



THE HON. DR MIKE KELLY MP Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Support

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COMBAT HISTORY OF THE 2ND D&E PLATOON IN THE VIETNAM WAR

The Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Support, the Hon. Dr Mike Kelly AM MP, and Ms Jennie George MP met today with veterans of the 2nd D&E Platoon who served in the Vietnam War as part of the Australian Task Force (ATF), to discuss the acknowledgement of the Platoon and its history in that conflict.

For many years now the surviving members of the Platoon have been battling to have their record and role in the Vietnam War officially recognised.

Dr Kelly said, "I am pleased to announce that I have been able to bring this long struggle to a conclusion by confirming that the Rudd Labor Government and the Defence Department have been able to determine that the Platoon did indeed exist and engaged in a series of important actions in Vietnam as part of the Australian Task Force."

"I would like to pay particular tribute to the courage and dedication of the men of the 2nd D&E Platoon. They were a team that was effectively born in battle, not having been formally raised and trained as a sub-unit in Australia before deploying to Vietnam, but being assembled in country in response to the particular security requirements of the ATF. They were able to come together as an effective fighting force thanks to the professionalism of the soldiers and in particular the Non-Commissioned Officer who led them, Corporal James Bertram Riddle," he said.

The action for which the 2nd D&E Platoon should particularly be noted for was the successful ambush they executed together with 2 Troop, B Squadron, 3rd Cavalry Regiment, in May 1969 at Thua Tich. This was a ferocious battle that involved the engaged troops taking on a much larger enemy force beyond artillery support and through many heroic individual and collective efforts were able to soundly defeat the enemy without loss. Their success was a tribute to their professionalism and the outstanding leadership and courage of Corporal Riddle whose personal actions ensured the survival of many members of the Platoon who would otherwise surely have been killed.

"I am delighted to advise these proud veterans that their role in the war will be forever enshrined and acknowledged in the Official History of the Vietnam War which is soon to be published. I was privileged to have been able to meet with them personally and thank them for their service to the country and the Australian Army. They served and performed in the finest traditions of the Australian Defence Force and they will have an honoured place in its history. As part of my responsibility for education and training in the ADF I intend to see that our future generations of Army leaders will have the opportunity to not only be aware of this legacy but to have the opportunity to learn from it," Dr Kelly said.

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