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26 April, 2023

Signed On : <https://defence-honours-tribunal.gov.au>

Submission to Inquiry - Mr Alan Terry Bennett

Part 1 – Name of Inquiry

Name of Inquiry *

Medallic Recognition for service with Rifle Company Butterworth

Part 2 – About the Submitter

Title or Rank *

Mr

Given Names *

Alan Terry

Surname *

Bennett

Post-nominals (if applicable)

Street Number and Name *

[REDACTED]

Suburb *

[REDACTED]

Postcode *

[REDACTED]

State *

[REDACTED]

Email Address: *

[REDACTED]

Primary Contact Number *

[REDACTED]

Secondary Contact Number

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

Part 3 – Desired outcome

Provide a summary of your submission:

Recognition of service with Rifle Company Butterworth between 1970 and 1989 as Warlike. I have provided details with regard to the expectation of casualties as one element of the case for classification of service with RCB as warlike

Part 4 - Your submission and Supporting Documentation

File Attached: statement-alan-bennett.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;
- 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.

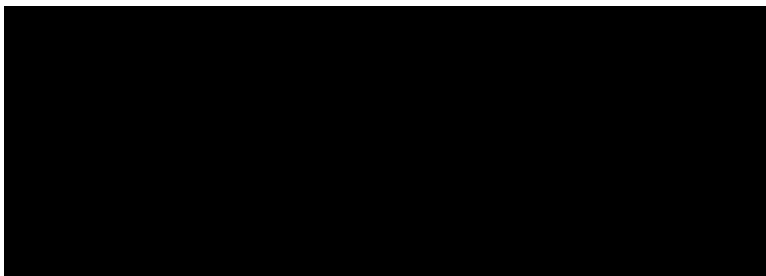
✓ I declare that the information I have provided is correct.

Name

Alan Bennett

Date

26/04/2023



Signature Certificate

[Redacted]
[Redacted]

LEGALLY SIGNED USING
WPsignature
[Redacted]



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26 April 2023

Mr Stephen Skehill

Chair

Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal

Enquiry – Medallic Recognition for service with Rifle Company Butterworth

Statement: Alan Bennett

Dear Sir,

Thank you for the opportunity to make a statement to the Tribunal in relation to my service with Rifle Company Butterworth (RCB).

In June 1981 I was detached from 1Fld Sqn, 1 FER to D Coy 5/7 RAR for duty in Malaysia, June through Sept 1981 with the RCB.

On the 25th June 1981 our section was on duty as the QRF Section.

At approx. 2130 hours the QRF was called out to the IADS unit, as always callouts were assumed by all QRF members to be actual intrusions to ABB until advised otherwise. On arrival at the designated Key Point (KP) the QRF section vehicle came to a sudden stop and all members of the section jumped from the rear of the vehicle and proceeded to patrol through the KP. When I jumped from the rear of the QRF Vehicle I landed heavily on my left leg causing injury to the knee such that I was unable to stand unassisted.

As I was unable to move with the section, I lay in the prone position with my personal weapon (SLR) towards the direction that the section was advancing. Details of weapons states have been covered in many other submissions, however from memory we were at the load condition as the IADS unit was a high profile KP and there had been a recent incident in that area involving a MAF soldier and a local.

At the time that the injury occurred it was not known whether this callout was actual or rehearsal. Once the section had completed the patrol through the KP it was advised by the Duty Officer that the callout was a rehearsal and the section returned to my position and I was able to be assisted to the QRF vehicle.

The injury to my left knee responded to treatment provided at ABB and Penang Hospital for a while, and I continued to perform normal duties with the Platoon and Section. Sometime in August, the knee became worse and I was put into a plaster cast from hip to ankle, which remained in place until the Company returned to Australia in mid-September.

I would raise the following questions:

1. How do you determine if a QRF Section member is a casualty or a training accident?
 - a. It has been accepted that at the time of the call out, the QRF were never advised that that there was NOT an actual intrusion to ABB.

- b. Once the QRF had patrolled through the KP and cleared the area of any hostile activity they would be advised by the Observer/Duty Officer that the callout was a rehearsal and whether they had met the required objectives.
 - c. In my case I was injured before it was known that the callout we were performing was a rehearsal.
 - d. At the time I went down we were still operating as if there was an intrusion or hostile activity at the KP.
- 2. I would believe that at least in the first instance I should be classified as a casualty? In some military definitions of Casualty, it is often defined as a member lost to the organisation through being killed, wounded, injured, through disease, etc.
- 3. I have not seen in any definition of War-Like Service the term "battle casualty" used in relation to the expectation of casualties. I would respectfully submit that any member of RCB injured during a callout should be classed as a casualty due to the nature of the callout process and standing orders including ROE.

The end result of this injury was that I was medically downgraded in 84/85 and no longer able to be posted into my primary trade of Field Engineer (FE). This downgrade severely impacted my military career and eventually resulted in my separation from the Army.

In support of this statement I have a signed witness statement from the QRF Section Commander that was present at the time of the injury. This statement was originally obtained by DVA in the investigation of my claim for injury and then obtained by me under FOI from DVA. At this time it is also appropriate to note that my treatment by DVA in relation to my claim for this injury and others has always been extremely good and timely.

Primary medical documents regarding the injury and treatment from BAB and Penang Hospital are not available as they were never transferred back to my unit, 1 Fld Sqn 2/3 FER.

I was not able to locate any casualty report or injury report of the incident of 25 June 1981. Whether a casualty or accident report was ever raised is unknown.

Yours Sincerely

Alan Bennett