

Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee

Answers to written questions on notice
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE

Additional estimates 2001—2002; 20–21 February 2002

Active Service Medal for People Serving in Japan 1945–1947

QUESTION W30

- a) Is the Minister aware that the Second AIF Council has called for Veterans who served in Japan from September 1945 to 30 June 1947 to be awarded the Australian Active Service Medal?
- Has Defence consulted with the Council over this issue? If not why not?
- b) Has a decision been made on this matter? If not when will a decision be made?
- If a decision has been made and it was to not grant the medal, why not?

RESPONSE

- a) Yes. On 29 November 2001, Mr James Wallace, President of the 2nd Australian Imperial Forces (AIF) Council, wrote to the Prime Minister and the Minister for Defence concerning the award of Australian Active Service Medal (AASM) 1945–75 for service in Japan with the British Commonwealth Occupation Forces (BCOF). The matter was referred to the Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence for response. Defence did not consult with the Council on the matter because the matter has been dealt with through Ministerial correspondence.
- b) A recommendation was made by the 1993/94 Committee of Inquiry into Defence and Defence Related Awards (CIDA) to award the Australian Service Medal (ASM) 1945–75 for BCOF service during the period 3 September 1945 to 30 June 1947. The recommendation was accepted by the then Labor Government. On taking office in 1996, the Coalition Government accepted the CIDA report and, as part of its medals policy, extended the eligibility period to 28 April 1952. Defence has implemented the decision of two successive Governments to award the ASM 1945–75, not the AASM 1945–75, for BCOF service.

CIDA stated that “the role of [the] BCOF was primarily to disarm the remaining Japanese forces, demilitarise the Japanese Imperial Force and assist in the reconstruction of a country devastated by bombing and military defeat”. This was carried out after the formal surrender by Japan on 2 September 1945, hence the BCOF were not involved in an engagement between opposing forces which ‘active service’ suggests. CIDA also observed that the majority of submissions to the inquiry requested simply that some general form of recognition be given, rather than specific recognition of ‘active service’. In 1997, the Service Entitlement Anomalies (SEA) Review also stated that service with the BCOF did not fulfil the requirements for qualifying service. Occurring after the formal surrender of Japan, the occupation forces did not incur danger from hostile forces of the enemy and, as a result, were not warlike in nature. As a result of the findings of both CIDA and the SEA Review, the awarding of the ASM 1945–75 with Clasp Japan is appropriate.

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Attitudinal Surveys on Defence

QUESTION W31

- a) Can the Department confirm what public attitude surveys were conducted by Defence in 2001?
- b) Which of these surveys included specific references to the ADF's role in intercepting unauthorised boat arrivals or illegal immigrants? If so, when were these surveys carried out?
- c) Were the results of these surveys conveyed back to the Government? In reporting back any results, was the Government specifically informed of attitudes in relation to unauthorised boat arrivals or illegal immigrants?

RESPONSE

- a) In 2001, Defence conducted its annual tracking of community attitudes to Defence and also conducted individual studies of the impact of Defence involvement in four Centenary of Federation events:
 - the Avalon Air Show;
 - the Townsville Federation Fire and Water;
 - Federation Sunday (in Adelaide); and
 - the Mars and Beyond exhibition at the National Museum in Canberra.
- b) The annual tracking of community attitudes to Defence consisted of a national random phone poll, conducted between 23–26 November 2001, and a series of focus group meetings, held between 3–5 December 2001, in metropolitan and regional areas. Respondents in the phone poll were questioned on their level of awareness of 17 current Defence activities, of which “intercepting boat people and illegal immigrants” was one. Respondents were asked in a follow-up question for their level of support for each of the activities. Participants in the focus groups were asked for their attitudes on a range of Defence topics, one of which was the potential role of the ADF in the event of further illegal immigration to Australia.
- c) Yes. A summary of the findings of the November-December 2001 Defence community attitudes research was forwarded to the offices of the Minister for Defence and the Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence, in the week ending 8 March 2002, in line with departmental practice. Detailed results of the research are still being evaluated by Defence.

The Government was not specifically informed of attitudes in relation to unauthorised boat arrivals or illegal immigrants.

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Chemical Biological Radiological Response Squadron

QUESTION W32

- a) Prior to 11 September 2001 what capability existed within the ADO to deal with chemical, biological and radiological threats? Was there a specific unit with this designated role? If so how many personnel did it have? What was its budget?
- b) Post 11 September 2001, has a decision been made to increase this capability? If so what increase has occurred to date? What further increase in capability is planned?
- c) How many personnel does the Chemical Biological Radiological Response Squadron currently have? What is its current budget?
- d) Does the CBRR Squadron currently have people trained to deal with CBR bombs?
- e) What is the interaction between the CBRR Squadron and HAZMAT? Who has primary responsibility for dealing with chemical, biological or radiological hazards?
- f) How many times has the CBRR Squadron been called on to deal with a CBR hazard in 2001?
- g) What role did the CBRR play in providing security for the 2000 Olympics?
- h) What role will the CBRR play in providing security for the CHOGM meeting in Queensland?

RESPONSE

- a) Prior to 11 September 2001, the ADF had a limited capability to respond to chemical, biological and radiological (CBR) compound incidents.

A Chemical, Biological and Radiological Response (CBRR) Squadron was raised on 1 March 1999 to provide support to the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games and had an establishment of 90 personnel.

The overall direct budget of the CBRR Squadron for 2001–02 was approximately \$12m. This includes salary, allowances and superannuation, unit operating costs, garrison, communications and information technology costs.

- b) No decision has yet been made.
- c) See a) above.
- d) Yes.
- e) The CBRR Squadron conducts regular liaison and training with state and territory emergency services, including departments of health, police bomb response agencies and fire agencies. This training and interaction is fostered through Emergency Management Australia which is a part of the Attorney-General's Department.

The states and territories have the primary responsibility for dealing with CBR incidents. In most states and territories, HAZMAT, or an alternative emergency service organisation, is the primary combat agency for dealing with domestic chemical, biological and radiological hazards.

- f) The CBRR Squadron did not respond to any CBR incidents in 2001. However, the High Risk Search Troop provided explosive detection dogs and technical equipment in support of the New

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South Wales Police Service for a search in the Dubbo area as part of a criminal investigation. The support provided by Defence was beyond the capabilities of the New South Wales Police Service.

g) The CBRR Squadron was responsible for assisting the New South Wales Police Service and other states and territories to deal with CBR incidents. During the Olympic security period (an eight-week period), Squadron teams deployed to two incidents, both at Sydney's International Airport.

h) The CBRR Squadron provided a CBR response capability for CHOGM. The unit was prepared to assist in hostage recovery operations, consequence management incidents, or hazardous material spills where the state authorities did not have the ability to respond to a compound incident or where they may be overwhelmed.

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ABC Documentary on RAAF

QUESTION W33

An article in the Australian (1 December 2001) raised issues concerning a documentary on the RAAF.

- a) When was the documentary shot? When was the documentary completed?
- b) What did the RAAF contribute to the project?
- c) Is the RAAF aware of the reasons for the delay in the screening of documentary?
 - Has the documentary been screened? If not, is the RAAF aware when it will be screened?
 - If it has not been screened, is there any consideration being given to updating the documentary? Will the RAAF contribute to the cost of any update?

RESPONSE

- a) The documentary was filmed between mid-2000 and mid-2001. A limited amount of filming is currently being conducted to update the original documentary.
- b) The RAAF contribution to the project is outlined in the further response to Q48 Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee Additional Information Received, Additional Estimates 2000–01. (Volume 1, May 2001, Pages 100–101)
- c) Yes. A meeting was held in December 2001 between the ABC's Head of Policy and Administration and the Deputy Chief of Air Force. The Head of Policy and Administration apologised for the ABC's failure to keep the RAAF informed and reported that changes were required before the series could be broadcast. Discussions have been held with a view to updating and revising the series with a "greater science emphasis". It is anticipated that the documentary will be screened in mid to late 2002. The RAAF will not be contributing to the cost of any update, aside from ongoing Project Officer costs.