Smart Array RAID controllers (CCISS): Erasure verification failures

There have been some issues with some Smart Array/CCISS RAID controllers where the erasure verification keeps failing (for example: SmartArrayP800). The erasure process itself is completed normally, but the erasure result verification part fails.

The problem is related to one of the controller's settings called the surface scan delay. This setting is the time interval before surface scan analysis activates (possible values from 1-30 sec.). This time does not begin counting until there are no commands being sent to the controller. Surface scan analysis is a background process that scans hard drives for bad sectors in fault tolerant logical drives. In RAID 5 or RAID ADG configurations, surface scan also verifies the consistency of parity data. Whenever the erasure part is completed, the surface scan is activated during the verification part and the controller starts writing some meta/RAID data on the drives. This naturally provokes the verification failure and subsequently the whole erasure process failure. Unfortunately, the surface scan cannot be disabled nor delayed more than 30 seconds.

If you happen to have a HP Smart Array RAID controller that presents this problem, before booting Blancco, remove manually all of the RAID logical array configurations.Boot Blancco 5 and follow the normal erasure procedure. Some HBAs will create (a) logical array(s) automatically during boot if they find unassigned physical disks which don't belong to any RAID array. That automatic creation has to be manually skipped by pressing ESC (this key press might vary, see hardware's documentation for more info) to prevent the problem from happening again.