



THE HON DARREN CHESTER MP
Assistant Minister for Defence

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PUBLIC HEARINGS FOR DEFENCE HONOURS AND AWARDS APPEALS
TRIBUNAL'S LONG TAN HONOURS REVIEW

The issue of recognition for Australian soldiers who fought in the Battle of Long Tan, Vietnam is to be reviewed by the independent Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal.

The review follows an application on behalf of 13 soldiers by Lieutenant Colonel Harry Smith SG MC (Retd), one of the commanders in the battle regarded as a watershed moment in Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War.

Assistant Minister for Defence, Darren Chester said he was pleased the Tribunal was progressing to public hearings for the review.

"I'm confident that the Tribunal's review will finally resolve this important issue for veterans and their families," Mr Chester said.

"I look forward to receiving the Tribunal's recommendations, once the hearings and the Tribunal's further deliberations are completed."

Seventeen Australians were killed and 25 wounded when on 18 August 1966, 108 men of D Company, 6RAR held off an assault by more than 2,000 enemies in the middle of a tropical downpour. They were greatly assisted by a timely ammunition resupply by RAAF helicopters, close fire support from Australian artillery, and the arrival of reinforcements in Armoured Personnel Carriers late in the battle.

The Tribunal will consider honours for 13 veterans of the Battle of Long Tan, including a Victoria Cross for the late Warrant Officer 2 Jack Kirby, who received a Distinguished Conduct Medal for his gallantry during the Battle.

The Tribunal will hear evidence from veterans of the Battle, representatives of the Department of Defence, and witnesses called by the applicant, Lieutenant Colonel Harry Smith SG MC (Retd).

The Tribunal will hold public hearings from Tuesday 1 March to Thursday 3 March, at The Sebel, Maroochydore.

Further information is available on the Tribunal's website at:
www.defence-honours-tribunal.gov.au.

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