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13 April, 2022

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Submission to Inquiry - Mr David Bruce Munro

Part 1 – Name of Inquiry

Name of Inquiry *

Medallic recognition for service with Rifle Company Butterworth

Part 2 – About the Submitter

Title or Rank *

Mr

Surname *

Munro

Given Names *

David Bruce

Postal Address *

[REDACTED]

Email Address: *

[REDACTED]

Primary Contact Number *

[REDACTED]

Secondary Contact Number

Is the Submission on behalf of an organisation? If yes, please provide details:

No.

Part 3 – Desired outcome

Provide a summary of your submission:

Attached is my submission regarding the proper recognition of the service of Rifle Company Butterworth. I have outlined my own experience leading up to and during deployment.

Part 4 - Your submission and Supporting Documentation

Munro_RCB-submission.docx

Part 5 – Consent and declaration

✓ I consent to the Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal making my submission publicly available.

✓ I also consent to the Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal:

- using information contained in my submission to conduct research;
- providing a copy of my submission to a person or organisation considered by the Tribunal to be appropriate; and

- providing a copy of my submission to a person or organisation the subject of adverse comment in the submission;
- using content in my submission in its report to Government.

The Tribunal will decide which person or organisation is appropriate, and this may include:

1. persons or organisations required to assist with the inquiry; and
2. persons or organisations with an interest in the inquiry.

✓ I declare that the information I have provided is correct.

Name

David Munro

Date

13/04/2022 /

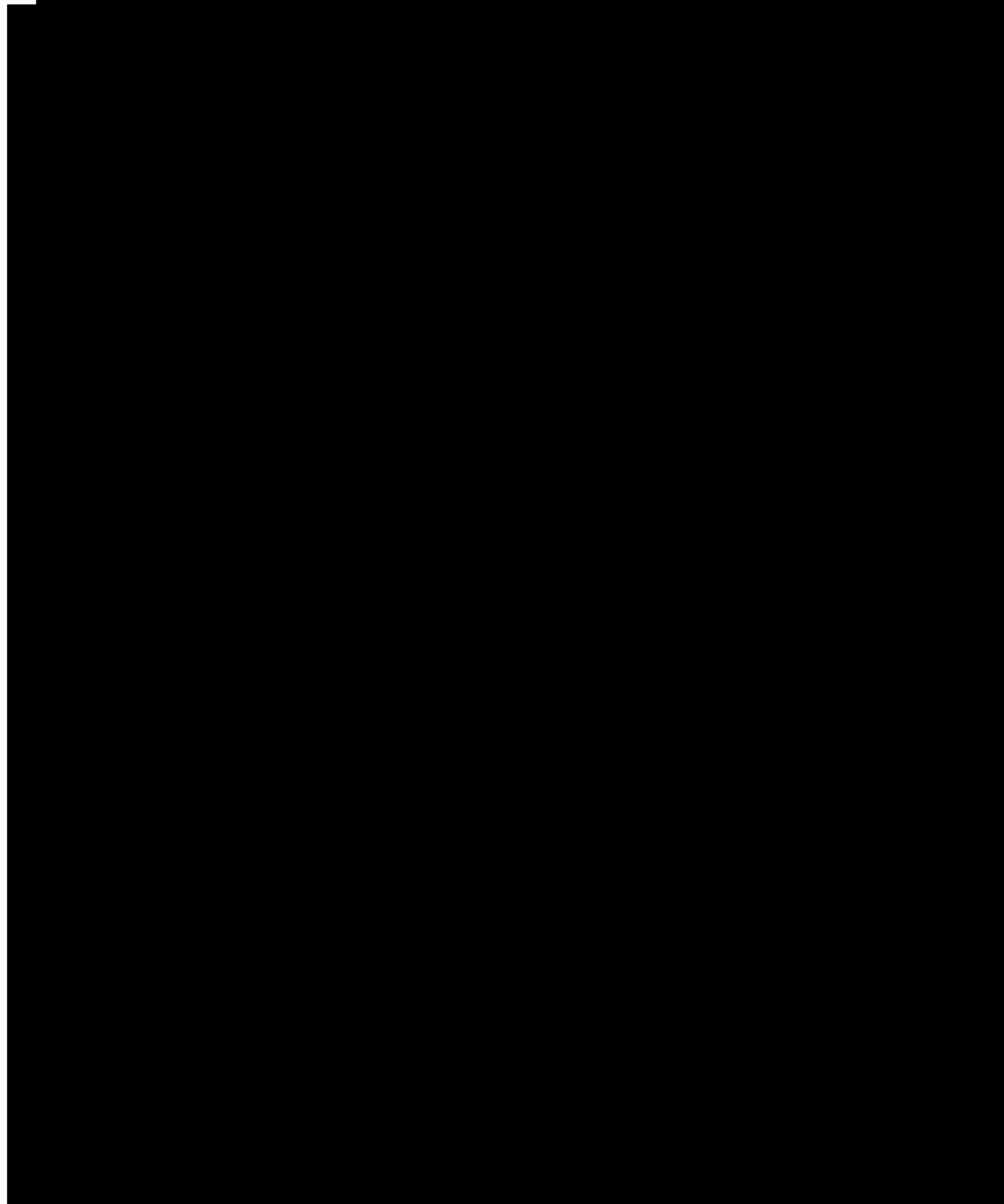
*Mr David Bruce
Munro*

Signed by Mr David Bruce Munro

Signed on: 13 April, 2022

Signature Certificate

Document name: Submission to Inquiry - Mr David Bruce Munro



Inquiry into Medallic Recognition for Service with Rifle Company Butterworth

My name is David Munro, I served in the Australian Army from 1980-1986 and then the Army Reserve in 1991.

In 1982 I was a Signaller with 139 Signal Squadron, Enoggera Queensland, when I was selected to deploy with B Company 8/9 RAR for a rotation at Rifle Company Butterworth, Malaysia.

Prior to our deployment we conducted approximately 2.5 months of rigorous training, not dissimilar to that undertaken by troops who deployed to Vietnam. This included:

- Jungle Warfare Course at Canungra which included live firing in the tropical ranges, tactics for combat in the jungle including ambush training with live rounds. This training was for over three weeks with extensive patrolling in the hinterland above the Gold Coast.
- Urban warfare training including live rounds and grenades with simulated housing scenarios
- Riot Control training including the order to shoot.
- A live firing exercise for several weeks at the Wide Bay training area which culminated in a Company sized attack on a position using live rounds and with rounds fired over us via twin Vickers Machine Guns and explosives around us to simulate actual battle noise.
- Attendance at a Battalion Firepower Demonstration including training in firing a Karl Gustav 84mm recoilless rifle using HEAT rounds.

As a non-Infantry Corps attachment I was positioned within the Rifle Group of 9 Section, 6 Platoon as Number two rifleman.

We deployed on 18 May 1982, departing from Amberley RAAF Base via Darwin to Butterworth on a B707.

One of the members of the deploying company missed the departure and I believe was charged and spent time incarcerated for missing an operational deployment.

Once in country we were briefed (again) on the threat of the Communists Terrorists (CTs) and our role as protection for the Australian assets on the base. We were advised of our roles and responsibilities of the various stages of the Quick Reaction Force (QRF) that we were there to man, with QRF 1 being the top level. On QRF 1 we were in a duty room standing by at all times with full kit and rounds ready for call outs as ordered by the Ground Defence Operations Centre as necessary to stop penetration into the Base area and to counter attack to repel, kill and/or capture the enemy as per our ROE. QRF 2 was our internal Company lines security piquet and QRF 3 were stood down, noting that our time off was still considered as being available for QRF.

As part of the briefing we were given Rules of Engagement (ROE) which, in part, required us to state in Malay and English "Stop or I will shoot". The ROE instructions were carried at all times in our left breast pocket.

Also once in country I was moved from rifleman carrying an SLR in 9 Section to Platoon Sig for 6 Platoon carrying an M-16, I believe due to the lack of a Sig as he was incarcerated in Australia for missing the deployment. As the Platoon Sig I attended all briefings by the Platoon Commander which always included an update on the CT threat for each of the section commanders.

The very first thing we did upon arrival was conduct an acclimatisation exercise to prepare ourselves for the months of deployment we were there for.

I was a very junior soldier aged 19 years (I believe the minimum age for deployment) and was selected as I was fit and was seen by my troop commander as suitable to undertake the Infantry role I would be deployed to do.

Several things stick in my mind from my time on the deployment:

- I was escort for a charge and the statement at the opening of the charge being read out was "Whilst on War Service".
- The OC, a Major, had increased powers due to the nature of the deployment and the apparent "War Service".
- Discipline was very strict with many charges and punishments meted out for infractions that in Australia would have gained lesser penalties. This included up to four of our members gaining 28 days incarceration.
- We were constantly briefed and reminded that there was a Communist Insurgency and there was always a threat, we were the deterrent. This was not taken lightly by anyone.
- We were well armed. Aside from our regular small arms, heavier weapons and ammunition were available at the base armoury.
- At the time most units were slightly undermanned and I was told that most Infantry Sections were operating with 9 men. We were a fully manned and armed Rifle Company with 10 men per section and full Platoon and Company HQ and support. Everyone was DP1.

The time I was training and the time I was deployed I never considered that this was a "training trip", why would we conduct months of pre-deployment training using live rounds on multiple occasions to go away on a training trip. We knew what we were there for and our responsibilities in being a deterrent for the known threat from the communist insurgents.

B Company 8/9 RAR deployed from 18 May til 1 September 1982, a total of 104 days in country. We were extended for two weeks to cover for 3 RAR who were delayed due to the move from Woodside, SA to Holsworthy, NSW. If this was just a training exercise why the necessity to ensure that the Rifle Company was always in place and ready at all times.

The evidence that has been presented by the recognition group shows beyond any doubt what the purpose of Australian Rifle Company Butterworth was. The comments from General Tan Sri Dato'Sri Hj Affendi Bin Buang, Chief of the Malaysian Defence Force echo, indeed re-enforce, this..."your presence and sacrifice here in (sic) Malaysian soil in protecting RMAF Butterworth base during the resurgence of the communist insurgency in 1970-1989 was a remarkable contribution...".

Infantry have a saying "Train Hard, Fight Easy". We were well trained prior to deployment, well prepared and ready for any eventuality. I am very proud of the time I spent with 8/9 RAR, it was the highlight of my service and to have it denigrated as it is has been does not sit well with me.

We were a deterrent for the insurgents, a deterrent that worked due to our preparedness and the training undertaken prior to deployment.

There was incurred danger; we were briefed on it constantly. No one was in any doubt.

Recognition of the true nature of Australian Rifle Company Butterworth is long overdue.

David Munro

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