another...

"Hi Dicko, I went to Korea with my wife Sally to visit her brother who is working there at the moment.

Because I had dealings with some Korean War vets when I was secretary of the local RSL, I said I would try to find the famous, (for them,) Hill 504, where they fought the battle in 1951. None of them had been back to visit the area, they feel they are too old to travel, and one has recently died.

I got to Kapyong, hired a car and drove around the bush, found the hill and the Australian/Kiwi memorial. The locals were unbelievably courteous and helpful...very respectful and appreciative of the Aussie involvement in the conflict. (I think much the same as the French to the WW1 diggers.)

It is a shame the same reverence will never happen for the Viet Vets..... Never mind.

I got there, sat on the memorial and had a beer, just as I promised the old diggers I would.

It is up to the Viet Vets to look after the WW2/ Korean Vets now. Regards Geoff"



. **Ron "Mook" Evans** surprised and intrigued me with the following - "G'day Dicko, do you have any memory of the murder of Lt Birse in December 1967? I was involved slightly in the investigation. Here is the link to the Appeal which reversed the conviction. Mook"

<http://www.defenceappeals.gov.au/decisions/newman27091968.html>

The incident took place in December, 1967 at FSB Bravo during Operation Forrest.

Click the link to the story it's really a fascinating read.

Ed's reply - "Mook, The practice of killing a "friendly" is called "fragging" - of the 58,183 Americans killed in the war, 84, or 0.14 per cent, were "fragging" deaths, lower than the "fragging" rate in the Australian forces in Vietnam, where it was never perceived as a problem – **apparently** - I can find no link to this activity in SVN by Australians.

...then...I had to ask one more question -

"Mook, you mention that "I was involved slightly in the investigation" - can you elaborate? Dicko"

...reply...

"Ah yes, I flew up to investigate the morning after the incident. I am pretty sure Max Troynar was with me. We were to look for any evidence of any sort and two things came to light: 1 the side arm and other personal gear were perforated by what looked like a grenade and 2 we found the handle of a grenade with a serial number on it.

It was quite a bit later that we heard that the suspect had been found guilty and later still that he had been not guilty on appeal.

Did this really happen 44 years ago?? Impossible. Mook"

However, I do believe that the following extract showing the quote / evidence from CO of 4th Field is bloody strange - (1968) 13 FLR 268 at 275 -

"Mr. Kelly's fourth proposition was that some other member of the Australian forces could have thrown the grenade and that such a hypothesis was so compellingly reasonable as to preclude the court-martial from disregarding it. **There was evidence from the commanding officer of the 4th Field Regiment that Birse lacked the qualities necessary for the management of men and was fairly slack.** A fellow lieutenant called by the accused gave evidence that Lieutenant Birse was harder upon the men than normal and was disliked by them. However, this evidence, although it tends to show that Lieutenant Birse was unpopular, does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that there was a widespread animus amongst those persons of such a nature as would lead one of them to make an attack upon Lieutenant Birse by throwing a hand grenade into his tent. It was perfectly open to the court-martial, in my opinion, to consider that any such hypothesis was unreasonable."

It tends to show some odd form of management on the CO's behalf, for a start I would have thought to admit to a thing like the officer's "slack" performance and then countenance it does or should have raised a question in another place?

Now, on reflection I had / have a feeling that there was a hand grenade incident in Nui Dat in mid to late '67 with someone chucking one into the Sgt's or Officer's mess in Nui Dat - no one was injured. Maybe I have it confused with this case?

Again, for some scuttle-buck that it was good form for an infantry 2nd Lt Platoon Commander especially to keep on good terms with his crew as it was easy for someone to trip behind him and accidentally blow his brains out!

I remember being confronted by a gunner (a really nice quiet spoken sort of bloke) from HQ Battery coming into the "Locators Lounge", which we set up between two of the tents in the Arty Tac lines, with his SLR and putting a round up the spout and waving it around. Not the sort of thing you want to confront every night! He was disarmed and later taken away, never to be seen or heard of again. He'd had a "Dear John" from his girl friend/fiancé back in Aus.

It's hard to find other "fragging" type cases that happened with the Aus army in SVN? Maybe it's a good topic for an E&Es article? Great to hear from you, Dicko"

Ed – It'd be interesting to see and share more interesting serious and anecdotal stories from the SVN era – send them in if you come across them...

...then...on a similar topic during email correspondence between the late **Jeff Evans** and myself, he replied to a question with regards to his tour put to him by me. This is another interesting, frightening scenario.

Jeff had drafted this piece for his book at the time and had intentionally not named the Officer involved ...

"The Pistol incident

One night, a small group of officers including CAPT Tim Ford (OC Det 131 Div Loc Bty), CAPT Trevor Beer (Adjutant 12 Fd Regt), probably Noel Cooke (Quartermaster) and the author were sitting in the Officers Mess (a Lysaught Hut) playing Poker. It was probably five-card stud poker, but the game is unimportant. We were joined by one of the forward observers from a battalion which had recently returned from operations.

The forward observer joined us at the card table, ordered beer, and proceeded to drink fairly heavily for the next couple of hours. The game was only 10 cent poker (maximum bet), so one could not lose a lot of money. However our forward observer, now somewhat fatigued by beer, had lost maybe 10 dollars. Without provocation or warning, he left the card table, walked to the 'cloak room' (where we deposited firearms and hats before entering the Mess proper), and reappeared with a 9mm pistol in hand.

He cocked the pistol, pointed it at us and proceeded to give us all a dressing down for being POGO's (a derogatory term for those who did not go outside the wire surrounding Nui Dat base), and not worthy of being soldiers or something similar – we were not hearing the words properly with a pistol in our faces. Fear was trumps at that card table; we sat frozen, scarcely game to breathe. What will happen next? How serious is this guy? Who said what to upset him?

CAPT Beer, in a very cool, courageous move, rose from the table, calmly approached the forward observer with hand outstretched, and quietly but firmly asked for the pistol. Beer said, "You don't want to do this; it is just the beer talking; why don't you give me the pistol and we can talk about this?" After what seemed like half a lifetime, but was only a matter of seconds, the pistol was handed over to Beer who gave it quickly to one of us, and walked the forward observer out of the Mess and off to bed. It was all over in a matter of perhaps two minutes, but it was long enough to produce copious beads of perspiration, and sufficient reason to quickly order another round of stiff drinks from the bar. The next day, the forward observer was charged with 'conduct unbecoming an officer', had appeared before the Task Force Commander, was ordered to return to Australia, had departed the Nui Dat base, and was gone, all in a day. We did not see him again. Some years later, he had tried to rejoin the Army, but many people knew the story, and the application was rejected."

Ed – Jeff continues to be sadly missed as I enjoyed knowing him via his correspondence and no doubt others who he contacted in his quest for more detail for his book.

. George Lane sent in the following which started a great tradition for future "Nashos" – "Dicko I don't know if you



Gnr "Spike" Chase

know but the Nashos who were Pioneers in 131 did with distinction the **first ever all National Service Cenotaph Guard**. Freddie Lennon was Guard Commander and all drilling was done at Victoria Barracks in front of Staff Officers as well as all the WO1 and WO2. The guard was done at the Cenotaph on mid morning of a Thursday. I just happen to be the right marker and you would have been proud of us. It commenced from Castlereagh St all the way down Martin Place to the Cenotaph and it was packed with spectators both public and Service people. The next morning I was asleep in my room at North Head when Bruno Snedden picked up my bed and dropped it to wake me up, he then threw the Tele at me and said - "Here you're a film star" and marched out. On the front page was the headline "Yesterday he was a civilian today he is a well drilled and efficient Soldier" all with photo of me on the front page. George."



Gnr George Lane

Gnr Dickson

Doing a slow march arms reverse,
But not in step with George!



Ed – Even I cracked it for left marker, but by then it was a regular Thursday event (I did it in February, 1968) watched by ever-eagle-eyed WW1 and WW2 Vets to see whether we stuffed up the slow march or anything else!

. Customs – This is a continuation of the series suggested by **Ernie Newbold** from the AWM site <http://www.awm.gov.au/commemoration/customs/recitation.asp> - they're not totally peculiar to the Australian Armed Forces, but they deeply rooted traditions which can make the hairs on the back of your neck stand up and produce a lump in the throat – here's another interesting one in the series...

Red Poppies

The Flanders poppy has long been a part of Remembrance Day, the ritual that marks the Armistice of 11 November 1918, and is also increasingly being used as part of ANZAC Day observances. During the First World War, red poppies were among the first plants to spring up in the devastated battlefields of northern France and Belgium. In soldiers' folklore, the vivid red of the poppy came from the blood of their comrades soaking the ground. The sight of poppies on the battlefield at Ypres in 1915 moved Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae to write the poem *In Flanders fields* (see [The recitation](#)). In English literature of the nineteenth century, poppies had symbolised sleep or a state of oblivion; in the literature of the First World War a new, more powerful symbolism was attached to the poppy – the sacrifice of shed blood.

Moina Michael, who worked for the American YMCA, read McCrae's poem just before the Armistice. She was so moved by it that she wrote a poem in reply and decided to wear a red poppy always as a way of keeping faith, as McCrae had urged in his poem. At a meeting of YMCA secretaries from other countries, held in November 1918, she talked about the poem and her poppies. Anna Guérin, the French YMCA secretary, took the idea further by selling poppies to raise money for widows, orphans, and needy veterans and their families.

The poppy soon became widely accepted throughout the allied nations as the flower of remembrance to be worn on Armistice Day. The Australian Returned Soldiers and Sailors Imperial League (the forerunner to the RSL) first sold poppies for Armistice Day in 1921. For this drive, the league imported one million silk poppies, made in French orphanages. Each poppy was sold for a shilling: five pence was donated to a charity for French children, six pence went to the League's own welfare work, and one penny went to the League's national coffers. Today the RSL continues to sell poppies for Remembrance Day to raise funds for its welfare work.



The Roll of Honour dotted with red poppies.

The poppy has also become very popular in wreaths used on ANZAC Day. An early instance took place in Palestine, where poppies grow abundantly in the spring. At the Dawn Service in 1940 each soldier dropped a poppy as he filed past the Stone of Remembrance. A senior Australian officer also laid a wreath of poppies picked from the slopes of Mt Scopus.

Poppies adorn the panels of the Memorial's Roll of Honour, placed beside names as a small personal tribute to the memory of a particular person, or to any of the thousands of individuals commemorated there. This practice began at the funeral of the Unknown Australian Soldier on 11 November

1993. As people waited to lay a single flower by his tomb in the Hall of Memory, they had to queue along the cloisters, beside the Roll of Honour. By the end of the day, hundreds of RSL poppies had been pushed into the cracks between the panels bearing the names of the fallen.

...and continuing one more thing – Ernie Newbold's discoveries.



"I hope the Viet Cong know this!"

. **Dave Auld** gets in touch with a follow up visit to the Vietnam Veterans Museum on Phillip Island mentioned in an earlier edition of *Eyes & Ears* – “Hi Paul, with ref to the Vietnam Veterans Museum on Phillip Island, I called in there about 3 weeks ago and I did see 1 photo of an ANKPQ1 but it was very small. I will be meeting with Dave Doyle tomorrow and will be bringing up this subject of the photo of bravo radar that we enlarged and used as a raffle prize at one of our reunions. Thinking of doing another enlargement and giving it to Shorty & Jane Gow who are going to Melbourne in March to take the photo out and present it to the Museum on behalf of 131 Vets.

On the subject of Peter Mackie, in my data base we have an address for Peter McKie.

I wonder if someone somewhere had a typo error, and it is Peter McKie that has passed away? (See note later on re: this ongoing story)

Update on Reunion - due to the fact that my son in-law had a valve replaced in his heart around the 17th Oct and had a few probs. So instead of getting home a week ago I arrived home on Wed late so people should start receiving paper work about the reunion from next week. Ubique Dave Auld”

. **John Chilton** chimes in with an in-country arrival memory – “Hi Dicko, just enjoying the *Eyes & Ears* Newsletter. I recalled that when I arrived in country I became 131 Orderly Room NCO for about 8 weeks, until the new replacement arrived. One of my many hats was a qualified Army Clerk. During this time I typed up a complete name and Address List of all the boys and printed the list on the old Gestetner Printing machine that we had in the Orderly Room. This list was printed between the last week December 1968 and February 1969. It was a comprehensive list and I am not sure

whether the list only referred to members in country at that time, or all members that had served in Nam up until Feb 1969. Unfortunately I destroyed my list many years ago, but maybe one of the boys still has a copy. Take Care Dicko, Keep Well. John Chilton.”

. **Chris Bouilly** sent in some catch-up news – “Thought I would reinstate myself back with you boys @ 131 I didn’t know about the association’s existence. I really enjoyed reading the *Eyes & Ears* news brought back names of people that I had forgotten e.g. Bob Retrot, “Stewy” Sporn, Mick Campbell, Ross Gunnell, Mick Habben etc... I spent time in NZ before going Vietnam in April 67 spent five weeks there with elements of kiwi’s and 100 SAS guys from section 1 from WA in a goodwill exercise. The governments at the time were not happy about the Kiwi’s landing shells on our 1RAR INF Group. Hence the exercise to coordinate the guns. On arrival at Nui-Dat via Darwin in a Hercules was posted to Doc Halliday’s 32 Bravo along with Bdr Tom King, LBdr Barry Nugent, “Stewy” Sporn and others. Also spent time at the engineers LP, but spent most of my stay on Nui Dat Hill LP. It was good there because I knew a lot of the SAS guys from my previous trip to NZ. We would often visit the Kiwi’s as well, it was an enjoyable association. Finally back to 31B from there was on operation Santa-Fe before returning home in Dec.

Now a little about what has happened since Married 4 months after return from Vet living on family sheep station Pt Augusta area have two sons both married with two kids each.

My eldest granddaughter this week is competing in Mark Webber 350 kilometre race in Tasmania Samantha has just turned 18,tough gig running mountain biking and kayaking for 10.5 hrs every day for 5 days. Too good for me these days. I have put on about 20 kilograms since returning. I have two other grandsons who are heavily into horse competition at young age. Richard their dad worked on Victoria River Downs NT for 17 years horses and cattle have been a big part of their life. For the past 40 years I have been on Tregalana Station between Port Augusta and Whyalla looking after 10,000 sheep and a few cattle at times. Tried fish farming for 11 years we started with snapper found them to be slow developers so moved onto breeding Yellow Tail Kingfish, growing 3 kgs a year was a lot better. We used fish farming as another add on, we were in partnership with 8 other people but like all partnerships they eventually break down, so we sold out. Tregalana Stn surrounds El-Alamein army area know locally Cultana Army Training Area, this month the federal govt after 12 years of negotiating have finally decided to compulsory acquire our property for expansion. We move out by April 2013, we have just finished shearing and slowly removing stock etc. Now I’m ready for retirement. Planning to move to Port Victoria York Peninsula then do a bit of travelling around Australia and spend time with family and grandkids on cattle property Qld plenty of good fishing at Port Vic. Was good to speak to Vic the other day, when he told me his name a picture of his face came straight back to me, recall is amazing sometimes.

Anyone who comes this way any time can contact me on 0407001501

Email: chris.bouilly @ bigpond.com

Would like to have Bob Retrot email address if anyone has it?

Good to hear from you and thanks for finding me

Regards to all 131 lads CB”

. **Peter Ravelje** continues with “**The Monastery**” story... “G’day Paul, I was riding shot-gun with a couple of our blokes that did a hot-box delivery out to our Gunnies at the Monastery, whilst there I snapped these pix...”



A relaxed Yank from the U.S. searchlight crew.



ARVN “warry” perched on rock, John Lucas, (hands on hand on hips) ...both went to the same mincing school



Richard Chaplin (probably writing up his beloved diary)



Alan Wheatley (mincing school grad) Peter Bennett (surrendering)



. Dave Reilly (sitting) desperate to get at food in hot-box... Dave Negus (standing) reading mail from the Mrs...



Gay SVN scorpion that liked chewing on Dave Negus' arse.

. **John Vitkovsky** has a query...

“Paul, it was early in my stay at the Dat - the tent in the picture was the orderly room for 131 Bty, so I would say early 1967

Now John doesn't mention who's standing on his left and **Ed** has no idea – any helpers??



. **Allen Morley** after reading a **Peter Ravelje's** Locator Profile wrote in with -

“Paul, I enjoyed **PR's** Profile. Informative for us early 131ers.

My last year in High School in Melbourne - yes I did get that far - a fellow student was Peter Szabo. Peter says he has lost touch with 131's Peter Szabo. Just a coincidence of names? Probably, but not certainly.

My memory is reading somewhere that the 131 Peter Szabo had changed his surname, but that is the sum total of my knowledge. For now that is where the mystery will have to lie unless one of your readers knows otherwise.

Cheers Allen”

. **Tuesday, 19th February, 2013 – the Next 131 Locators Association** general meeting is at 11.00am
at

Goulburn Soldiers Club

Club Address: 15 Market Street, Goulburn, NSW, 2580

Phone: (02) 4821 3300 Fax: (02) 4822 1107 Email: info@goulburnsoldiers.com.au

Contact Grahame Dignam and let him know you're coming at: Sectreas131locators@gmail.com

Get a mate, make a plan and get along!

. **Ian Board** responded to an email from **Vic Danko** as being one of the “88 silent Locators” – this is a really good read –

“G’day Vic,

I am Ian Board one of the 88 silent Locators but as a surveyor we never were very rowdy, slack yes, aloof yes but never rowdy.

I do apologise for not replying but would like to make up for lost time by revisiting the *Eyes & Ears* of a couple of months ago regarding returning from SVN.

I was on the first trip of the Sydney and was one of the first into Nui Dat, as a surveyor we did not have a lot to do as in the early days the guns did not go outside the wire. As a consequence I was detached to the Civil Affairs Unit and there I met a lot of Australian and Vietnamese interpreters, The Aussies told me they had been trained at Point Cook Victoria, at the RAAF School of Languages. After R & R in Bangkok I decided to apply for language training and was accepted to do the 1/67 Thai course. This meant that I would be coming home around mid- December. Being a devious sort of bastard I wrote two letters one to my sister, Gail, swearing her to secrecy and asking her to write to my bride of 18 months Maureen, who I had not told about the application in case I did not get it, asking her to come to Sydney around mid- December to do some shopping and see the in-laws. Maureen, being a frugal Army wife, was staying with her parents on the family property near Blayney. She replied to Gail that as we were trying to save as much as we could she did not think it prudent to waste money on non- essentials.

So much for prior planning and preparation!

I dutifully arrived in Sydney on the first Starlifter to land in Australia. Our arrival at Mascot was greeted with wild cheering from the few people in the airport, lack of interest by the Customs men and sheer bewilderment by the Movements Officials.

Eventually we were put on a bus and taken to South Head where because it was Saturday morning no-one knew a thing about our arrival. After about 2 hours a Sergeant came out and I recognised him as Alex Petrovitch a Service Corps Clerk who was once our pay rep on North Head. He asked what I was doing there and when I told him he rolled his eyes and said “come with me”. We went through and he asked for my pay book, made a few entries, gave me a wad of cash, a leave pass and directions to the Watsons Bay Bus Terminal. I sneaked out a side door and in greens with two big kitbags walked out of South Head. I no sooner hit the road when a car full of young blokes came along, they asked me if I wanted a lift, I accepted and when they found out I was just back from Vietnam, insisted on driving me to Belmore where Gail lived. I hate to think what might have happened a couple of years later.

I was very disappointed when Gail told me Maureen was not there but a phone call soon changed that and she and her parents arrived the next day, this was probably a good thing for Dad and his mates at the Belmore Bowls Club made my homecoming a really memorable one.

I went to Point Cook and passed my course, as there was not a lot of call for Thai linguists at that stage I was posted back to the Battery at Holsworthy where the BSM Steve Rawlings was less than enthusiastic about welcoming a LBdr surveyor who he thought were grossly overpaid and not real soldiers. I soon found myself posted to Kapooka as an instructor but that is another story.

I hope I haven’t bored you too much and hope to hear from a few more of the OLD locators from North Head. Where is Fred Lennon?”

Un-Vale – after our recent article in November 2012’s edition of *Eyes & Ears* concerning **Peter Mackie** we got this from him –

“Paul, thank you for contacting Sharon & me re the mix up in the Vietnam Veterans journal the Last Post, to which I was unaware.

Firstly I would like to give my condolences to the family of whoever I was mixed up with.

As for the rest of the words in your *Eyes & Ears* I was heartened to hear that some people still new of me & came out with such glowing testimonials, although these are probable issued only when people no longer exist.

To read the names and see a couple of photos of people like Mike Butler, Bill Vanzetten, Pete Colman, Peter Saint, Kim Hewitt, Kevin Browning, Len Walker and of course my old trusty navigator Dave Doyle certainly stirred a few memories.

Paul, I am not one to be actively involved in RSL’s or organizations, but I do appreciate that you people do. I will however make every effort to fill in the profile sheet.

As for Dave Doyle he certainly caused a stir when chasing my whereabouts at the Katoomba RSL. Me being absent and all. I have been and will be further in contact with Dave to catch up and revive where we are in life (Still upright) regards Peter Duncan Mackie”

Committee members:
President – Allen Morley, **Vice President** – Bert Blink, **Treasurer/Secretary** – Grahame Dignam,
Public Officer – Victor Danko, **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 (Melb) – Alan Adams, **WA** - Barry Guzder
<http://www.131locators.org.au>

Welcome – The Association has great pleasure in welcoming a group this time – **Stan Patterson, Robert “Shorty” Gow, Brian Turner and Richard Chaplin** to the Association fold. There are now 125 blokes who have committed to the Association – fantastic!

President’s “Christmas Message” - “Dear Members and other *Eyes and Ears* readers,
 With the end of 2012 approaching rapidly this represents closure of a milestone year for 131 Locators Association. On your behalf the Association Committee has been active and focussed. The Committee has delivered against plans and intentions. I acknowledge their important contribution and commitment. Thanks Fellas.
 If you read *Eyes and Ears* regularly and are not a Member, why not put in the small effort to sign on? Contact Grahame Dignam on sectreas131locators@gmail.com and he will help sign you up. Consider it a positive New Year Resolution!
 On behalf of the 131 Locators Association Committee, I extend Christmas wishes to you all plus our hopes for a healthy and successful 2013.
 Regards Allen Morley President”

. **Tuesday, 18th December** saw the Association’s monthly meeting at The Entrance Long Jetty RSL Sub Branch in Long Jetty, New South Wales and some of the activities were captured –



Top photo left to right facing the camera: Allen Morley (back to camera), Grahame Dignam, Ernie Newbold, Ged Carroll, Ian Amos, and Gordon Malcolm



Bottom photo right to left facing the camera: Bob Billiards, Bert Blink, Vic Danko, George Lane, and Brian Turner



Then, what the hell is going on with Nick Proskurin and Allen Morley – Nick is fine but what’s with the helmet and camouflage shirt??

The 131 Locators Association has produced a Car sticker which was unveiled at the December 2012 meeting.

They are the same as the Lapel badge with 120 mm sides, rounded peaks to resist lifting when washing the car and laminated to withstand the rigors of the Australian sun.

Sale price is \$5 each or 5 for \$20 – place orders to the Sec/Treas via the website

or

Direct to sectreas131locators@gmail.com, supported by a bank deposit (mention "Stickers") as follows:

Electronically by funds transfer to:

A/c Name: 131 Locators Association Inc. Bank: Westpac, Kingsgrove NSW BSB No: 032 166 A/c No: 264133

By cheque – Make payable to: 131 Locators Association Inc

Mail to: G. Dignam, Secretary / Treasurer, 131Locators Association, 8 Darling St. ABBOTSBURY NSW 2176

Other suggested uses for the sticker are: On the Caravan, ute, golf buggy or motor bike

Maybe as a display plate (the sticker is **not** microwave or dishwasher safe) or a Portfolio enhancer.



. Upcoming Events Calender -

. **Tuesday, 19th February, 2013** – the Next 131 Locators Association general meeting is at 11.00am at

Goulburn Soldiers Club

Club Address: 15 Market Street, Goulburn, NSW, 2580

Phone: (02) 4821 3300 Fax: (02) 4822 1107 Email: info@goulburnsoldiers.com.au

Contact Grahame Dignam and let him know you're coming at: Sectreas131locators@gmail.com

The website also covers all these details in News / Events.

. web Performance...

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

Now if you're having trouble logging on etc then contact Bob Billiards - billiard@pnc.com.au you can always use the "Contact" page to get in touch and send a message.

. Birthdays in the Battery...January, 2013 –

Now let's pick the youngster out for the Month – Hey, we've cracked a veritable bunch of hatchlings crowding up 1950 – **Arthur Dove, Allan Robotham, and Edward Cooper** all getting to 62 this year! Have great birthdays where ever you all are!



Here's what Don "Scotty" McNicol looked like some 45 years ago. He got home with a couple of months to spare for his 23rd birthday! Hey he went back for a visit in 1970 – what was he thinking!

January	Name	Regt No	YOB	In SVN	Out SVN	Comments
1	VICTOR DANKO	2783210	1945	04 05 1967	12 12 1967	
1	JOE LIBRIZZI	5716081	1947	23 09 1969	04 06 1970	
1	CHRIS CHAPPLE	5716208	1948	20 01 1970	13 08 1970	
1	RICHARD CHAPLIN	2791166	1948	20 01 1970	13 08 1970	
2	JOHN BROWNE	218367	1949	27 08 1969	13 08 1970	
3	GARY NAVAS	2793162	1949	30 05 1970	26 05 1971	
4	PETER PETTIFORD	3792038	1947	08 11 1968	04 06 1969	

5	GRAEME SMITH	6708707	1946	12 04 1968	20 08 1968	
6	ARTHUR DOVE	217348	1950	13 01 1969	28 11 1969	
6	ALLAN ROBOTHAM	6709864	1950	25 05 1971	18 11 1971	
9	PETER SADLER	15138	1941	20 05 1966	28 04 1967	† 2008
9	ROBERT NESS	4717755	1945	20 05 1966	30 04 1967	
9	GERARD PIRES	5717069	1949	03 03 1971	12 08 1971	
11	PAUL TRAVERS Maj.	47027	1940	{09 09 1965	19 09 1965	VISIT
	" "			{25 02 1967	04 04 1967	RAEME
11	PETER PIORO	2790931	1948	27 11 1969	04 05 1970	
12	PETER HOPPER Sgt	3787938	1945	04 05 1967	12 12 1967	
12	DAVID REILLY	3794901	1948	24 03 1970	13 08 1970	
12	BRIAN JOHNSON	4720991	1949	29 05 1970	05 05 1971	AACC
	" "			14 05 1970	27 05 1970	1st Armoured Regt.
12	LASZLO FALKAI	4721836	1949	03 03 1971	30 06 1971	131
	" "			30 06 1971	18 11 1971	12 Fd REGT.
13	ROGER HOLMES	3795910	1948	22 07 1970	25 02 1971	
15	PHIL. ENDICOTT	2783419	1945	06 01 1967	27 09 1967	
16	EDWARD COOPER	44231	1950	26 08 1969	21 01 1970	
16	LESLIE SAURINE	2791863	1947	24 03 1970	17 12 1970	
18	PETER SZABO	38752	1947	26 03 1969	25 03 1970	
19	BARRY HEARD	3788324	1945	02 04 1967	25 10 1967	Honorary 131
19	PETER FIELDEN	3797872	1949	25 11 1970	12 08 1971	
21	DON McNICOL	216327	1945	{12 09 1967	17 09 1968	131
	" "			{09 04 1970	02 05 1970	VISIT
22	KEVIN BROWNING Sgt	217743	1948	16 09 1968	24 09 1969	131
	" "			05 04 1971	29 06 1971	131
	" "			30 06 1971	18 11 1971	12 Fd REGT.
22	MICHAEL BARLOW	2792252	1949	19 08 1970	11 03 1971	4 Fd Regt.
23	DONALD CHALMERS	3793171	1945	01 07 1969	03 12 1969	
24	TERENCE ERBS	3791713	1947	28 10 1968	04 06 1969	
24	DAVID NEGUS	3794728	1947	24 02 1970	13 08 1970	
25	WALLY FRANKLIN	1411285	1949	29 01 1968	28 01 1969	
26	RAY HUTCHINSON	37669	1940	17 04 1967	02 04 1968	
26	GEOFFREY TODD	54254	1943	18 12 1967	10 12 1968	
27	ALAN ADAMS	3788792	1945	04 05 1967	27 09 1967	
29	PETER MACKIE	2184557	1949	20 08 1970	08 02 1971	
30	ALAN McDONALD	511355	1947	05 12 1967	03 12 1968	
31	COLIN GORDON	16975	1945	15 03 1968	26 03 1969	† 28.03.10

Ed – 18 blokes is looking marginally better – but nothing to write home about! Let's halve it by this time next year!

. **Locator Profiles** – we've received **101** and we've sent out **101**. **Ed** – we're only 99 short of 200!!

. **Found...**

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.

. **George Wearn** responded to **Vic Danko's "Locate a Locator"** program – "Hi Vic - Thanks for the email. I am a bit confused as to the difference between this association and that of the Locating Artillery Association Incorporated. Are they two different associations?

I am currently a financial member of the Loc Arty Assoc Inc but not a member of the 131 Locators Association Inc. I used to receive some time ago copies of "Eyes & Ears" but have not for ages. What other info do you require? Regards George Wearn"

. **Murray Smale** with a bit of effort found us! – "I was recently doing some research and came across your Website but didn't have time to take it further then.

I would like to receive your Newsletter and will do what is needed to get that into play. Regards Murray Smale"



131 Locators Association is always on the lookout for new financial members. With the upcoming establishment of the web site we are going 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 or 5 years. Hope we hear from you?

Web site - <http://www.131locators.org.au/131locators/>

. Other related sites...

. Artillery Surveyors 131 Div Loc Bty...



ARTILLERY SURVEYORS 131 DIV LOC BTY

"Elements of 131 came wandering in from the bush"

(A quote whose origins are lost, yet the sentiments expressed will not be lost on many who served with 131 Div Loc Bty SVN.)

This website seeks to make contact with the Artillery Surveyors of 131 Div Loc Bty. We welcome your relevant contributions of photos, insights and observances so we might endeavour to expand

131 Artillery Surveying Vietnam record, beyond this window. Please use the [contacts page](#) for details:

<http://www.artillerysurveyors131.com.au/>

<http://www.artillerysurveyors131.com.au/operations/coburg.html>

. Locating, Surveillance & Target Acquisition Association...



LOCATING, SURVEILLANCE & TARGET ACQUISITION ASSOCIATION

The Eyes And Ears Of The Battlefield

...notes taken from the LS & TAA website – Committee meetings are held regularly with most held at Paddington RSL commencing at 1115 hrs. The next Meeting will be held at Paddington RSL on 10 February 2013. Members are cordially invited to attend. Details of scheduled Committee meetings will be available in the next issue of the Associations Newsletter LOCREP. <http://www.locatingartillery.org/index.htm>



Australian Artillery Association – www.australianartilleryassociation.com



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



Australian Government
Department of Veterans' Affairs

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://83rd_artillery.home.comcast.net/~83rd_artillery/

Editor contact email: three-zero@hotmail.com **Ed** – Paul 'Dicko' Dickson

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