

Commemoration of the Operational Service
of
The Iroquois (Huey) Helicopter's Participation in the South Vietnam War
and the Dedication of Air Frame UH1B A2-1022
by
The Caloundra RSL Sub Branch

Scope

This paper deals with the Commemoration and Dedication of Air Frame A2-1022, only.

Background

A dedicated project team, from the Caloundra RSL Sub Branch has been involved in finding an aircraft that had seen Operational Service in South Vietnam (SVN). They sourced Aircraft A2-1022 at Nyngan which was owned by the Bogan Shire Council.

The Bogan Shire Council agreed to release this Air Frame for a suitable replacement. A huge task has been achieved by the project team, through commitment, dedication, resourcefulness and craftsmanship. They have restored a non-military Huey to an acceptable museum standard copy 'circa 1966' as if it had seen service.

The changeover of Air Frames has occurred. Now that A2-1022 is in Caloundra it has also been restored to display standard at 'circa 1966'. It will be housed and displayed as part of the planned Caloundra RSL Sub Branch Military Display.

Situation

A2-1022 represents a very important Australian component during the war in SVN. It was 9 Squadron (9Sqn.) Royal Australian Air Force crews, gunners, load masters, fitters, maintainers and handlers that provided and satisfied the Role of, 'Provide Helicopter Support to the Royal Australian Army in SVN'.

Tasks achieved by 9 Sqn. included:

1. Causality Evacuation – DUSTOFF.
2. Combat insertion and extraction of Royal Australian Regiment (RAR) and Special Air Service Regiment (SASR) troops. The hot extractions under fire of some SASR patrols were welcome and are still legendary.

3. Operational Demand (Opdem) resupply. Sometimes under enemy fire, such as the critical small arms ammunition drop to the outnumbered D Company 6RAR in The Battle of Long Tan.
4. As an air platform Gunships providing close air to ground fire support.

All Corps within the Australian Task Force in SVN had exposure to the Huey workhorse and many owe their lives to the actions of 9Sqn.

As a recognition of the involvement of the UH1B and 9 Sqn. The Caloundra RSL Sub Branch has establish a permanent memorial of their achievements by displaying A2-1022 as a significant addition to its Military Display.

Mission

To dedicate, commemorate and celebrate the restoration and permanent display of UH1B A2-1022.

Execution

Air Chief Marshal Angus Houston AC AFC, the last Commanding Officer of 9Sqn., has been asked to officiate at the ceremony.

The Commanding Officer 6RAR has given approval 'in principle' to providing a suitable ceremonial party from within the Battalion as recognition of the Aircraft's place in their history during The Battle of Long Tan. A request for musical support from the Royal Australian Band Corp and a further request for RAAF serving personnel to be part of the ceremony has been passed to Defence.

Three nondenominational padres, one from each of the Services will dedicate the display.

The 9Sqn Association members and the surviving members and families of D Company 6RAR from The Battle of Long Tan will hold a special place on the day.

All Military Associations involved in the SVN war will be invited as significant guests.

The event will also be open to the public with suitable marketing to encourage their support.

Administration and Logistics

Timings

The ceremony is set down for 13:30 Hrs. 16 March 2012.

Catering

Afternoon tea and refreshments will be provided for the official party and the troops parading after the ceremony. All other participants are invited to utilise the facilities of the Services Club to celebrate this occasion.

Command and Signals

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