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10 May, 2022

Signed On : <https://defence-honours-tribunal.gov.au>

## Submission to Inquiry - Mr. Peter Norman Gerdes

### Part 1 – Name of Inquiry

**Name of Inquiry \***

Recognition of Rifle Company Butterworth Service 1968 - 1989 Malaysia

### Part 2 – About the Submitter

**Title or Rank \***

Mr.

**Surname \***

Gerdes

**Given Names \***

Peter Norman

**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:**

This submission is for myself and for the Rifle Company Butterworth.

### Part 3 – Desired outcome

**Provide a summary of your submission:**

Retrospective Allotment for Special Overseas Service for RAAF and Rifle Company Butterworth Personnel in Malaysia 1968-1989 for Medallie and Repatriation Benefits.

### Part 4 - Your submission and Supporting Documentation

File Attached: DVA-Submission.pdf

### 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**

Peter Norman Gerdes

**Date**

10/05/2022 /

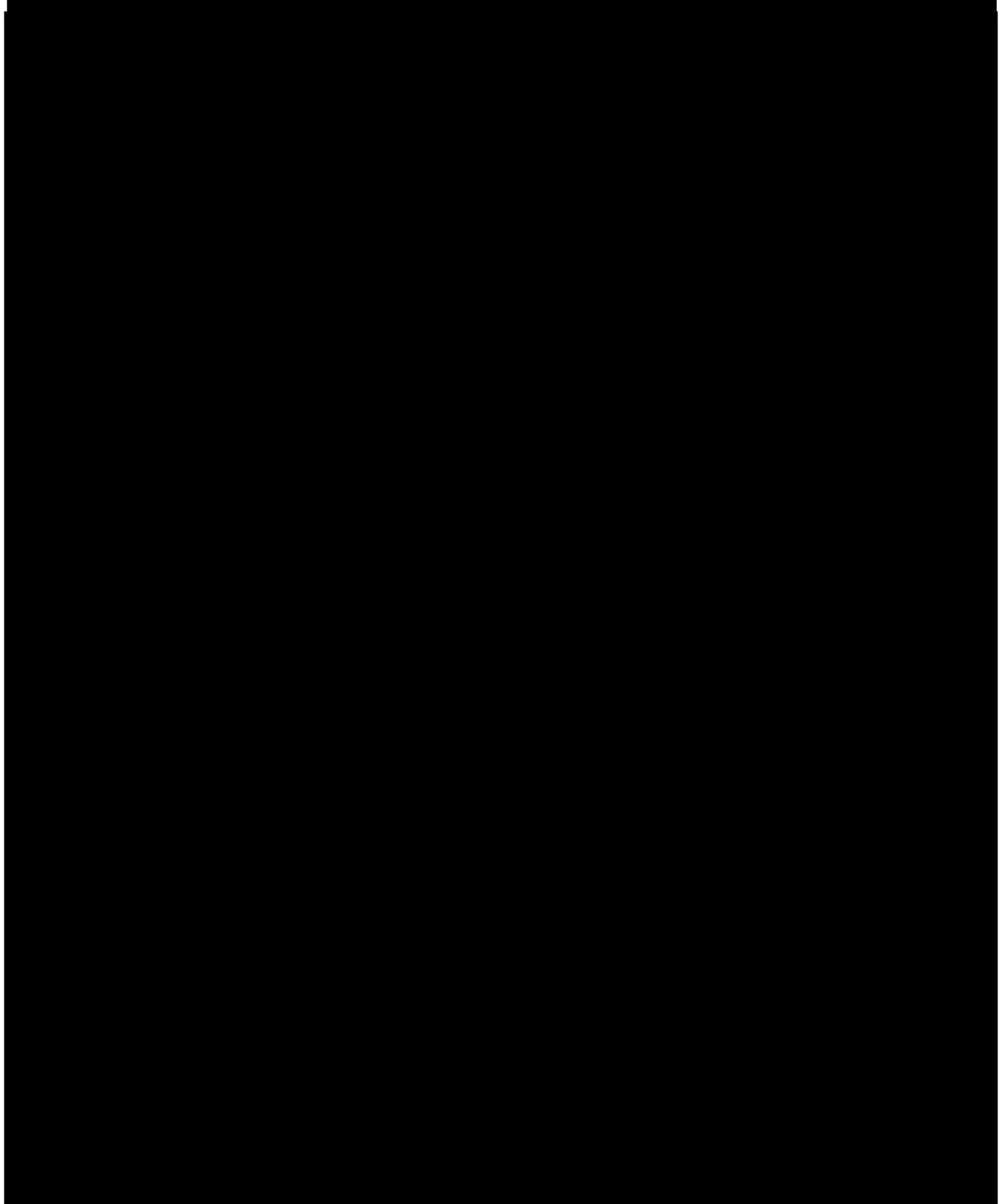
*Mr. Peter Norman  
Gerdes*

Signed by Mr. Peter Norman Gerdes

Signed on: 10 May, 2022

# Signature Certificate

Document name: Submission to Inquiry - Mr. Peter Norman Gerdes



# **DEFENCE HONOURS & AWARDS TRIBUNAL**

## **SUBMISSION TO INQUIRY**

**03 May 2022**

I served as a member of the Royal Australian Air Force at 478 Squadron Air Base Butterworth for a period of thirty months from 23 October 1969 to 13 April 1972. I was A222868 Cpl Peter Norman Gerdes. My mustering was Aircraft Instrument Fitter and primary task was to repair, calibrate and maintain test equipment required for the maintenance of the Mirage Fighter Squadrons, Transport Support Flight, Sabre Advisory Flight and Base Squadron Support Equipment together with the maintenance of test equipment for Squadrons deployed to Vietnam and Singapore. These duties were carried out in an environmentally controlled Precision Measuring Equipment Laboratory specially built for the purpose.

Prior to posting, I was briefed that Malaysia was enduring a period of civil unrest due to ethnic differences with riots on Penang Island and Curfew hours in force. On arrival at Butterworth, my Wife and I were briefed on the potential for "booby Traps", the activity of Riot Police, confirmation of the current curfew hours and the need to exercise caution and maintain a high level of situational awareness. Gurkha Rifles were based at Minden Barracks on Penang Island at that time and I became aware of the Communist Insurgency activity.

During a period of what can only be described as heightened CT activity, threat alerts were issued resulting in an SLR and live rounds being placed in the PME Laboratory for the defence of personnel and assets. Significant potential for casualties must have been a major concern for such action to have been ordered. A major concern at the time was that of the welfare of families on Penang should the Base be closed with all personnel required to remain in defence of the Base.

I submit that my Service in Malaysia was definitely not peacetime service. I was posted to Butterworth under the Anglo-Malaysian Defence Agreement 1963. Commonwealth Forces serving under this agreement are entitled to be awarded the British General Service Medal 1962 for service in Malaysia. The Five Power Defence Agreement became effective on 1 November 1971 after the withdrawal of British Forces and Families from the Far East. Australian Parliamentary Approval for a reinforcement force of a Brigade of three Battalions was given in December 1971. Security of RAAF Personnel and Assets was obviously a concern of the Department of Defence.

My previous requests for correct recognition and Qualifying Service have been denied because the allotment for overseas special service paperwork was not completed. It can be argued that the popular opinion against the deployment of Conscripts to Vietnam was the reason for that omission.

In addition to my claim, I totally support the Rifle Company Butterworth in their claim for correct recognition. For years the Review Group have researched and accessed Top Secret and Secret documents supporting the claim and proving the potential for hostilities in the protection of Malaysian and Australian Defence Force Personnel and Assets. Those documents have continuously been ignored by Department of Defence and Governments of the day. The deployment of the RCB replaced the British Forces after 1971, the New Zealand Forces after 1973, and allowed the RAAF personnel to return to the tasks for which they were deployed. The RCB performed extremely well in deterring a

major Incursion onto Air Base Butterworth, a task that had been thought to require a Brigade of three Battalions.

The Malaysian Government has recognized Malaysian and Commonwealth Forces for their Service during both the First and Second Communist Insurgencies with the award of the Pingat Jasa Malaysia (PJM). Defence Force Members who served during the First Incursion have been retrospectively allotted for Special Overseas Service, and awarded the PJM. The Malaysian Government sees no difference between 1964 and 1989. The documents released under FOI show the threat at a potentially higher level after 1968.

The New Zealand Government has accepted the evidence and has now recognised New Zealand forces with Operational Service.

In conclusion, I believe that with honest consideration of the documentary evidence submitted to this inquiry the outcome must be a recommendation to apply the *Repatriation (Special Overseas Service) Act 1962 (SOS Act)* for my Service and the RCB, and the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986 (VEA)* for the latter years of RCB Service with the retrospective allotment for Overseas Special Service.

I am therefore requesting Qualifying Service for Repatriation Benefits. The award of the Australian Active Service Medal 45-75 with Clasp 'MALAYSIA', General Service Medal 1962 with clasp 'MALAY PENINSULAR', and the Pingat Jasa Malaysia. Additionally, in view of my duties maintaining test equipment supporting the ADF in Vietnam I also apply for the Vietnam Logistics Support Medal.

I remain yours faithfully,  
Peter Norman Gerdes.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

# Royal Australian Air Force

## Permanent Air Force

### Certificate of Discharge

Rank and Name:..... Corporal Peter Norman GERDES

Date and Place of Birth: 23/9/1945 Ryde NEW SOUTH WALES

Enlisted on: 25/5/1965

Official Number:..... A222868

Discharged on: 31/5/1974 Total Service:..... 9..... years..... 7..... days

Reason for Discharge (under provisions of AFR 115( 1 ) ) : On Request

Conduct Assessment:..... Exemplary

RAAF Trade:..... Instrument Fitter

Trade Proficiency:

Skill in trade:..... Superior

Ability as a supervisor:..... Superior

Administrative ability:..... Superior

Civil Vocation:..... Legal Searcher

Qualification and Special Courses: No 56 Instrument Mechanic Course 1966; No 37

Instrument Fitter Course 1967; Hercules C130E Instrument Course 1968; No 16 Semi-Conductor Course 1968; No 2 Precision Measuring Equipment Laboratory Technician Course 1969

Honours and Awards:..... Nil

Remarks: Transferred to the RAAF Reserve on 1/6/1974

*P. Norman* *Flt Lt*  
Member for Personnel

Signature of Member:.....

Certificate No: 32589

Date of Issue: 19/6/1974

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