

MEDIA RELEASE

Comprehensive Account For Vietnam Official History

The final volume of *The Official History of Australia's Involvement in Southeast Asian Conflicts 1948-1975* will include the most comprehensive and authoritative accounts of the two soldiers declared missing in action whose bodies were recovered within the last year.

SAS soldier, Private David Fisher fell from a rope during a helicopter 'hot extraction' under fire, and was lost in deep jungle in 1969, and Lance Corporal John Gillespie was a medic in a helicopter that crashed during an evacuation to extract wounded men from a mine incident in the Long Hais hills in 1971.

"Because of the way the two men were lost the bodies couldn't be recovered for a long time. With the release of the final volume next year, a comprehensive account of the action in which the two men were lost and the circumstances will be available. I hope this will help bring solace to their families," official historian Mr Ashley Ekins said.

This comes in the week that we remember Vietnam Veterans' Day.

The ninth and final volume of the Vietnam official history has been meticulously researched, reconciling first hand reports and official documents to produce a balanced and objective account that honours and accurately reflects the experiences of those who served in the Vietnam conflict.

"The thorough investigation required for official histories takes years of research, including discussions with veterans, and the assessment of large quantities of supporting documents.

"This detailed and patient research results in a valuable resource for use by historians and as a reference for future generations. It is essential that the research and scholarship underpinning the volume are of the highest order," Mr Ekins said.

Official histories are "official" in the sense that they are commissioned by government as the national record of Australia's involvement in particular conflicts. The Australian official war histories contain the authors' own interpretations and judgments and do not follow any official or government line.

Since its inception, the Memorial has sponsored Australia's official war histories for the two World Wars, Korea, Vietnam, and Peacekeeping operations.

Further information:

<http://www.awm.gov.au/histories>

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