

15 000 New Medal Entitlements for South East Asian Service

Up to 15 000 veterans who served in Singapore and Butterworth, Malaysia between 1971 and 1989 are set to be awarded the Australian Service Medal, the Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence, Bruce Scott announced today. Mr Scott said this latest announcement on medal entitlements follows the Government's acceptance of recommendations arising from the Review of Service Entitlement Anomalies in Respect of South-East Asian Service 1955-75, and a further review of the medal entitlements of those Defence personnel who served in Singapore until 1975 and in Butterworth until 1989 - the year in which the communist insurgency in Malaysia officially ended.

"These medal entitlements recognise the vital role that Australian servicemen and women have played in the stability and security of South East Asia during a period of significant tension," he said. "The Department of Defence has received many thousands of applications for medals since the Review's findings were announced last year. "I would ask all those who have submitted applications to be patient. The applications are being processed as quickly as possible."

Mr Scott said the Government was determined to ensure proper recognition of the service and sacrifice of its servicemen and women in the defence of their country, and in assisting in the maintenance of peace and security of countries much less fortunate than Australia. "As the Coalition promised in its 1996 election policy, the Federal Government is committed to monitoring the issue of military awards and will ensure that any genuine anomalies that are brought to its attention, are rectified as quickly as possible."

For further information contact: Mark Croxford 02 6277 7820 or 0408 645 787

Attachment to Min 129/01 : BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In addition to the awards announced today, previously announced awards resulting from the Review of Service Entitlement Anomalies in Respect of South-East Asian Service 1955-75 and the follow-on Review include:

- * Australian Active Service Medal (AASM) 1945-75 with Clasp 'Malaya' for service by the Royal Australian Navy in support of operations in Malaya during the period 2 July 1955 to 31 July 1960
- * AASM 1945-75 with Clasp 'Thai-Malay' for land operations during the period 1 August 1960 to 16 August 1964 and Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) air operations during the period 17 August 1964 and 30 March 1966 on the Thai-Malay Border
- * AASM 1945-75 with Clasp 'Thailand' for service in Thailand at Ubon Air Base and with 2 Field Troop, Royal Australian Engineers, in Operation 'Crown' during the period 25 June 1965 to 31 August 1968
- * qualifying criteria for all operations that earned entitlement to the AASM 1945-75 or current AASM standardized to conform with modern criteria for warlike operations, which is basically, 'one day or more on the posted strength of a unit allotted (or assigned) to and serving in an operational area, one operational sortie into the area, 30 non-operational sorties or 30 days for visitors'
- * introduction of a separate Clasp 'SE Asia' to the Australian Service Medal (ASM) 1945-75 and current ASM, for land service during the period 1955-89 in certain areas of South-East Asia outside of the Malayan Emergency 1955-60, Thai-Malay Border operations 1960-66, Indonesian Confrontation 1962-66 and South Vietnam 1962-73

Also approved by the Governor-General were extended entitlements for:

- * ASM 1945-75 with Clasp 'Korea' for service with the British Commonwealth Forces Korea in Japan and Okinawa during the period 29 April 1952 and 26 August 1957
- * ASM 1945-75 with Clasp 'Middle East' for service with 78 Wing RAAF for duties in Malta during the period 9 July 1952 to 1 December 1954

* ASM 1945-75 with Clasp with Clasp 'SW Pacific' for:

- War Grave Unit activities in Borneo, Labuan Island and Ambon during the period 25 November 1946 to 10 November 1956
- RAAF activities on Cocos Island with No 2 Airfield Construction Squadron during the period 18 November 1951 to 24 January 1954

Applications may be made by letter or on the form available on the Department of Defence web site at http://www.defence.gov.au/dpe/dpe_site/resources/index.htm, and addressed to:

Navy Medals Section
Queanbeyan Annex
Department of Defence
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Ph: 1800 065 149

Air Force Medals Section
Queanbeyan Annex
Department of Defence
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Ph: 1800 065 149

Army Medals Section
GPO Box 5108BB
MELBOURNE VIC 3001

Ph: 1800 623 306