

## Submission to Inquiry - Lt(Ret) John Ward Hunt

### Part 1 – Name of Inquiry

Name of Inquiry \*

Medallic recognition for service with Rifle Company Butterworth.

### Part 2 – About the Submitter

Title or Rank \*

Lt(Ret)

Given Names \*

John Ward

Surname \*

Hunt

Post-nominals (if applicable)

FIEAust

Street Number and Name \*

[REDACTED]

Suburb \*

[REDACTED]

Postcode \*

[REDACTED]

State \*

[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:

To have my service elevated from Normal Peacetime service to Wartime service with veteran benefits.

### Part 4 - Your submission and Supporting Documentation

File Attached: DHAAT-additional-SUBMISSION-20230417-018-D-RE-RCB.pdf

My-Submission-to-Maj-Gen-Mohr-1999.pdf

Annex-A-to-review-update-2001.pdf

Bilson-Pat-Clarke-NO-GO-Zone.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**

John Ward Hunt

**Date**

18/04/2023

*Lt(Ret) John Ward*

*Hunt*

Signed by Lt(Ret) John Ward Hunt

Signed on: 18 April, 2023

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## **ANNEX A TO SEA REVIEW UPDATE OF MAY2001 FINDINGS OF FOLLOW-ON REVIEW TO THE REVIEW OF SERVICE ANOMALIES IN RESPECT OF SOUTH-EAST ASIAN SERVICE 1955-75**

The following is the basis on which the Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence approved an extension of the award of the ASM 1945-75/ASM with Clasp 'SE Asia' for service in Singapore until 31 April 1975 and Malaysia until 31 December 1989.

### **Background**

In 1955 Commonwealth forces were stationed in Malaya as part of the British Commonwealth Far East Strategic Reserve (FESR) to deter communist Chinese aggression and fight the continued armed Malaysian communist terrorism. At the time, Australia considered South-East Asia the area of greatest strategic importance to its own defence, let alone the defence of South-East Asia. The strategic thinking behind the FESR was that a military response to a crisis on the Malay Peninsula would be swifter if air power was already in position.

In April 1971 a 'Five Power' ministerial meeting attended by representatives of Australia, Malaysia, Singapore, New Zealand and the United Kingdom selected 1 November 71 as the date on which new defence arrangements would come into effect. Accordingly, FESR would cease on 30 October 1971. Australia's Chiefs of Staff had previously agreed that a continuing strong presence in the region was highly desirable, and the most effective and convenient form of that

presence would be the two RAAF fighter squadrons already at Butterworth.

Given the timetable for the British withdrawal, the nucleus of a new air defence system had to be in place by mid-1971. The two RAAF fighter squadrons at Butterworth assumed the leading role in the new integrated air defence system giving Malaysia and Singapore an opportunity to build up their own defence forces. In 1974 Long-Range Maritime Patrol Aircraft commenced a program of continuous rotational deployment through Butterworth for regional surveillance. The surveillance of the region provided a valuable contribution to the stability of the Malaysian borders.

The Australian, New Zealand and United Kingdom (ANZUK) Force was created on 1 November 1971 with troops from Australia, the UK and NZ stationed as a deterrent to armed attack, or the threat of such attack. The ANZUK Force was created from its existing resources and was not an integral part of the Five Power Arrangements. The ANZUK Force was disbanded on 1 January 75 with the last elements of Australian military personnel withdrawn in April 75.

The Rifle Company Butterworth was established in 1970 as a quick-reaction force to provide protection for Australian assets within the perimeter of the Royal Malaysian Air Force Base Butterworth, due to the continued threat of armed Communist

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terrorism within its borders. It was initially provided from the ANZUK Australian Force and was formally under operational command of the Commander ANZUK Forces. Besides securing protection for the two jet squadrons within the perimeter of the Air Base, the role of the RCB was to provide a quick-reaction force to meet the communist terrorist threat, and be responsible for internal security within Air Base Butterworth. The RCB was not to be involved in local civil disturbances or to be employed in operations outside the gazetted area of the Air Base. Rules of Engagement (ROE) for the RCB were specific on 'Orders to Open Fire' if threatened and security was breached, but were applied within Air Base Butterworth only, regardless of curfew, periods of increased security, air defence exercises or time of day or night. Although it may have involved patrolling, its ROE was defensive only, not unlike those during UN peacekeeping operations.

There are recorded incidents of ambushes on Malaysian troops, bombings and daily skirmishes with local military and police forces by the terrorists. Accordingly, due to these terrorist activities, the northern regions of the Malay Peninsula were 'no go' areas for Australian Defence Force personnel.

In February 1988, the then Minister for Defence announced a reduction of the RAAF presence at Butterworth in consultation with the Malaysian and Singaporean governments. In December 1989, Chin Peng, the leader of the Malaysian Communist Party signed a peace accord with the Malaysian Government. These events resulted in the RAAF presence being dramatically reduced and the quick reaction role of the RCB abolished. Since 1989, Butterworth has provided a good overseas training ground for Army personnel, albeit still under the name of RCB. Although there is still a Five Power Agreement, this is now primarily a Defence cooperation agreement rather than a regional security treaty, ie. the RAAF and the RCB devote more time to training activities with the Malaysian and Singaporean Armies.

### **Findings**

In view of the conditions that existed in Singapore and Malaysia after the Indonesian Confrontation on 11 August 1966, and until the end of FESR on 30 October 1971, duties in Butterworth are equally deserving of an award due to the terrorist threat which existed and the purpose of regional security under the ANZUK and FPDA.



B1564  
42331

AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE HEADQUARTERS

## MINUTE

PE 2000-34836 Pt 1  
CDF 249/01

*B 12/4. Good outcome!*

AIDHQ
18 MAY 2001
CDF 12/4/2001
Reg No. 1198

Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence

### RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE REVIEW OF SERVICE ENTITLEMENT IN RESPECT OF THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE AND ARMY RIFLE COMPANY BUTTERWORTH SERVICE 1971-1989

#### RECOMMENDATION

That you **approve** the awards of the Australian Service Medal (ASM) 1945-75/ASM with Clasp 'SE ASIA' for service in South-East Asia from 31 Oct 71 to 31 Dec 89 as outlined below.

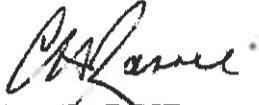
#### OVERVIEW

- On 30 Aug 00, you advised in a Media Release concerning the implementation of the recommendations of the Mohr Report that a separate submission would be completed addressing service in Singapore/Butterworth following the cessation of FESR on 30 Oct 71. This minute outlines the findings of a further review of this service.
- Following the cessation of the Far East Strategic Reserve (FESR) on 30 Oct 71, Australia maintained a presence in South-East Asia under similar arrangements with the Australian, New Zealand and United Kingdom (ANZUK) force until Apr 75. In 1970, the Rifle Company Butterworth (RCB) was raised to provide a quick reaction force to meet the communist terrorist threat and provide internal security and protection for Australian assets within the perimeter of Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) Base Butterworth.
- After ANZUK disbanded in 1975, the RAAF retained its presence at Butterworth for regional security under the Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA). The RCB ready reaction force was retained.
- Rules of Engagement (ROE) for the RCB were not dissimilar to those used on United Nations peacekeeping operations, ie. application of force authorised for self-defence.
- The communist terrorist threat was proven to be real with recorded clashes on a number of occasions within its borders until Chin Peng, the Communist Leader, signed a peace accord in Dec 89.
- Following the peace accord, the Australian contribution was scaled down with the reduction of the RAAF presence at Butterworth and the RCB devoting more time to training activities with the Malaysian and Singaporean Armies.
- In view of the conditions that existed in Singapore and Malaysia after the Indonesian Confrontation on 11 Aug 66 and until the end of FESR on 31 Oct 71, it is considered that duties in Butterworth are equally deserving of an award due to the terrorist threat which existed and the purpose of maintaining regional security. This is in keeping with CIDA principles.
- An estimated 19,600 members served in Singapore/Butterworth between 1971-1989, however, it is expected that about 25% will have already qualified for an award for their service in South-East Asia.

Sensitivity. Nil

**Resources.** Resource implications are estimated at \$0.37M and these funds will need to be included in financial year 2001/2002 bids. However, any awards assessed before Jul 01 could be met from within this year's allocation.

**AUTHORISED:**

  
**C. A. BARRIE**  
ADML  
CDF  
Tel: 6265 2858

10 Apr  
Mar 01

~~**APPROVED/NOT APPROVED**~~



**BRUCE SCOTT MP**

15/04/01

**CONTACT:**

Mr Pat Clarke  
Tel: 6265 1513

Copies: Office of the Minister for Defence, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Defence,  
Secretary

## **BACKGROUND**

Following the Report of the South-East Asia review and your Media Release of 30 Aug 00, you instructed that a further review of service in the South-East Asia region be conducted and be the subject of a well considered brief. This was in regard to service after the cessation of the FESR on 31 Oct 71 and particularly that with Australian, New Zealand and United Kingdom Forces (ANZUK) until 1975, and further service in Malaysia with the Army Rifle Company Butterworth (RCB) and RAAF. This submission recommends the further award of the ASM 1945-75/ASM Clasp 'South-East Asia' for service in those cases.

## **ISSUES**

In 1955 Commonwealth forces were stationed in Malaya as part of the British Commonwealth Far East Strategic Reserve (FESR) to deter communist Chinese aggression and fight the continued armed Malaysian communist terrorism. At the time, Australia considered South-East Asia the area of greatest strategic importance to its own defence, let alone the defence of South-East Asia. The strategic thinking behind the FESR was that a military response to a crisis on the Malay Peninsula would be swifter if air power was already in position.

In Apr 71 a 'Five Power' ministerial meeting attended by representatives of Australia, Malaysia, Singapore, New Zealand and the United Kingdom selected 1 Nov 71 as the date on which new defence arrangements would come into effect. Accordingly, FESR would cease on 31 Oct 71. Australia's Chiefs of Staff had previously agreed that a continuing strong presence in the region was highly desirable, and the most effective and convenient form of that presence would be the two RAAF fighter squadrons already at Butterworth.

Given the timetable for the British withdrawal, the nucleus of a new air defence system had to be in place by mid-1971. The two RAAF fighter squadrons at Butterworth assumed the leading role in the new integrated air defence system giving Malaysia and Singapore an opportunity to build up their own defence forces. In 1974 Long-Range Maritime Patrol Aircraft commenced a program of continuous rotational deployment through Butterworth for regional surveillance. The surveillance of the region provided a valuable contribution to the stability of the Malaysian borders. The number of RAAF personnel who served at Air Base Butterworth from Nov 71 to Dec 89 is estimated to be approximately 12000.

The ANZUK Force was created on 1 Nov 71 with troops from Australia, the UK and NZ stationed as a deterrent to armed attack, or the threat of such attack. The ANZUK Force was created from its existing resources and was not an integral part of the Five Power Arrangements. The ANZUK Force was disbanded on 1 Jan 75 with the last elements of Australian military personnel withdrawn in Apr 75.

The RCB was established in 1970 as a quick-reaction force to provide protection for Australian assets within the perimeter of the Royal Malaysian Air Force Base Butterworth due to the continued threat of armed Communist terrorism within its borders. It was initially provided from the ANZUK Australian Force and was formally under operational command of the Commander ANZUK Forces. Besides securing protection for the two jet squadrons within the perimeter of the Air Base, the role of the RCB was to provide a quick-reaction force to meet the communist terrorist threat, and be responsible for internal security within Air Base Butterworth. The RCB was not to be involved in local civil disturbances or to be employed in operations outside the gazetted area of the Air Base. Rules of Engagement (ROE) for the RCB were specific on 'Orders to Open Fire' if threatened and security was breached, but were applied within Air Base Butterworth only, regardless of curfew, periods of increased security, air defence exercises or time of day or night. Although it may have

involved patrolling, its ROE was defensive only, not unlike those during UN peacekeeping operations.

Statements by former RCB participants provide evidence of armed communist terrorism close to Air Base Butterworth, including:

- blowing a bridge seven kilometres north of the Base;
- the ambush of a Malaysian Army troop convoy at Alor Setar; and
- daily minor skirmishes with the local military and police forces.

Added to the hazards involved for the RCB were the Malaysian Airforce Defence Guards (Handau). These were conscripts who were also employed to provide security to the Air Force base. Advice from the Army Historical Unit is that they were an additional hazard as they had various levels of training (not particularly good) and it was not unusual for the Handau to overreact when surprised and shoot at the unknown. Such incidents are known to have occurred during RCB quick-reaction response training in which RCB members came under fire. There is also a known incident in the early 1970s that during such training, a contact was made with Malay terrorists, however, this resulted in a 'stand-off' situation and although tense, did not result in any exchange of fire or casualties. Due to known armed terrorist activities, the northern regions of the Malay Peninsula were 'no go' areas for ADF personnel.

In Feb 88, the then Minister for Defence announced a reduction of the RAAF presence at Butterworth in consultation with the Malaysian and Singaporean governments. In Dec 89, Chin Peng, the leader of the Malaysian Communist Party signed a peace accord with the Malaysian Government. These events resulted in the RAAF presence being dramatically reduced and the quick reaction role of the RCB abolished. Since 1989, Butterworth has provided a good overseas training ground for Army personnel, albeit still under the name of RCB. Although there is still a Five Power Agreement, this is now primarily a Defence cooperation agreement rather than a regional security treaty against a communist threat, ie. the RAAF and the RCB devote more time to training activities with the Malaysian and Singaporean Armies.

In view of the conditions that existed in Singapore and Malaysia after the Indonesian Confrontation on 11 Aug 66 and until the end of FESR on 31 Oct 71, it is considered that duties in Butterworth are equally deserving of an award due to the terrorist threat which existed and the purpose of regional security.

#### **CONSULTATION**

Army and RAAF Historical Sections were consulted during this review, as were a number of Army units involved with RCB rotations. Existing submissions to the Mohr Review and previous Ministerial and Departmental correspondence was also reviewed.

#### **COMMUNICATIONS ASPECTS**

Should you approve the contents of this submission, media aspects will be addressed through PACC and your media advisor, Mr Mark Croxford.



**John Hunt**

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal  
Floor 1, 5 Tennant Street  
Fyshwick  
Locked Bag 7765  
Canberra BC ACT 2610**

**Re Medallic Recognition Hearing into Rifle Company Butterworth**

**Dear Sir's,**

This submission is additional to my previous documents numbered 018, and 018 A, 018 B, 018C and becomes 018 D.

I would like to briefly comment on the "RIFLE COMPANY BUTTERWORTH VETERANS GROUP SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION" submission lodged mid-April 2023, concerning the analysis of the Intelligence documents discussing the two types of attack, one, the threat of an External attack, and two, the definite risk of attack by subversive groups or individual CT's acting alone. I agree that it does not seem correct to just take the stance of the External threat scenario and apply the "UNLIKELY" banner across both scenarios.

The following document, I think also gives weight to the above mentioned, and is the basis on which Ministers made decisions regarding Medallic recognition in 2001, see :-

**ANNEX A TO SEA REVIEW UPDATE OF MAY2001 FINDINGS OF FOLLOW-ON REVIEW TO THE REVIEW OF SERVICE ANOMALIES IN RESPECT OF SOUTH-EAST ASIAN SERVICE 1955-75.**

(I provide a copy for you as an attached file named "Annex A to review update 2001 with this submission)

I also attach a minute from Adml Barrie to Min assisting the Min of Defence 2001

(I provide a copy for you as an attached file named "Bilson Pat Clark No Go Zone with this submission)

I repeat some sections of this Annex for your consideration :-

*In 1955 Commonwealth forces were stationed in Malaya as part of the British Commonwealth Far East Strategic Reserve (FESR) to deter communist Chinese aggression and fight the continued armed Malaysian communist terrorism. At the time, Australia considered South-East Asia the area of greatest strategic importance to its own defence, let alone the defence of South-East Asia. The strategic thinking behind the FESR was that a military response to a crisis on the Malay Peninsula would be swifter if air power was already in position.*

The FESR ceased operations in Oct 1971, and my service is in Malaysia and Singapore Jan 70 to May 71.

*The Australian, New Zealand and United Kingdom (ANZUK) Force was created on 1 November 1971 with troops from Australia, the UK and NZ stationed **as a deterrent to armed attack, or the threat of such attack.***

*The Rifle Company Butterworth was established in 1970 as a quick-reaction force to provide protection for Australian assets within the perimeter of the Royal Malaysian Air Force Base Butterworth, due to the continued **threat of armed Communist terrorism within its borders***

**Threat of armed communist terrorism within its borders**, aligns with point two above :- Definite risk of attack by subversive groups or individual CT's acting alone. This highlighted statement directly infers that the DOD accepted that the CT's had intent as an enemy towards the ADF personnel.

The Annex A document, states that the finding for the second review is :-

In view of the conditions that existed in Singapore and Malaysia after the Indonesian Confrontation on 11 August 1966, and until the end of FESR on 30 October 1971, duties in Butterworth are equally deserving of an award **due to the terrorist threat which existed and the purpose of regional security** under the ANZUK and FPDA.

Again, the comment "**Due to the terrorist threat which existed and the purpose of regional security**" implies that the DOD accepted that the CT's had intent as an enemy towards the ADF.

The finding of this second review, clearly show that the DOD recognised the terrorist CT threat to the ADF, and therefore the consequence of that recognises the CT'S intent, capabilities and the flow on for casualties.

I have repeatedly stated in all my submissions since 1999, that at the Butterworth Auditorium, we were told that we were going to a region near the Thai border that had recent CT activity and there was a possibility that we could encounter them. If that happened then we would be resupplied within 20 minutes. The reason we were going there was to "**Be Seen to be Present as a Deterrent to the CT's**"

This briefing at the auditorium is completely consistent with the clips above from Annex A.

For your added information, I also attach as a file called "My submission to Maj Gen Mohr 1999" lodged 24 years ago. On re reading those submissions, my story has not changed. **At that time I had no evidence**, and the RCB groups struggle had not commenced. The evidence now available, proves my story, and proves that the DOD have used a method obfuscation towards me for 24 years.

24 years of rejection, has a very negative impact on veterans health, and I hope that at last, the obfuscation, lies, and deceit, by DOD & DVA will be cease, due to your review.

Of particular importance is the sentence in Annex A that says :-

*There are recorded incidents of ambushes on Malaysian troops, bombings and daily skirmishes with local military and police forces by the terrorists. Accordingly, due to these terrorist activities, the northern regions of the Malay Peninsula were 'no go' areas for Australian Defence Force personnel.*

The DOD themselves say in their own produced document Annex A, that the northern regions were “NO GO ZONES”, why has it taken over 20 years of obfuscation towards me, by denying there was ever a problem. They still say that “I am appropriately classified a normal Peacetime Service”

On one of my trips to the Thai border area, we carried out two, two week, back to back patrols, giving a total of 4 weeks continuous service in what has since been recognised by the DOD, as a “No Go Zone” for ADF personnel.

Sirs, Due to the amount of evidence submitted in hundreds of submissions, the three days of public hearings by your Tribunal, the hundreds of secret and top secret documents supplied, and the verbal sworn evidence given by credible witnesses at the hearings, we are all very much more enlightened as to the realities on the ground at the time of our service, yet we seem to be at a critical point in your decision making whereby legal argument may take precedence over evidence, the reality and the application of common sense to all of it.

I note that at the top of the RCB Groups latest supplementary document, they say :-

*Soldiers deployed overseas with Rifle Company Butterworth, Malaysia, were under no disillusion that they may be subjected to hostile elements, threats, expect casualties and to engage, if necessary, with those elements that intend on causing harm to personnel and damage to property.*

I also note that they attach a copy of the SITREP form that was used at the time :-

*OPERATIONAL ORDER 1-71*

*A Situation Report (SITREP) template (left) is included in the annexes and forms part of the Operational Order.*

*The Sitrep template on the left sets out the reporting requirements in instances where an incident arises*

*The report must identify any*

*(b) casualties*

*(f) ammunition state*

*(h) any enemy sightings*

or movements

All the examples above show that the DOD themselves, acknowledged that there was an enemy, that there was an expectation of casualties and that the zone above Butterworth, was a "No Go Zone" for ADF personnel.

Sirs, I cannot comprehend, how we were ever sent to the border region, with the knowledge that the DOD, and Intelligence organisations had of the Enemy at the time. Remember that we were unarmed other than the Sergeants taped magazine. I can see why the DOD and Governments, want to, in your words at the hearing on the fourth "Bury, once and for all" all of our claims and assertions. The reality of the dangers we were put in at the time, with the knowledge known by the decision makers, is truly incomprehensible.

I am torn between two principles, one is the respect in which I hold the panel members, and the actions and thoughts I should take because of that respect, and the other, is my inner emotion, and stress, caused by the reality that I have lived with for the past 52 years.

My inner emotion says that we should be afforded the same treatment of upgrade others have been granted, primarily based on the description that Maj Gen Mohr gave as his reasons and principles on which he granted many servicemen and women, upgrades. His principals of Incurred Danger, seem to cover the reality of the situation, and give a fair and balanced approach to us compared to others. Yet as stated above, we seem to be at a critical point in your decision making which is reliant on legal principle and devoid of the fairness of the Incurred Danger concept.

Sirs, I have shown above, where in 2000 and 2001, DOD have had a clear opinion, on which they instructed Ministers etc, but since have constantly changed the goal posts, changed rules, used a method of obfuscation, and frustrated the veterans in general. This methodology by the DOD & DVA, is a clear example why it was necessary to convene a Royal Commission into Veteran Suicide.

I sincerely hope that your panel is prepared to look outside of just legal interpretation, and afford Veterans like myself, a fair and just outcome on what has been a very long period that we have suffered due to these bureaucrats.



John Hunt  
Army number [REDACTED]

MELBOURNE DAY ONE  
NEW SUBMISSION: ENCLOSURE 8



The Secretariat  
South East Asia Review Committee  
R1-1-D030  
RUSSELL OFFICES  
A.C.T.  
2600

Dear Sir,

I would like to submit a submission to your committee for consideration, and give the following information as assistance:-

1.	Full name	JOHN WARD HUNT
2.	Military service number	3796996
3.	Period of service	July 69 to July 71
4.	Unit	First Royal Australian Regiment
5.	Date of Birth	11 May 1949
6.	Overseas service	Jan 70 to June 71

I heard Comm. Tim Bloomfield discussing the review committee's areas of interest on 3LO last Thursday 19 August 1999. He mentioned the Thailand/Malay border patrols and Butterworth, both of which I served in.

The topics of interest I would like to discuss are:-

- A. Type of service in 1RAR.
- B. Thailand/Malay border patrols
- C. Intelligence briefing at Butterworth
- D. Discharge papers
- E. Medical ailments
- F. Were our lives at threat due to hostile forces.

#### A. TYPE OF SERVICE IN 1RAR

There was a shortage of Medics in 1RAR whilst I was serving, so the Regimental Medical Officer trained several of us to act in the capacity of Medic. The regiment awarded us with a field medical training certificate. My initial service was as a rifleman and then for over one year I acted as a company medic. It was my sole responsibility to maintain over one hundred personnel on many occasions and I undertook many field medical evacuations by helicopter whilst on patrols.

I carried morphine and an array of antibiotics etc whilst on patrol.

## **B. THAILAND/MALAY BORDER PATROLS**

During the near eighteen months I spent in South East Asia, 1RAR was required to carry out protection duties at the Airforce base at Butterworth Malaysia. As I was a medic, I was sent with many different companies and other corps to Butterworth, and therefore spent a considerable time on patrol, in, and on, the Thailand/Malaysia border.

These patrols lasted for generally two weeks each but some were for four weeks duration. The only resupplies we got were for food on a three to five day basis. All water etc was from local creeks, which were saturated with arsenic from the rubber plantations. No clothing changes or washing facilities were provided, so by the end of four weeks, we were a pretty dirty mob.

The patrols were as a deterrent to hostile forces from entering Malaysia and the Airforce base, so we had to be seen in the area on a regular basis to achieve this aim. This meant covering the border region from one end to the other, so on times we were quite mobile and helicopters would pick us up and re deploy us in another location on the border.

We were made quite aware that our presence was risky, but our being there was to stop the hostilities spreading from, Vietnam through Thailand and into Malaysia.

## **C. INTELLIGENCE BRIEFING AT BUTTERWORTH**

On one trip I did to Butterworth, the entire unit was briefed by the Base Commander, and some visiting Intelligence officers. The briefing went something like this :-

" There has been some infiltration near and across the Thailand border by hostile forces, and some bridges have been damaged. We are sending your unit, to the border in the region where Intelligence suspects these forces are operating. It is a strong possibility that you will encounter these forces.

Due to International law and the current zone classification of this area, we are not allowed to let you carry live ammunition, which under certain circumstances could escalate the War.

We have planned, and are taking every precaution to ensure that should you come into conflict with the enemy forces, we will have live ammunition available to you as soon as possible, through helicopter drops."

Great ah!. We were sitting ducks, God only help us if we had have been hit.

## **D. DISCHARGE PAPERS**

My discharge papers show that I did nearly eighteen months of overseas service, yet I am not classified as being a returned serviceman. I cannot be a full member of the R.S.L. and cannot partake in memorial march's etc.

## **E. MEDICAL AILMENTS**

As I am not classified as a returned serviceman, I am not entitled to returned serviceman benefits. I did suffer minor ailments that have had a permanent effect on my life.

These are as follows:-

- i) Broken ankle during corps training, has permanently weakened my ankle which is very easily sprained and a constant reminder of my service days.
- ii) Body rash's which are a constant source of irritation. I had rashes on me on several occasions during the long patrols, and had to live with it as I was the only medic there.

#### **F. WERE OUR LIVES AT THREAT DUE TO HOSTILE FORCES**

I firmly believe that our lives were often at risk whilst we were on border patrols (See C above) .

#### **CONCLUSION**

I strongly believe that it is very unfair that I am not entitled to Returned serviceman's benefits due to the above mentioned, and would summarise by adding the following:-

It is my recollection that anyone that was charged with a military offence while over there with me, were charged as being on **ACTIVE SERVICE**.

**How can you be on active service for eighteen months, on foreign soil's and in the same location as known enemy forces, without ammunition, and not say that your life was definitely at a very high risk of death. Yet still be deemed as not being a returned service man.**

Yours Faithfully



Lt JOHN HUNT R.A.E.



Directorate of Honours and Awards  
R1-1-D030  
Department of Defence  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

JOHN WARD HUNT



The Secretariat  
South East Asia Review Committee  
R1-1-D030  
RUSSELL OFFICES  
A.C.T.  
2600

Dear Sir,

1.	Full name	JOHN WARD HUNT
2.	Military service number	3796996
3.	Period of service	July 69 to July 71
4.	Unit	First Royal Australian Regiment
5.	Date of Birth	11 May 1949
6.	Overseas service	Jan 70 to June 71

Yesterday, I attended the Melbourne Hearing and gave a brief submission about my service on the Thailand/Malay border. General Mohr asked me several questions:-

1. Did my discharge papers show that I had been trained as a Field medic.  
Answer:- As attached copy of discharge shows, I have no recognition of the course run by 1RAR on the discharge sheet, of the certificate that was awarded to me and signed by the RMO and Co.
2. Does your discharge paper show the border patrols.  
Answer:- As attached copy shows, only one year and 123 days service outside Australia, There is no mention of the border patrols in a hostile Environment carried out at the height of the Vietnam conflict.
3. What do you want from this hearing.  
Answer:- As I was virtually a roving Medic with 1RAR, my service was considerably different than a standard rifleman in 1RAR. I was sent to the border many times , compared to any one company or platoon. I therefore would like to be elevated to a status of returned serviceman and veteran and qualify for any entitlements that are appropriate.

General Mohr also mentioned that he thought I was eligible for , and I'm not exactly sure of the name, but "A Malaysain Peninsula medal" or there abouts.



I rang the Defence Dept. this morning and spoke to the medal inquiry officer and he said I was not entitled to any medals. He mentioned the Australian Service Medal with Thai/Malay clasp and said I had to be there between 1960 and 1964. In a long discussion with him, he said the Thailand/Malay border patrols were a contentious issue that had not been resolved.

I am attaching another copy of the written submission I handed in yesterday in case you cannot tie the two together.

I would like to march on ANZAC days and be proud of my service and part I played in protecting this great country which I am lucky to live in, but find that each year at Anzac time, it depresses me for the total lack of recognition that my country gives me.

Yours Faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'John Hunt', with a flourish at the end.

JOHN HUNT