

Document ID: d4e43272d5dfa41dcecd4d04ea64d8d36de11076

9 May, 2022

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

Submission to Inquiry - Mr Geoffrey Henry

Part 1 – Name of Inquiry

Name of Inquiry *

Inquiry Into Medallic Recognition For Service With Rifle Company Butterworth

Part 2 – About the Submitter

Title or Rank *

Mr

Surname *

Henry

Given Names *

Geoffrey

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:

Part 3 – Desired outcome

Provide a summary of your submission:

I served as part of Rifle Company Butterworth (RCB) in 1974 and 1975. I believe that to have been warlike service based on the fact we were sent RCB as a fully armed Quick Reaction Force. There was a known enemy, an expectation of casualties, and there where ROE. Numerous 'Secret' documents will be submitted to the tribunal supporting my comments. Prior to the 1974 RCB duty it was arranged for the 3 stretcher bearers/first aiders going to Butterworth to undergo additional emergency first aid training at the Queensland Ambulance Station in Townsville. My desired outcome is that RCB's operational deployment in Malaysia qualifies as 'Warlike Service', not as 'training', on the basis that RCB's service has hitherto been classified, wrongly, as 'peacetime service' due to previous failures by various APS advisers and Ministerial decision makers to identify and correct significant errors of fact and misrepresentations as to the nature of the RCB service deployment - whether due to the flawed application of Government policy or inadvertently.

Part 4 - Your submission and Supporting Documentation

File Attached: a-RCB-Testimonial-May.pdf

Part 5 – Consent and declaration

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

I do not consent to my address and phone number being made public.

✓ 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

Geoffrey Henry

Date

09/05/2022 /

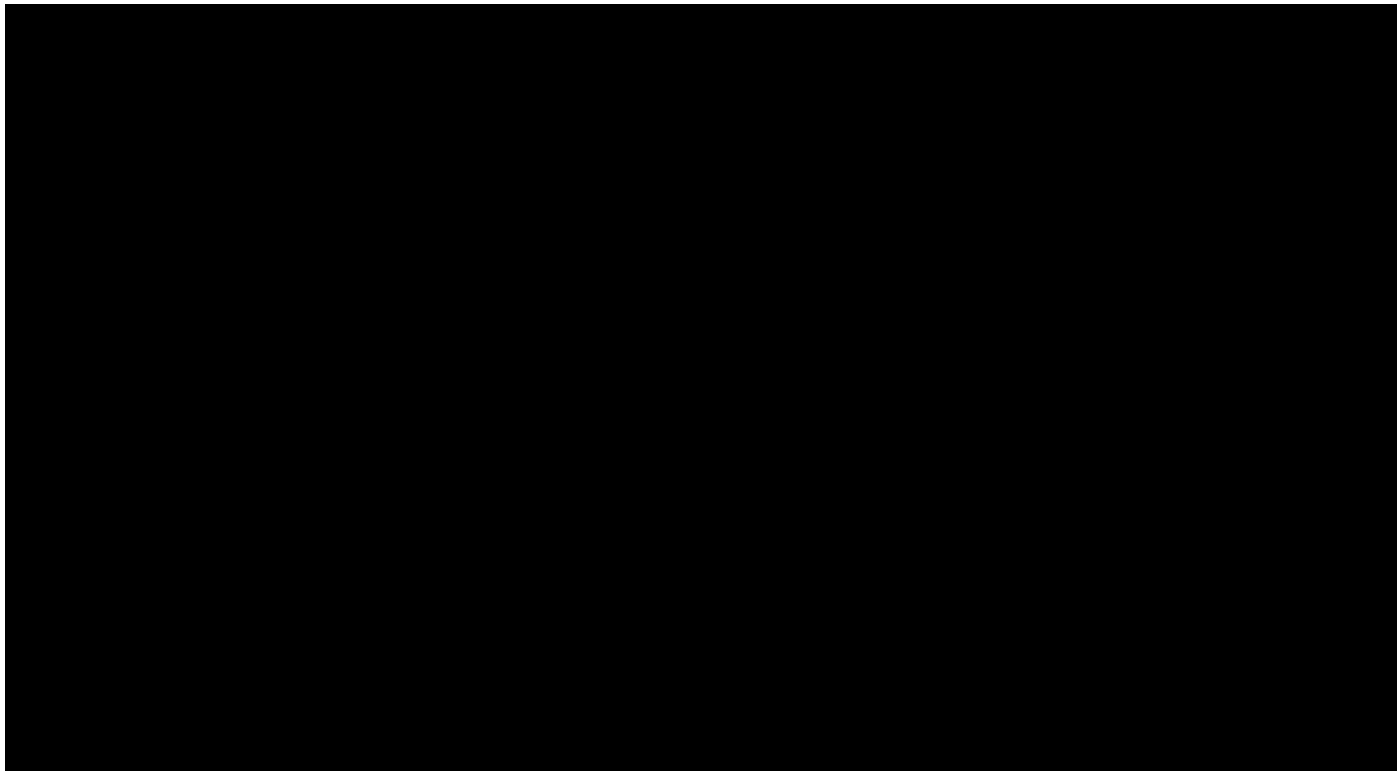
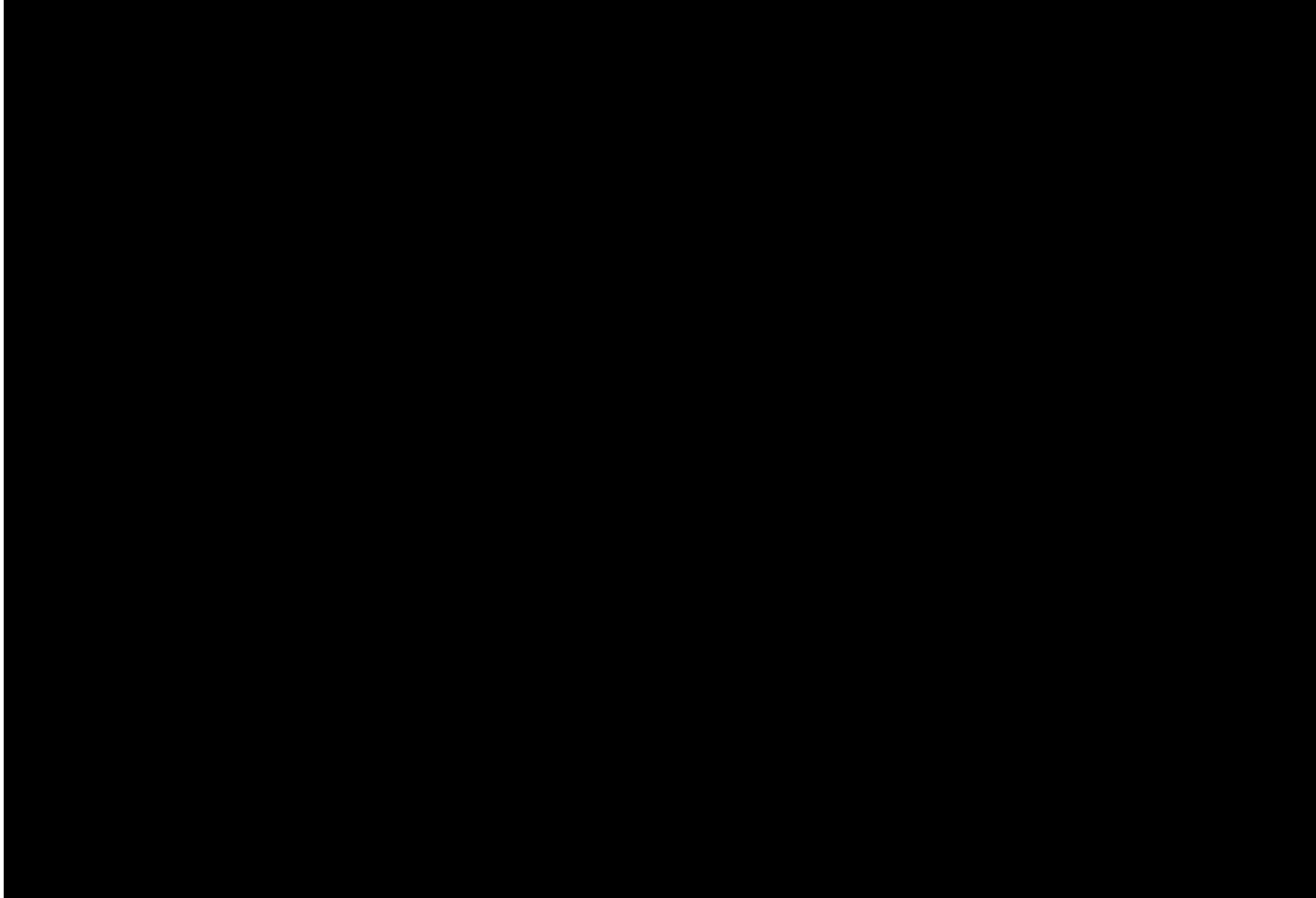
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'G. Henry', written over a horizontal line.

Signed by Mr Geoffrey Henry

Signed on: 9 May, 2022

Signature Certificate

 LEGALLY SIGNED USING



RIFLE COMPANY BUTTERWORTH SERVICE TESTIMONY - Geoff Henry

My name is Geoffrey Henry and I was 24yo when I joined the ARA on 8 March 1972, Army No [REDACTED]. My previous employment was with the Commonwealth Bank and I attained the position of Trading Bank Examiner. The Branch positions above me were Accountant and Manager, so I was not a wet behind the ears straight from school 18y.o. when I joined.

I was posted to 1RAR on 11 August 1972 as a rifleman and after a week of battalion training I was allocated to the Band platoon with duties as a rifleman, stretcher bearer and bandsman. I was assigned to the band as I had some musical knowledge.

On 3 Sept.'72 elements of 1RAR including the band emplaned to Lae, PNG on Exercise Treble Change. There was NO first Aid training prior to going to PNG (later contrast to RCB).

RCB Service Summary

I served with C Company 1 RAR at Air Base Butterworth from 4 June 1974 to 3 Sept 74. I was a L/Cpl at that time.

My primary task was as a stretcher bearer/first aider attached to one of the platoons and I also had two other band stretcher bearer Privates in my charge who were allocated to two other platoons. During day time routine I was to remain in the vicinity of the company HQ, with a first aid kit, in case of a QRF call out which I was to join.

While at RCB in 1974 I completed one of the subjects for promotion. The group thought it was great to do the subject at RCB as we had our laundry and ironing done for us and our uniforms were always of an acceptable standard.

My weapon was an M16 while the rest of the company carried the usual allocation of SLRs, M16s and the sections M60. All normal small arms weapons required for operational service were readily available on base along with ammunition. While on QRF duties, section M60s were routinely deployed.

In April 1975 I was promoted to Corporal and I was one of the 17 (or 18) members of the band platoon attached to A Coy 1 RAR to go to RCB from 3 June 1975 to 3 Sept 75. The Band members were dispersed among the various sections to make up the numbers and their duties were primarily as stretcher bearers. The band did QRF duties with the platoon/sections they had been allocated to.

During the day time routine as well as platoon/section duties, and depending on what each of the platoons were doing, sometimes we were able to do some band practice within the barracks area, though the priority was QRF duties.

Enemy

I went to RCB with the understanding from what we were told prior to departure and again confirmed at arrival briefings, that there was a communist enemy force in Malaysia and a threat to the air base where RAAF personal and Australian fighter aircraft were stationed. Our roll as a QRF was to defend and protect that air base. From what we had been told and the additional pre departure first aid training, I had no doubt that there was a known enemy present and the expectation of casualties.

Danger

On the day of arrival at RCB as part of our briefing the Company OC Maj. Paul Jackson made it very clear that if we were overdue from any leave it would not be classed as AWOL but desertion. He also covered the Rules of Engagement, and to me that certainly emphasised our warlike status, and that is not something I would forget. We were also briefed on the dobi laundry system and numerous other items which I can't exactly recall.

ROE were discussed when commencing night or weekend QRF duty, where we slept in the 'guard room'. I was involved in a couple of callouts, one in 1974 and one in 1975. I can readily recall these due to the nature of the incidents.

On one occasion in 1974 when I was on night QRF duty, the duty officer was intending to check the ammunition that was kept in a metal foot locker, and he discovered the key to locker was missing. There was an interesting period where someone was about to break open the locker. I recall that as despite the seriousness it had a 'Dad's Army' side to it (as Aussie humour goes).



On my second tour in 1975 a couple of us would run around the perimeter roadway after 1600hrs, and a couple of times we were warned off from running that circuit by NCO's due to the proximity to the boundary fence and what I would sum up as recent or current 'enemy activity' in the area. Had we been there for training there would have been no need to warn us off.

On one night the platoon (not just a section) was to be on stand to closer to the flight line due to an alert of possible enemy in the vicinity. We were based in ten man tents with stretcher beds setup on grass though we did not stay in the tents as they were an easy target and we had no protection from incoming fire, other than to be less conspicuous by spreading out into darker areas.

Expectation of Casualties

A month or perhaps less prior to the June 1974 departure, the band was told there would be some of us going to Malaysia as part of the Rifle Company based at Butterworth. Our duty would be as stretcher bearers/firstaiders, and for the first time since I joined in 1972 there was serious first aid training including casualty evacuation, splinting of limbs and wound dressing. Prior to that I had only one or possibly two brief instruction periods in the basic use of the first aid kits.

The training was conducted by the two band corporals, Cpl Peter Tuck and Cpl Darryl Cooper, both Vietnam Veterans. I was one of the three bandsmen selected to go, and Corporal Tuck and Sgt Shoebridge, also a Vietnam veteran, arranged for us to undergo further first aid training at the Queensland Ambulance Station, Hugh St, Currajong (Townsville). This training was over several evenings with intense attention to serious wound management. That additional first aid training certainly made me aware that there was an expectation of casualties.

I do not have evidence of that QAS training but will supply a Statutory Declaration if required,

In the first tour I was to remain in the vicinity of the Company HQ in case of a QRF callout and I was to be the stretcher bearer/first aider with the section, or join in with a platoon. Likewise in 1975 at least a couple of the band stretcher bearers were required to remain near Coy HQ. As we were reminded there was also the availability and support of the base RAP and hospital if and when needed. That to me highlighted an expectation of casualties.

Training with the Malaysians

I did NOT do any training during either of my tours with the Malaysians.

Actual tasks

I was deployed as a stretcher bearer/first aider in 1974 to be part of the QRF and likewise in 1975 as part of the 1RAR band platoon to make up numbers and with the primary duty as stretcher bearers/first aiders and riflemen. I was not called upon to administer any combat first aid. We had some daytime band practice and on one occasion played outside the officers' mess when a (Malaysian?) dignitary attended.

I would be prepared to give this and possible further oral evidence if given the opportunity to appear before an independent inquiry (personally or by telephone). Preferrably by phone as I am a carer for my wife and travel at times is difficult for us.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Henry', is shown within a light gray rectangular box.

Name: Geoffrey Henry

[Redacted]

Email:

Telephone:

[Redacted]