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7 June, 2022

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Submission to Inquiry - Lt Col (Retd) Gary McKay

Part 1 – Name of Inquiry

Name of Inquiry *

Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal (DHAAT) Inquiry into RCB service

Part 2 – About the Submitter

Title or Rank *

Lt Col (Retd)

Surname *

McKay

Given Names *

Gary

Postal Address *

[REDACTED]

Email Address: *

[REDACTED]

Primary Contact Number *

[REDACTED]

Secondary Contact Number

Is the Submission on behalf of an organisation? If yes, please provide details:

No, this is an individual representation

Part 3 – Desired outcome

Provide a summary of your submission:

The outcome I would like to see is that personnel who served as members of Rifle Company Butterworth during the period 1970 to 1989 be awarded the AASM.

Part 4 - Your submission and Supporting Documentation

File Attached: RCB-SD.pdf

Stat-Dec-RCB.pdf

Part 5 – Consent and declaration

I consent to the Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal making my submission publicly available.

I also consent to the Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal:

- using information contained in my submission to conduct research;

- using information contained in my submission to conduct research;
- providing a copy of my submission to a person or organisation considered by the Tribunal to be appropriate; and
- providing a copy of my submission to a person or organisation the subject of adverse comment in the submission;
- using content in my submission in its report to Government.

The Tribunal will decide which person or organisation is appropriate, and this may include:

1. persons or organisations required to assist with the inquiry; and
2. persons or organisations with an interest in the inquiry.

✓ I declare that the information I have provided is correct.

Name

Gary McKay

Date

07/06/2022 /

Leave this empty:

Lt Col (Retd) Gary McKay



Signature Certificate

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Build. Track. Sign Contracts.



Lt Col (Retd) Gary McKay

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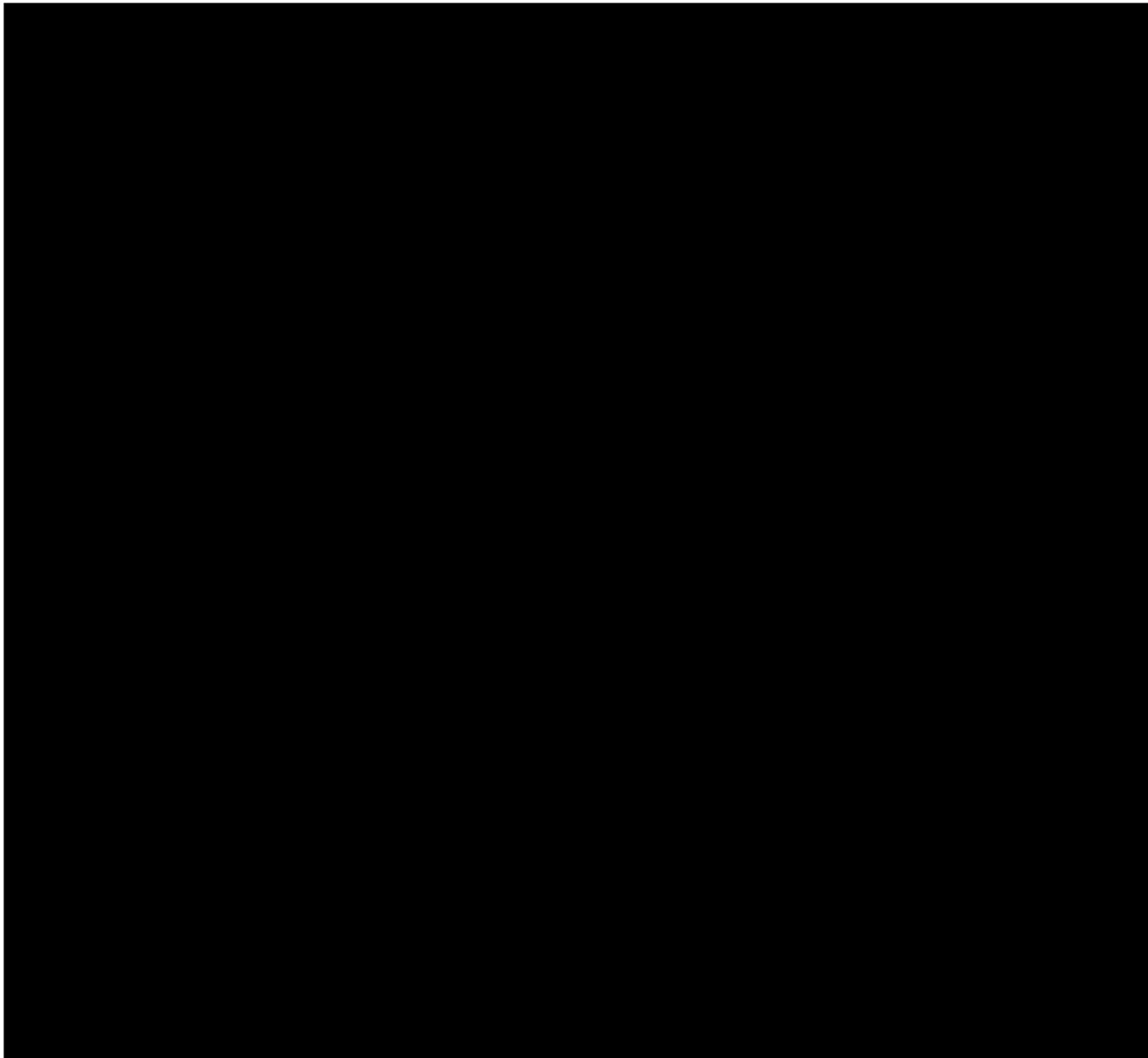
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Statutory Declaration
OATHS ACT 1900, NSW, EIGHT SCHEDULE

I, Lieutenant Colonel Gary John McKay, MC, (Retired), do solemnly and sincerely declare that between October 1975 and March 1976 I served as the Company Second-in Command (2IC) of Delta Company, 6 Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment (RAR), which was serving in West Malaysia as the Rifle Company Butterworth (RCB) as assigned by Field Force Command of the Australian Regular Army. I had previously served on operation service as a rifle platoon commander in Delta Company of 4 RAR. During that tour of duty in 1971 I was engaged in several major actions and was subsequently awarded the Military Cross for gallantry at the Battle of Nui Le in September 1971. In total, I served for 30 years in the Australian Regular Army, was a platoon, company and battalion commander, and served in Canada (attending Staff College), New Zealand (exchange officer) and served in many staff and instructional appointments.

My duties as the Company 2IC were to supervise the administration of the RCB and when required to man the command post (CP) when the on-duty platoons were called out. I saw our task at RCB as to being primarily one of protecting the joint RAAF/RMAF Air Base at Butterworth from attack by Communist Terrorists (CT). Prior to deploying to Butterworth, the Company Commander Major Peter Michelson and I received briefings on our duties and the threat to the air base. These briefings were given by staff from HQ Field Force Command. Consequently, while we were posted to RCB when platoons were on immediate call-out duty they were armed with 7.62 mm and 5.56 mm ball ammunition and M 26 HE grenades.

The Rules of Engagement (ROE) used at RCB required that our platoons were not to engage any enemy unless they were fired upon, or the enemy failed to respond when challenged to stop or if they saw the enemy was about to take action that was a direct threat to RAAF assets on the base, the safety of our troops or the safety of RAAF personnel and their families. The ROE issued to RCB personnel were not dissimilar to those used on operations in South Vietnam between 1965 and 1972.

Any contact or sighting was to be reported immediately by ANPRC 25 set radio direct to the Company Command Post. When platoons were called out, I was

the principal duty officer on duty at the CP and several of the company HQ staff soldiers were employed as watch keepers. Our CP responded to the RAAF Base Ground Defence Operations Centre.

When soldiers were on call-out duty it was usually a rifle platoon that was mounted in three troop carrying vehicles. Each vehicle was mounted with a GPMG M60 machine gun to provide fire support and protect the vehicle and its occupants. To support the platoons mounted on trucks, there were observation towers on the air base perimeter. Each tower was manned by Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) personnel who operated large searchlights to illuminate the air base perimeter. Every night that the RCB was on duty, one of the three rifle platoons was rostered for immediate call-out and the other two were on 30 minutes notice to move. These call-out response times were changed when the threat was deemed to be greater; for example: public holidays and significant Communist events such as birthdays (Mao Tse Tung), and deaths of significant Communist leaders (Lenin and Marx).

The RCB deployed regular patrols after hours both inside and outside the base perimeter. They were always deployed at irregular times and never set to a pre-arranged schedule. The role of the patrols was to look for CT attempting incursion, or if outside the perimeter wire, to look for sign of anyone observing the airbase. This was primarily defensive in nature to detect and apprehend anyone carrying out covert or overt surveillance on the air base.

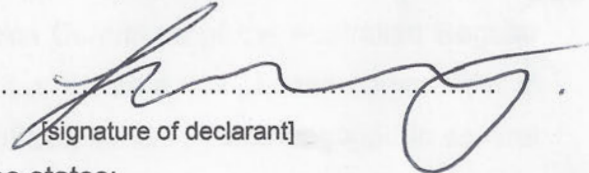
On several occasions the call-out was in reaction to a request from the Air Base Ground Defence Operations Centre. When this occurred, we reacted a platoon to the immediate area of concern and then immediately called out the remainder of the RCB personnel as back up. When a full call-out occurred, the company commander, Major Peter Michelson, assumed command and control of any deployment either inside or outside the Air Base.

It is my opinion that the nature of RCB duties was special service and on a scale with being on operational service. I have been involved in several security tasks during my 30 years military service including securing elements of the New Zealand military communication sites and Lyttleton Harbour tunnel in New Zealand's South Island during public insurrection in 1979. At no time was ball ammunition issued to the soldiers protecting or deployed on those duties. I also took part in protecting parts of the University of Queensland infrastructure during anti-war protests in 1970 and again no ball ammunition was issued or carried. This is a solid

indicator that the role of RCB where the carriage of ball ammunition and grenades, and the strong reliance on ROE on call-out was of an operational nature.

And I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true, and by virtue of the provisions of the Oaths Act, 1900.

Declared at Kiama, NSW on 27 September 2021


[signature of declarant]

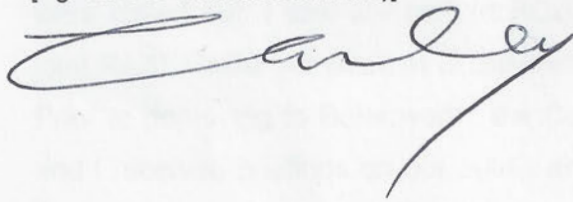
In the presence of an authorised witness, who states:

I, Eric Oswald Bensley, a Justice of the Peace
[name of authorised witness] [Justice of the Peace]

Certify the following matters concerning the making of this statutory declaration by the person who made it. I have known this person for at least 12 months.

ERIC OSWALD BENSLEY reg. no. 160119
A Justice of the Peace in and
for the State of NSW

.....
[signature of authorised witness]]



..... 27.09.21
[date]