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8 June, 2022

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Submission to Inquiry - Mr Christopher John Crewther

Part 1 – Name of Inquiry

Name of Inquiry *

Inquiry into medallic recognition for service with Rifle Company Butterworth

Part 2 – About the Submitter

Title or Rank *

Mr

Surname *

Crewther

Given Names *

Christopher John

Postal Address *

[REDACTED]

Email Address: *

[REDACTED]

Primary Contact Number *

[REDACTED]

Secondary Contact Number

[REDACTED]

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

No

Part 3 – Desired outcome

Provide a summary of your submission:

I recommend medallic recognition, through the Australian Active Service Medal, for Sabe Saitta and other Australian veterans who served with Rifle Company Butterworth in Malaysia between 1970 and 1989, based on the evidence submitted, and more broadly, and given the recognition provided to veterans from other nations who served in Malaysia during this period.

Part 4 - Your submission and Supporting Documentation

File Attached:

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

Christopher John Crewther

Date

08/06/2022 /

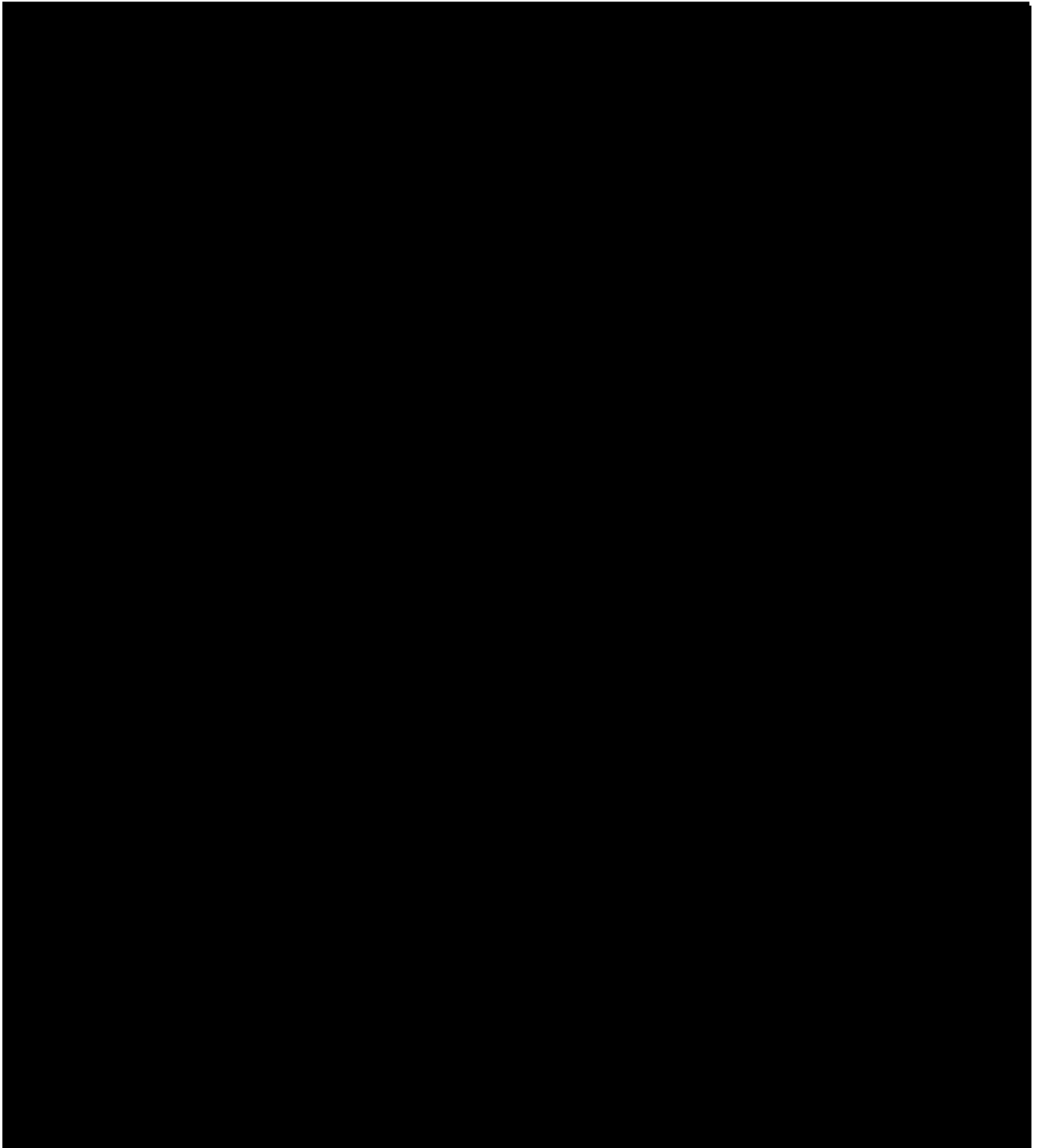
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Crewther', written in a cursive style.

Signed by Mr Christopher John Crewther

Signed on: 8 June, 2022

Signature Certificate

Document name: Submission to Inquiry - Mr Christopher John...



From: [Chris Crewther](#)
To: [DHA Tribunal](#)
Cc: [Sebastian Saitta](#)
Subject: Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal – Submission for Sabe Saitta - Inquiry into medallic recognition for service with Rifle Company Butterworth
Date: Monday, 6 June 2022 11:24:29 PM
Attachments: [Outlook-ams2vgfo.png](#)
[Outlook-https_ww.png](#)
[Outlook-https_ww.png](#)
[Outlook-https_ww.png](#)
[Outlook-https_ww.png](#)
[Sabe photos.eml](#)

EXTERNAL EMAIL: Do not click any links or open any attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal,

I am writing with respect to the 'Inquiry into medallic recognition for service with Rifle Company Butterworth', on behalf of local Mt Martha, Victoria, resident Sabe Saitta (cc'd).

Sabe currently runs his own business, Sabe's Hobby House (see <https://sabeshobbyhouse.com.au/>), and is a military veteran with an assistance dog named Wicket.

For introductory purposes, I am currently the Liberal Candidate for the Victorian District of Mornington. Formerly, I was the Federal Member of Parliament for Dunkley, Chair of Parliament's Foreign Affairs & Aid Sub-Committee, and Member of Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade. I have also in the past worked as a Political and Legislative Adviser to the Shadow Minister for Veterans' Affairs between 2012-13.

My father himself started in the Army through the Army Apprentice Scheme based at Mt Martha, and my grandfather and great-grandfather served in the Navy and Army respectively. My grandmother was put through school by Legacy, as an only child, following my great-grandfather's death due to the effects of mustard gas poisoning post the World War I.

Background

I understand that the Tribunal will re-examine the issue of medallic recognition for Australians who served with Rifle Company Butterworth in Malaysia between 1970 and 1989.

In more detail, I understand that Tribunal will consider whether these Australian veterans should receive the Australian Active Service Medal for their deployment to Malaysia.

I note that the issue was looked at by the Tribunal more than a decade ago, and a view was taken at the time not to recognise their service as “warlike”.

However, I also note that the New Zealand Government recently broadened eligibility for

the New Zealand Operational Service Medal for veterans who served in Malaysia and Singapore between 1959 and 1974. Given this, I agree that it is timely that this issue is re-examined.

Veterans who have served on Rifle Company Butterworth deployments **have been fighting for this additional recognition for years.**

Australian Defence Force personnel have served continuously at the Royal Malaysian Air Force Base Butterworth in Malaysia since 1970, when Rifle Company Butterworth was deployed at a time of unrest in Malaysia, led by the Malayan Communist Party (MCP). The MCP signed a peace treaty with the Government of Malaysia in 1989.

Submission

Firstly, it is the submission of Sabe, with other veterans, that the conflict never ended after the first emergency, hence the recognition the Malaysian Government wished to give veterans like Sabe via a medal.

Sabe states that that two groups of communist insurgents did not sign a peace treaty until 1989 and 1990, respectively. If they were simply combatants in hiding, the Malaysian Government would not have entered such a process.

Sabe notes that he and others with him were armed, and given the rules of engagement, not to mention the fact that they were under war law, where any action by them with respect to (and not limited to) AWOL would be desertion, and so forth.

Noting NZ's recent recognition, Sabe notes that he and others spent a very short time at the Kiwi Barracks in Singapore in the 80's. 1RNZIR was relocated south from Terendak Camp in Malaysia to Singapore in December 1969. At first they were stationed at Nee Soon Garrison, but in June 1971 they were moved to Dieppe Barracks. New Zealand maintained its battalion in Singapore until 1989.

New Zealand Force Southeast Asia (NZFORSEA) (1974–1989) comprised the elements of the Royal New Zealand Navy, New Zealand Army and Royal New Zealand Air Force. Much of the New Zealand military left Singapore as part of operation Kupe in 1989, leaving behind a residual Defence Support Unit (NZDSU). Read more here: <https://biblioasia.nlb.gov.sg/vol-15/issue-3/oct-dec-2019/dieppe-barracks/>

Surrounding this situation was the continuing cold war at the time, with the continued pressure of the Vietnam War that saw veterans like Sabe continue to rescue Vietnamese out of the South China Sea.

Sabe was part of a rescue that saw him and others he was with rescue 99 people, where

they then took them to Singapore. That was in the 1980s. See some photos **attached** of just some of the people Sabe was involved with rescuing, who duly recognise him and other veterans for these acts during their service.

Sabe notes that the American sailors he and other Australian veterans served with on the same deployment were recognised as serving in the area during the cold war, whereas he and his compatriots were not.

Recommendation

With Sabe, I recommend medallic recognition, through the Australian Active Service Medal, for Australians who served with Rifle Company Butterworth in Malaysia between 1970 and 1989, based on the evidence both aforementioned and more broadly, and given the recognition provided to veterans from other nations who served in Malaysia during this period.

Supplementary submission

Note that, following further conversation with Sabe or a request via the Tribunal, it may be necessary for me to provide additional information supplementary to this submission. Sabe and I are more than happy to do so.

Thank you very much for opening and running this Inquiry, and for your time. Please do not hesitate to contact me for further information.

Kind regards,



CHRIS CREWTER

LIBERAL FOR MORNINGTON



[Redacted email address]



[CrewtherChris](#)



[Redacted phone number]



www.chriscrewther.com.au

Chris **CREWTER**

LIBERAL FOR MORNINGTON

VISIT WEBSITE





