

2 Lt. ALAN DOUGLAS JELLIE

KIA VIETNAM
3 December 1969

Prepared by Lt Col Max Jellie (Rtd)



Left: Nui Dat 1969

Above: Presentation of wings, Amberley, Qld.

Alan was born 17 short months after his brother, David, and spent the next few years of his life trying to catch up and do all of the things big brother could do. His great regret was that he didn't develop infected tonsils, break bones, gash bare feet etc., etc., etc., as did his brother. He finally achieved stardom when, playing with a cousin, they broke a glass panel in a door and he had to have a half a dozen stitches inserted in a gash in his thigh, and an evil penicillin-in-oil injection.

Dad was in the Army and absent for a large part of each year of his young life. This fact, and frequent moves, welded the family into a very tight-knit group. The two boys, especially, formed a bond of friendship, second to none.

At about 8 years of age, whilst accompanying Dad to a demonstration of Infantry Weapon, he was invited to fire his first 2in. mortar. (The 3 in. bomb was too heavy for him!) After a display of MMG firing by big brother, Alan was stop into the target area until the belt was exhausted.

Queensland born, Alan cut his teeth on Rugby League, with archery and a little boxing thrown in.

When Dad was posted to Adelaide he quickly adjusted to

"aerial ping pong", and soon after, attending Marion High School, was selected as Captain of the Junior Aussie Rules Team.

On another expedition with Dad, the two boys were invited to participate in a Bren and SLR shoot. Big brother topped the score for the day. Alan came last.

In his social sport he won the 1962/63 Junior Singles Tennis Championship, and was a partner in the Junior Doubles Championship.

Marion High School had a Cadet Unit and Alan was a member. Competition between brothers was fierce for Best Turned Out Cadet, etc. Poor mother had three lots of Khaki Drill to wash, starch and iron.

A posting to Brisbane for Dad saw the family start to break up. Big brother joined the SA Police Academy, while big sister took a job in a laboratory and stayed in Adelaide. The separation reached 18 years. Dad introduced him to the Police Boys Club and, thanks to a very dedicated Sergeant, he quickly settled in. He was inveigled into playing basketball, and from complete novice was selected to be State Captain within 2 years (his matriculation year). Dad had to veto this as studies were going by the board.

Most of his life Alan had been interested in flying. (Dad was a Parachutist!) His favourite war hero was that intrepid World War 1 flying ace, "Snoopy" – hence the "beagle eye" on his Bone Dome.

Not long after his 18th birthday, Alan was accepted for flying training at RAAF Point Cook. From Point Cook to Pearce in WA for advanced flying, from whence came the telegram – "Failed Instrumentation – don't worry, I've got a job!" The job was transfer to the Army, pending a slot at Scheyville, and then to Tecny Weeny Airlines. Army aviation had not been established at that time.;

Six months at Scheyville (I shan't try to tell about that!), and off to Amberley. As 2 Lt in Royal Australian Engineers, (the pilots were held against appointments in the various corps,) hence the R.A.E. Badge on the Blue Beret for the Parade to receive his "Wings" and Things".

During his stay at Amberley, Alan made a lifesaving dash to Stradbroke Island and airlifted a seriously ill girl to hospital in Brisbane.

From Amberley Alan went on Detachment with a survey squadron in the Northern Territory. He claimed the two or

three months flying the survey sappers into (and onto!) their remote spheres of operation, was the best flying experience a pilot could get. He celebrated his 21st Birthday in the Territory.

Early 1969 saw him posted to 161 Recce Flight at Nui Dat, Vietnam, and plenty of operational flying. He seemed to have flown most C.O.'s of the Battalions and Regiments in the country at the time.

One day he felt liquid spurting over him and became aware that "Charlie" had holed his petrol tank. Contact with Base went something like this, "Possum XYZ. Have taken hostile fire. For Christ's sake, nobody light a cigarette when I land. Out".

On the morning of 4th December, Dad was summoned to the C.O.'s Office. "I have to inform you that a signal has just come in to say that 2Lt Alan Douglas Jellie has been accidentally killed in Vietnam." An hour or so later, a second signal arrived, amending the 'accidentally killed' to "killed in action."

Australia had lost its first Pilatus Porter in Vietnam and Dad had to go home and tell Mum and the family. ✕



2Lt A.D. Jellie
Nui Dat 1969