



CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE FORCE

☆☆☆☆

CDF/OUT/2017/734

Mr M Sullivan AO

Chair of the Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal

Locked Bag 7765

CANBERRA BC ACT 2610

Dear Mark,

Thank you for your letter dated 30 April 2017 requesting the Department of Defence's views on further recognition for service at the Battles of Fire Support Bases Coral and Balmoral and unit recognition for the Royal Australian Navy Helicopter Flight Vietnam (RANHFV), in support of the Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal's ('the Tribunal') Inquiries.

Defence has received a number of representations seeking recognition for various units engaged on operations during the Vietnam War over many years. As previously stated, Defence does not support the retrospective awarding of unit citations such as the Meritorious Unit Citation or the Unit Citation for Gallantry for units which served prior to 1991 (the year these awards were introduced).

It would be inappropriate to apply contemporary criteria to military activities which occurred almost half a century ago. Furthermore, examining the activities of individual units or battles in isolation, as opposed to their role within the context of the wider conflict, may result in unequal recognition.

While Defence's position on further recognition for the RANHFV and for service at the Battles of Fire Support Bases Coral and Balmoral is consistent with previous retrospective reviews, I acknowledge you will still require our assistance during this process. Defence has therefore compiled a list of units which served at the Battles of Fire Support Bases Coral and Balmoral at Enclosure 1, and a historical summary of the Royal Australian Navy Helicopter Flight Vietnam at Enclosure 2.

My point of contact on these matters is the Director of Honours and Awards, Ms Margot Kropinski-Myers, who may be contacted on (02) 6266 4952 and margot.kropinsk-meyers@defence.gov.au.

Yours sincerely,

R.J. Griggs, AO, CSC
Vice Admiral, RAN
Acting Chief of the Defence Force

*I apologise for the delay
in responding.*

R1-5-CDF Suite
PO Box 7900
Canberra BC ACT 2610

| September 2017

Enclosure:

1. Preliminary list of units participating in the battles at Fire Support Bases Coral and Balmoral (Operation TOAN THANG I) May – June 1968.
2. The Royal Australian Navy Helicopter Flight Vietnam – A Brief History