

**[14/06/00 President's Special Report - 10 Mile Limit NGS MEDAL](#)**

**URGENT - PLEASE READ THIS, ENTIRELY. IT MAY SAVE YOU SOME EMBARRASSMENT**

For: Minister Bruce Scott, or Michael Hughes [ONLY]  
13 June 2000 6 pages  
Re: 10 MILE LIMIT - NAVAL GENERAL SERVICE MEDAL  
LETTER FROM COMMANDER TIM BLOOMFIELD 8/6/2000

Similar letters to the one attached (marked Ai & Aii) have been received by several of our members today. The introduction of a 10 mile limit, in relation to the issue of the Naval General Service Medal, in recognition of service in the Far East Strategic Reserve during the Malaya Emergency, goes against the findings and recommendations of Justice Bob Mohr, contradict the announcements contained in the Budget papers and introduces criteria which is not contained in the Royal Warrant.

The 10 mile limit contained in the Governor General's Declaration was determined in Australia, by Australians, for Australians. It was introduced solely for repatriation legislation requirements and had nothing to do with medals whatsoever.

The background for the operational area for Malaya is to be found in the file 691/1- 3712/4/28 in the National Archives of Australia at Melbourne. The earliest document, a letter from G.P. Wootten, Chairman of the Repatriation Commission to the Secretary, Department of Navy, is dated 11 April, 1951.

The document seeks Navy cooperation in prescribing the operational areas for Korea and Malaya, to meet the requirements of Repatriation legislation. It includes the statement:

"Operational area' means an area outside Australia that is prescribed to be an operational area for the purposes of warlike operations in Korea after the Twenty-Sixth day of June, One thousand nine hundred and fifty, or in Malaya after the twenty eighth day of June, One thousand nine hundred and fifty".

At paragraph 4, will be found:

Malaya: As from 29.6.50 (date of commencement of operations) until date to be prescribed –

Army and Air: British Malaya, together with waters contiguous to its coast extending seawards for a distance of 10 nautical miles.

(Note: There appears to be no reason to include a wide stretch of waters for the Forces in Malaya as the Commission is informed that the enemy has no planes, and Navy has not been involved in the operations).

The 10 n.m. area contiguous to the coast of Malaya then became the area in Repatriation Regulation 199 and subsequently in repatriation legislation, some four years before the RAN was officially involved. To now make an interpretation that it included the Navy, when it clearly states that it did not, or that it should be used to determine the area for qualifying for the award of the NGSM, is in defiance of the original conditions of award, and dishonest.

The 10 n.m. operational area was solely meant for repatriation benefits for the Army and RAAF, and nothing else.

To now suggest that Britain used such criteria to determine the issue of the NGSM, is either intentionally, or unintentionally, misleading.

If such evidence exists, please show it to us. However, attached to this correspondence (marked Bi) is part of a letter from Ms Barwick, Head of Royal Navy P&P, Gosport, which outlines the criteria that the Royal Navy used to issue the NGSM. There is no mention of a 10-mile limit. Nor is there any defined area in the Royal Warrant.

For years now, we have been told that the provisions of the Royal Warrant would not be changed or varied. Why the change of attitude?

In 1997, we were told by Minister Bishop's office, and the then Chief of Navy, that the G-G's Declaration had 'nothing whatsoever to do with the Navy', it was simply a document required as part of the Military Discipline Act as

it related to the Army.

All these documents are on file.

As we understand it, Admiral Mike Hudson and Commodore Nobby Clarke met with the Minister last week and discussed this issue. We understand that they were to forward a written submission for your consideration. As we also understand it, they met with Major General Simon Willis and made similar arrangements. Our members were prepared to wait and let these things run their course; you can imagine their surprise to receive these letters today.

There would seem to be no basis for this decision. If there is supporting documentary advice to proceed along these lines, I would have thought it prudent to share that advice with the ESO's and individuals involved.

Not only is this decision beyond satisfactory explanation, your political advisers might question the wisdom of its promulgation.

Minister, you have achieved high praise among our members for your courageous and sympathetic approach to this issue, since inheriting the portfolio responsibility. I urge you not to let all that go to waste by allowing the introduction of this silly and unsubstantiated provision, in relation to the NGSM. It is time to move on, and let these people have their just reward. Those in Defence who would try to make one last effort to deny some of these sailors, will only damage you and your party, not themselves. Therefore, goodwill toward you will be effected by a bureaucratic nonsense.

I will be in Canberra between 15th and 23rd June 2000. I would like to meet with you or Michael Hughes to discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely,  
Noel Payne  
NATIONAL PRESIDENT