



SENATOR DAVID FEENEY
Parliamentary Secretary for Defence

13

Sunday, 6 March 2011

**Commendation for Gallantry Awards
for WWII Prisoners of War**

Senator David Feeney, Parliamentary Secretary for Defence, today announced that twenty servicemen who were killed while escaping from Japanese forces during World War II will be posthumously awarded the Commendation for Gallantry.

Senator Feeney accepted the unanimous recommendations of the independent Defence Honours and Awards Tribunal and called on the next of kin of those honoured to come forward and receive the Commendation for Gallantry.

The Tribunal inquired into recognition of Australian prisoners of war who were killed while escaping from Japanese forces during World War II. Among the twenty servicemen are the 'Tavoy Eight', members of the 4th Anti-Tank Regiment who were executed by firing squad in Burma on 6 June 1942.

"The Commendation for Gallantry recognises the bravery and courage of these World War II servicemen.

"Each has his own story. Some were killed while trying to escape, others executed after being recaptured. But what is common to all twenty men is the Australian spirit that they showed before their deaths.

"Gunner Cleary was one of approximately two thousand Allied prisoners of war held in the Sandakan POW camp. The retribution he experienced after an attempted escape was brutal. The 'Tavoy Eight' were refused last rites and final messages to their families before their execution in Burma," Senator Feeney said.

"Today, we recognise and remember these heroic escape attempts.

"I am calling on the next-of-kin of these twenty men to come forward and register their details with the Government. They will be invited to accept the Commendation for Gallantry on behalf of the servicemen. We are keen to hear from family members who currently possess the campaign medals of these men," Senator Feeney said.

The Tribunal recommended that the Commendation for Gallantry should be presented to the family member in possession of the deceased's World War II medals.

The Directorate may be contacted by calling 1800 111 321 or writing to:

Directorate of Honours and Awards
Department of Defence
PO Box 7952
CANBERRA BUSINESS CENTRE ACT 2610

The Tribunal's full report is available at: www.defence-honours-tribunal.gov.au.

Further information on Defence honours and awards is available at:
www.defence.gov.au/medals/

The twenty members are shown in the table below.

Name	Number	Date Executed	Execution Location
Private Alexander John Bell	VX73838	16 Mar 43	Thambyujayat , Burma
Sergeant Joseph Kenneth Bell	VX34637	16 Sep 42	Kuala Lumpur
Private Joseph Bell	VX50944 and VX18156	18 Jun 42	Malaya
Gunner Albert Neil Cleary (aka: Gunner Albert Neale Cleary)	VX52128	20 Mar 45	Ranau, Borneo
Gunner Thomas Stephen Cumming	VX31670	6 Jun 42	Tavoy, Burma
Sergeant Clifford Edmund Danaher	VX31946	6 Jun 42	Tavoy, Burma
Warrant Officer Class II Leslie George Davies	NX66447	22 Mar 42	Sumatra
Gunner Keith Johnson Dickinson	VX57167	2 Mar 43	Thambyujayat , Burma
Lance Bombardier Aubrey Alfred Emmett	VX38444	6 Jun 42	Tavoy, Burma
Private Victor Lawrence Gale	VX62289	2 Sep 42	Changi
Gunner Alan William Glover	VX57043	6 Jun 42	Tavoy, Burma
Signalman Howard Frederick Harvey	NX49419	11 May 43	Sandakan
Lance Bombardier Arthur Henry Jones	VX46835	6 Jun 42	Tavoy, Burma
Sergeant Caryle Benjamin Jones	NX45920	22 Mar 42	Djambi Camp, Sumatra
Signalman Theodore Rutland Brydon Mackay (aka: Private Daniel Seaforth McKenzie)	QX15656	11 May 43	Sandakan
Major Alan Mull	NX12243	10 Mar 43	Thambyujayat , Burma
Warrant Officer Class II Matthew Wallace Quittenton	VX45344	6 Jun 42	Tavoy, Burma
Gunner Arthur Reeve	VX27292	6 Jun 42	Tavoy, Burma
Private William Forges Schuberth (aka: Private William Forbes Schuberth)	NX2567	30 Jul 42	Malaya
Gunner James Alexander Thomas Wilson	VX47903	6 Jun 42	Tavoy, Burma

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