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3 February, 2023

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Submission to Inquiry - Mr Terrence Blake

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

Given Names *

Terrence

Surname *

Blake

Post-nominals (if applicable)

Flight Lieutenant (Rtd)

Street Number and Name *

[Redacted]

Suburb *

[Redacted]

Postcode *

[Redacted]

State *

[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:

Part 3 – Desired outcome

Provide a summary of your submission:

I served in the RAAF at Butterworth Malaysia from May 1970 to November 1972. I believe the service we provided and that provided by the Rifle Company Butterworth do satisfy the requirement for the recognition of the Australian Active Service Medal. In my submission I describe the situation I faced during my posting to Butterworth.

Part 4 - Your submission and Supporting Documentation

File Attached: T.Blake-submission-to-RCB-Butterworth-Medallie-Recognition.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

T.A.Blake

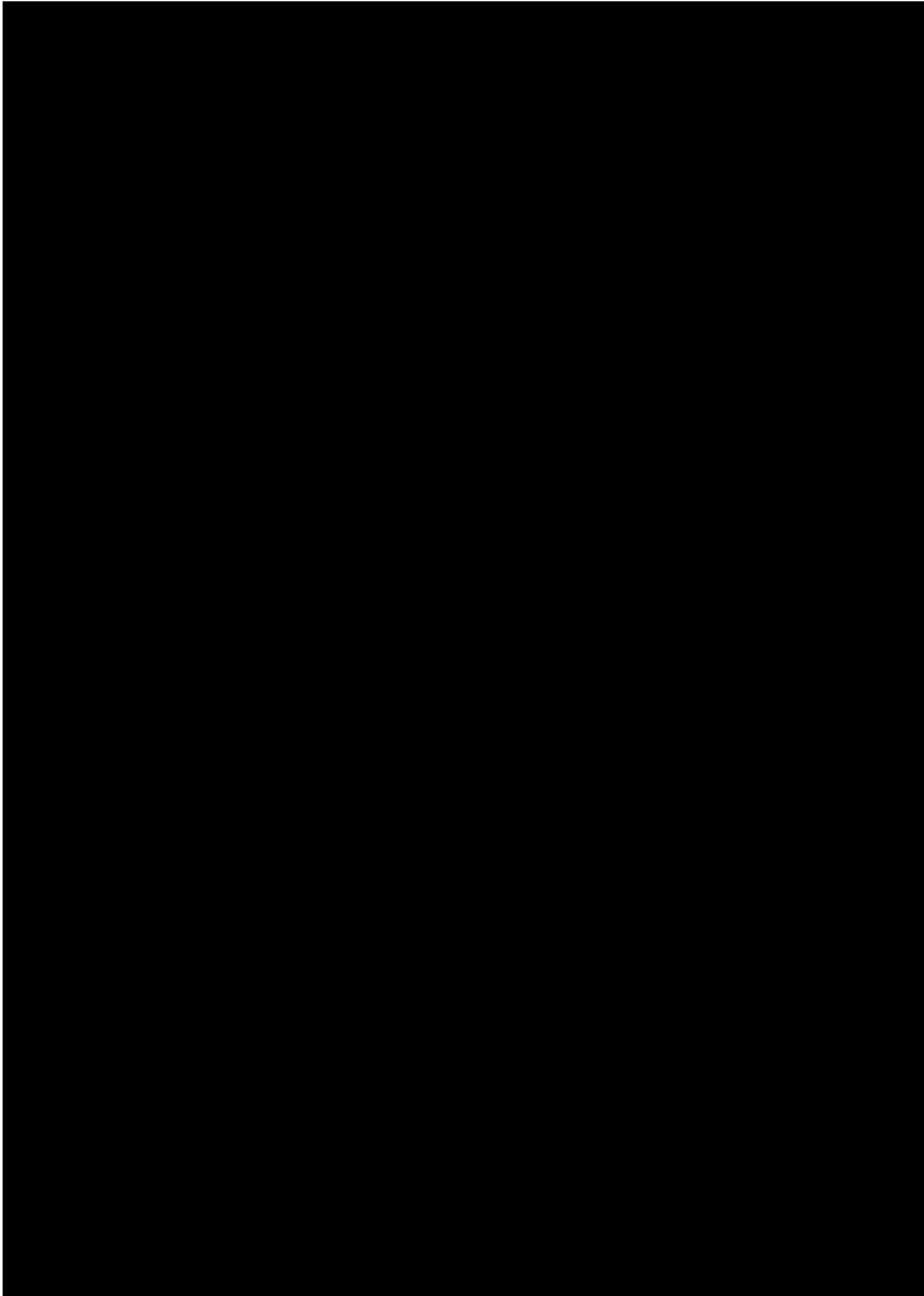
Date

03/02/2023

Mr Terrence Blake

Signed by Mr Terrence Blake

Signed on: 3 February, 2023



Submission to the Inquiry into Medallic recognition for service with Rifle Company Butterworth

Mr Terrence Blake

I was a member of the RAAF contingent who served at Butterworth from May 1970 until November 1972. For a significant period of my posting there were curfews rigidly enforced by heavily armed Malaysian Police units. In addition, armed RAAF service police also carried out patrols. I doubt these precautions were deemed necessary because there was no possibility of a threat.

I was a RAAF Radio Technician, part of my duties, along with colleagues, was to service and maintain the various navigation aids in operation both on the airfield and in the case of several of the units off the Base. My tasks included the AR1 Airfield Surveillance Radar located "outside the wire" and the TACAN navigation aid which was also "outside the wire" some kilometres from the base. Maintaining these required a daily trip in the service vehicle to and from the base at Butterworth, sometimes at night. Even though at that time there were reports of CT activity in the local area including booby traps and damage to roads and infrastructure, unbelievably we were sent out to these remote locations unarmed and unescorted. On several occasions even though travelling in marked RAAF vehicles we were challenged by very aggressive Kor Polis Tentera units searching for insurgents. These encounters did not promote a feeling of safety for those of us expected to carry out our duties outside the confines of the base.

We were also sometimes called upon to perform on base security duties such as armed flight line guard/patrols where, although authorised to use lethal force following the prescribed procedure, we were warned that we would/could be subject to Malaysian criminal law if we did so! Ah, how well Defence looks after its charges.

For much of our time there, 1970-1972, I believe the base security was provided by a company of Australian/New Zealand or British soldiers on rotation from Singapore so I am unsure when the RCB began its duties, but I can attest that when we did see the soldiers it was a great comfort especially to those of us working outside the relative security of the Base.

While not seeking to belittle the service of others, it's always been a source of disappointment to me to view the recognition of some, who in various theatres were awarded recognition for their service sometimes for as little as a day in theatre, while service in Butterworth has been essentially disparaged as unworthy.

T.A.Blake

Flight Lieutenant (Rtd)

3 February 2023