FIRST TRACKER DOGS IN VIETNAM

The first tracker war dogs to be used by troops of the Australian Task Force have arrived in Viet Nam.

Two Black Labradors with soldier handlers - Lance Corporal Norman Cameron of Kingston, South Australia and Private Thomas Blackhurst of Swansea, New South Wales - from the 7th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, are now undergoing orientation and acclimatisation training at the Task Force Base, Nui Dat, in Phuoc Tuy Province.

The dogs will be used by the Australian troops to search Viet Cong areas and jungle base zones, follow up blood trails of wounded enemy troops, and assist patrols to flush out enemy from jungle hides and Viet Cong dominated villages.

Named Justin and Cassius, the dogs were bred and trained for their war role both at the Infantry Centre, Ingleburn, New South Wales, and with the 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, at Woodside, South Australia.

Their trainers in Australia and the soldiers who trained the two handlers for Viet Nam duty were in many cases soldiers who had served in Malaya during the Emergency.

War dogs such as the two who have arrived in Viet Nam were used successfully by Australian and other Commonwealth forces in the Malayan jungles and large numbers of Australian troops were given specialist training at the Jungle Warfare School, Kota Tinggi, Johore State, Malaya.

Now for the first time since Australian troops have been committed to the war in Viet Nam home-bred tracker dogs will be working with Task Force units in search and clear operations against the Viet Cong.

Lists: A and B
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