

# SUBMISSION TO THE COMMITTEE OF REVIEW OF SERVICE ENTITLEMENT ANOMALIES IN RESPECT OF SOUTH EAST ASIAN SERVICE 1945 TO 1975:

RECOGNITION OF SERVICE BY MEMBERS OF THE EIGHTH BATTALION, THE  
ROYAL AUSTRALIAN REGIMENT WHILST PART OF THE  
BRITISH COMMONWEALTH FAR EAST STRATEGIC RESERVE IN MALAYSIA  
FROM 1 OCT 1967 UNTIL 1 MAY 1969.

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## Introduction

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- Aim** This submission seeks to justify the award of the Australian Service Medal 1945-75 (ASM 45-75) with clasp *FESR* to members of the 8th Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment (8 RAR) who rendered 30 days service in aggregate as a part of Australia's commitment to the British Commonwealth Far Eastern Strategic Reserve (FESR) in Malaysia during the period 1 October 1967 to 1 May 1969 (both dates inclusive).
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- Exclusion** This submission does NOT seek to recognise this non-warlike service through award of the Returned from Active Service Badge, or through Department of Veterans' Affairs repatriation benefits.
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- Enclosures** The following documents are submitted as enclosures by way of supporting evidence:
- a. Department of Defence Minute DM 86/6158 (SPP 1308/89) dated 12 December 1989 and enclosure '*The Australian Service Medal*'.  
**(FLAG A)**
  - b. Extract of the *Duty First: The Royal Australian Regiment in War and Peace*, ed David Horner, Allen and Unwin, N Sydney 1990 (pps 198,199).  
**(FLAG B)**
  - c. Extract of '*Australia in World Affairs 1966-70*' ed Greenwood, Gordon and Harper, Norman, Australian Institute of International Affairs (pps 242-246).  
**(FLAG C)**
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## Introduction, Continued

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**Enclosures,**  
continued

- d. Defence Instructions (Air Force) Admin 10-28 Amdt No1 dated 14 April 1997 (Annex A). **(FLAG D)**
  - e. Extract from *Oxford Companion to Australian Military History*, ed Dennis, Peter; Grey, Jeffrey; Morris, Ewan and Prior, Robin, Oxford University Press (p560). **(FLAG E)**
  - f. Extract from *Report of the Committee of inquiry into Defence and Defence Related Awards - 1994 (CIDA)* (Statement of Principles pps 5-8). **(FLAG F)**
  - g. Copies of three documents recommending and approving the ASM 1945-75 (with clasp FESR) to RAN Ships allocated or assigned to the FESR. **(FLAG G)**
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## Discussion

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### Conditions for award of the ASM 45-75

Para 3 of Flag A (Enclosure) states that *“Members of the ADF may be called upon to serve in non-warlike operations overseas which are not only hazardous, but prolonged and or arduous. Such service may warrant formal recognition through the award of the Australian Service Medal. Examples of operations which may attract the award are:*

- a. peacekeeping,*
- b. military training and assistance to foreign countries,*
- c. occupation duties,*
- d. evacuation from hostile territory,*
- e. humanitarian relief, and*
- f. deployment of forces to sensitive areas.”*

**Refer Flag A**

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### Nature of service between Emergency and Confrontation

We submit that all service rendered in Malaysia between the end of the ‘Malay Emergency’ and the commencement of ‘Confrontation’, and the period following Confrontation up until 30 October 1971 contained elements of peacekeeping, military training and assistance to foreign countries, as well as deployment of forces to sensitive areas. This service was non-warlike, overseas, hazardous, prolonged and/or arduous.

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### Service within FESR under Anglo-Malayan Defence Agreement

8 RAR deployed for duty in Malaysia on 1 October 1967 as one of the three infantry battalions of the 28th British Commonwealth Infantry Brigade (28 Bde) garrisoned in Terendak. The tour concluded on 1 May 1969. The commitment of this battalion, as well as other service units and personnel to either 28 Bde, or in other supporting roles throughout the Malay peninsular, was a part of Australia’s ongoing contribution to the FESR under the Anglo-Malayan Defence Agreement. This agreement lapsed on the 30th October 1971 and was replaced on 1st November 1971 by the Five Power Defence Agreement involving Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia and Singapore.

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### SEATO obligations

Australian forces allocated to the FESR were also earmarked for tasks (operations) as a part of the Australian contribution to the South-East Asian Treaty Organisation (SEATO).

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## Discussion Continued

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### **Nature of service and effect on individuals**

The members of 8 RAR spent approximately 6 months or 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of their tour of duty training in the Malaysian jungle with consequent exposure to a range of debilitating tropical illnesses and diseases. Deployments in force were often into areas close to trouble spots, or into areas where problems had previously arisen with internal security forces.

Married soldiers could be, and generally were accompanied by their spouse and immediate family. Separation from extended families - parents, siblings and friends, however, often placed serious strains on young wives, and on relationships. Long absences due to training and courses placed further strains on individuals. These pressures existed only within this context.

Unaccompanied soldiers, many of whom were conscripts or young regulars, were separated from all family support and friends for the full extent of their tour of up to 18 months. Unaccompanied postings to other overseas locations were of 12 months duration, making this both arduous and prolonged service.

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### **Race riots**

During the fierce race riots that swept Malaysia in late April and May 1969, some members of 8 RAR and later, 1 RAR, were involved in providing protection for married service personnel, their families and those ethnic Chinese and Indians who were closely associated with the Australians, British and New Zealanders. A large number of service personnel were accommodated outside the garrison proper. During this period of racial unrest, the ethnic minorities were frequently beaten and slain by Malay religious zealots. No major incident occurred in the married quarters areas guarded by our members, and it is certain that the mere presence of those guards assisted in persuading zealots to avoid acts of violence against our members and associated nationals who were not ethnic Malays.

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### **Internal threat to regional stability**

During the 8 RAR tour of Malaysia, there still remained an active if somewhat reduced Communist Terrorist (CT) threat. This continuing threat to internal security is clearly evident in the willingness of both the Malaysian and Singaporean governments to retain a strong Commonwealth presence for an extended period.

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## Discussion, Continued

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### External threat to regional stability

Another regional threat at this was the continued interest of Indonesia in the landmass of the archipelago and Borneo as a part of the Malaysian confederation. This threat had twice been realised with the Emergency and the Confrontation, as they have become known.

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### Role of Commonwealth forces

It is our contention that the presence of a strong, highly trained and capable contingent of Commonwealth forces in the area prevented further threats to Malaysia and Singapore. Defence co-operation, joint exercises and training, together with the presence of a strong role model provided a firm foundation for the defence forces of these countries.

The term “peacekeeping” did not exist at this time, and neither was the UN a force for regional stability. Nonetheless this is the role that was fulfilled by the Commonwealth forces within the newly independent countries of this region. It is a role comparable to some peacekeeping deployments undertaken by the Australian Defence Force in other countries in later years.

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### Relating the nature of this service to qualification for the ASM 45-75

This threat to security and our continued presence certainly justifies and meets the criteria of deployment of forces to sensitive areas. While the service of British, Australian and New Zealand forces in Malaysia may strictly speaking be not termed ‘peace keeping’ in its current sense, our presence did provide stability and the opportunity for the inexperienced armed forces of Malaysia and Singapore to train, develop and expand with a degree of reassurance and security. **Refer Flags B&C**

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### Previous consideration by CIDA

The CIDA previously considered the award of the ASM 1945-75 for service in Singapore and at Butterworth after the cessation of ‘Confrontation’ and determined that it did not meet what is defined by **Statement of Principles No 1** as, *‘Normal duties such as training and garrison duties should not be recognised by the award of a medal, even though they may be demanding, hazardous and uncomfortable, and may be undertaken in countries other than Australia. As a general rule, medals should be reserved for the recognition of service in military campaigns, peacekeeping or other military activities clearly and markedly more demanding than normal peace time service’*. **Refer Flag F**

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## Discussion, Continued

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**Inconsistent  
application of  
CIDA Principle  
No 1**

This principle has not always been consistently applied during the initial CIDA deliberations and in the subsequent consideration and recognition of service of our RAN colleagues on board RAN ships allocated or assigned to the FESR. In fact the documentation and process for gaining recognition and RAN ships assigned to the FESR is very scant compared with the detail required by CIDA when initially considering submissions for recognition.

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**CIDA Principle  
No 3 –  
comparable  
service**

Without seeking to denigrate the contribution of our RAN colleagues, whose service as part of the FESR has been duly recognised, we ask the committee to compare RAN service in Malaysian waters with that of 8 RAR who were also part of the FESR and whose service has not yet been recognised.

CIDA noted that *“To maintain the inherent fairness and integrity of the Australian system of honours and care must be taken that, in recognising service by some, the comparable service of others is not overlooked or degraded”*, and enshrined this in its **Statement of Principles No 3.**

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## Conclusion

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**Grounds for  
award of the  
ASM 45-75**

Service with 8 RAR was non-warlike, overseas, hazardous, prolonged and/or arduous. It involved deployment of forces to sensitive areas, military training and assistance to foreign countries as well as what is now defined as peacekeeping. This fulfils a number of grounds for award of the ASM 45-75 as well as Principle No 1 of the CIDA Review.

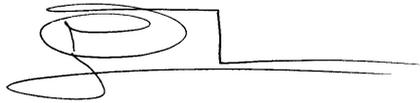
These duties were and are comparable to the service of other elements of the Australian Defence Force whose service has already been recognised by award of the ASM 45-75. Failure to recognise this service perpetuates the inequity of recognising comparable service over the same period of time within the FESR for the RAN, but not for the Army. This contravenes Principle No 3 of the CIDA Review.

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**Recognition of  
service**

We therefore submit that the *Committee of Review of Service Entitlement Anomalies in Respect of South East Asian Service 1945-75* accept the case for recognition of service for a minimum aggregate period of 30 days with the Eighth Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment between 1 October 1967 and 1 May 1969 with award of the Australian Service Medal 1945-1975 with clasp 'FESR'.

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for  
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