

[10/05/00 President's Budget Report](#)

Names on the Honour Roll - AASM – NGSM RAS Badge – Qualifying Service

Unless you have been asleep for the last week, you will now know that the Government have announced the implementation of the Review recommendations of Justice Mohr, concerning FESR Malaya 1955/60 and others. Other notable groups to get up were RAAF Ubon, 2RAR Thai/Malay Border etc. It was disappointing that some issues did not receive favourable outcomes, and that others appear to be still in the wind. However, for our part, we have done very well.

Attached you will find part of a memo from Commander Tim Bloomfield, Director Honours and Awards. This outlines some information and predictions in relation to the issue of medals. Also attached are copies of two Media releases that I have promulgated.

A disappointing part of the Budget announcement is that implementation is not until 01/01/01, 7 months down the track. I have spoken with Admirals Peek and Hudson, as well as Bob Gibbs, they are equally disappointed. Admiral Peek and Bob are angry at this move. As Bob said; "it took only 2 months to draft and enact the legislation to exclude our group from entitlements, when Davis and Doesel won at the Federal Court, and thereby deny us benefits, but it is going to take 7 months to grant us justice and give us benefits".

I appeared on Channel 7 Qld. News on Wednesday 10/5, and on The World Today, along with Admiral Hudson, on ABC Radio National on Thursday 11/5, as well as PM ABC Radio 11/5. On each occasion I protested the delay in implementation. I have had a long conversation with Michael Hughes, a retired senior army officer, who is Bruce Scott's Chief of Staff. Again, I protested the delay in our people receiving benefits. The Minister, and his staff, continue to run the line that the Government needs time to legislate the amendments to the Act. In my view, and that of some senior bureaucrats and knowledgeable people in politics, this is not true. The issue of an Instrument of Retrospective Allotment could deal with our matter. This single action would enable the time served in the FESR to be assessed for the award of the NGSM. Once that was done the current requirements of the Act would be satisfied. Remembering that Malaya is the only conflict, under the Act, that requires a Campaign Medal for the granting of Qualifying Service.

Those of you who feel strongly about this point should lobby through your local Federal Member or Senator, particularly, those that are part of the Government.

Notwithstanding the above disappointing aspect of the announcement, the rest is fairly much as we wanted.

There is still some tidying up to be done. Areas that will cause some concern are:

(a) How the days will be calculated in relation to the requirements of the Warrant for the issue of the NGSM. I have been advised by Commander Tim Bloomfield that the dates contained in Schedule 2 of the VEA, may not be those that are used in relation to the issue of medals. I expect the application to be generous. But the proof will be in the detail, when released.

(b) Some of you will be required to return your ASM if the FESR Clasp is the only one you have, and your only qualifying deployment was the same deployment for which you are awarded the AASM and NGSM. In that case, if you have another clasp ie Japan, PNG etc then you will only need to return the FESR clasp.

If you have undertaken other deployments to the Far East between 1955 and 1971, which were not those for which you will be awarded the AASM or NGSM, and you meet the days required, then you will be able to keep the ASM and FESR clasp. As Tim Bloomfield has said, do not return anything now; his staff will review each individual's entitlement, and request the return of the medals or clasps as required.

(c) When you apply for your Medals, apply also for the RAS Badge.

(d) You should also be aware that the VEA takes into account the Port to Port provisions when calculating days for their requirements. For medals it is entry into and exit from the operational area. A full list of Medal qualifying dates will be promulgated in due course. In my opinion, medal Qualifying dates will have nothing to do with Qualifying Service. As I understand it, you will all be up on that one.

Applications can be forwarded now. They will be held until processing can be carried out.

Be aware that there is huge amount of medals to be issued. Ours is not the only group involved in these latest eligibility amendments. Also, the NGSM is going to be a particular problem because of manufacturing difficulties. Tim Bloomfield has said that he will do his very best to have them out by ANZAC Day 2001. Remember, 'patience is a virtue'.

In relation to Service Pension, you should obtain a Service Pension Kit by phoning your nearest DVA Office. Fill it in, and return it to the Department of Veterans' Affairs. The Minister has instructed DVA Staff to take the applications and hold them until processing can take place.

I am sure you will all have a million questions. Those who can should come to the May meeting, and I will attempt to answer as many questions as possible. Those unable to come to the meeting should write to me at the above address. Don't listen to the 'buzz' or 'bungy' at the bar.

It will take some time for the relevant Departments and personnel to work through the implementation processes and requirements.

WE ARE UP – NOW WE MUST BE PATIENT

Regards.....Noel Payne