



AUSTRALIAN ARMY
Special Operations Headquarters

Minute

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DSOS

For information:
SOJ1 SOHQ

REVIEW OF RECOGNITION FOR 1 CDO REGT MEMBERS FOR ASM WITH CLASP CT/SR

References:

- A. Terms of Reference –Honours and Awards Project Team. 2014/OUT/SOHQ/AM1568522 dated 23 May 2014.
- B. SOCAUST DIRECTIVE 02/2013 dated 15 Nov 2013.
- C. Horner, D. SAS –Phantoms of War. Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2002.
- D. Collins, P. Strike Swiftly, The Australian Commando Story. Watermark Press, Sydney, 2005.
- E. DCA Intent Statement (04/09) for Raising of 2 Cdo Regt, dated 11 Feb 2009.
- F. Defence Honours and Awards Manual Volume 1, Chap 19, dated 03 Sep 2012.
- G. Conditions for the award of the Australian Service Medal with Clasp ‘CT/SR’. Commonwealth of Australia Gazette Special No. S 50 dated 30 Mar 2011.

1. In accordance with the Terms of Reference (Ref A), research was undertaken to confirm the validity of claims for the recognition of members of 1 Commando Regiment (1 Cdo Regt) for their eligibility to claim the Counter Terrorism/ Special Recovery (CT/SR) Clasp to the Australian Service Medal. Reference to Directives issued by Chief of the Defence Force (CDF), Chief of Joint Operations (CJOPS), Chief of Army Capability Directives (CACD) or other directives relevant to the period 2000 – 2002 in question was considered necessary. Due to the time lapsed since then the documents in question were located in either the National Archives of Australia or the Australian War Memorial. Other open source documents were accessed (Ref C & Ref D) as a starting point and were found to contain clear reference to the establishment and roles of the unit at that time. Further telephone and e-mail discussions with past Commanders of Special Forces and their equivalent provided anecdotal recollections and confirmation as to the roles and tasks of 1Cdo Regt at that time.

2. On the 3 May 1979 the government gave approval for the establishment of ‘ a specialised and dedicated counter terrorist assault team’. The possibility of a Tactical Assault Group (TAG) being located on a rotation basis in the Eastern States raised a further command problem as there might be an unnecessary delay if, in an emergency, the Commanding Officer of the SASR had to travel from Perth. Furthermore, a senior officer would be required in the Eastern states to look after the TAG’s special training, liaison with government departments and administrative requirements. It was therefore decided to raise the Headquarters of 1st Commando Regiment at Randwick in Sydney to fulfil these roles and consequently to

increase considerably the Regular Army manpower of the newly formed regiment. (Ref C, p 423-424).

3. Consequently LTCOL Peter McDougall was appointed as the first Commanding Officer of 1 Cdo Regt on the 1 Feb 1981. He recalled that, " his task was basically twofold: firstly to raise the HQ and establish a framework for the support of counter-terrorist training and operations on the Australian East coast; secondly, recreate 1 Commando Regiment and continue the developments being so ably and enthusiastically pursued by each of the sub-units." (Ref D, p 185).

4. This fact was further reinforced by ⁶³ ██████████ Commander Special Forces, 1990-1993, who stated that the HQ 1Cdo was raised to provide backup command and control (C2) of the TAG and although it never came to that, it was an essential part of the C2 of TAG.

5. Director Special Action Forces Australia 1985-1987, BRIG Rod Curtis's recollection was that 1 Cdo Regt Regimental Special Operation Command and Control Element (RSOCCE) function was to fill the gap at the time of the incident until the arrival from the West of the main body. They could be also expected to be the relieving HQ depending on the length of the incident.

6. The CO 1 Cdo Regt from 1987-1989 and Commander Special Forces 1998-2001 BRIG Phil McNamara's recollection was that in his day as CO (of 1Cdo) they were not part of the SOCCE and they were not considered part of the TAG although there was a requirement to send representatives forward to gather information. His recollection was that they were not part of the TAG but on occasions he was required to represent the CO TAG to the Police Commander. His recollection was that they deployed to National Exercises in Melbourne, Darwin and Brisbane. He insisted that the 1Cdo CT element was on the same degree of notice as the TAG with the same degree of notice and all the disruption to personal and Army life that that entailed.

7. On the balance of probabilities based on the recollections above and the open source documents, the 1Cdo Regt RSOCCE was the back up the SASR RSOCCE to TAG. It did on occasions provide liaison to government agencies as part of that role. It trained to fulfil those TAG roles and the members of 1 Cdo were employed under the same conditions of employment as the TAG. These roles were undertaken for the full period of the postings of those concerned.

8. The backup RSOCCE role was undertaken by a further twelve Commanding Officers, including ⁶³ ██████████ and their staff up until the role was handed over to 2 Cdo Regt. This occurred on the establishment of the TAG(E) capability on the 22 Jul 2002 (Ref B, para 11 b. (2) & Ref E). During the twelve year period, it was typical that the 1 Cdo

Regt RSOCCE would consist of the CO 1 Cdo Regt, the OPSO 1 Cdo Regt, the Intelligence Officer 1 Cdo Regt, the RSM 1 Cdo Regt, the Intelligence Sergeant 1Cdo Regt and the Cpl Clk RHQ 1 Cdo Regt.

9. From the 31 Aug 1979 the key criteria for the award of the Clasp of "CT/SR" to the Australian Service Medal (ASM) were, 'Service in a Tactical Assault Group either posted or attached for a period of 60 days continuous, and service in a Recovery Force either posted or attached for 60 days continuous' (Ref F, Annex B). Further SOCAUST guidance as to eligibility, in particular, of any members of a Regimental Special Operations Command and Control Elements (RSOCCE) stated that to be judged to be eligible recipients should, " have been a member of the TAG , which comprises a RSOCCE, signallers, intelligence staff and other specialists, a Squadron or Company Headquarters as applicable, and Land , Water, and Sniper and Signals troops" (Ref B, para 10, b. (2)).

10. This RSOCCE force element was force assigned, formed, trained, exercised and called out to practice contingencies. Members were compensated for the inconvenience of their participation in the RSOCCE by the granting of allowances including housing and clothing to enable their timely reaction to CT/SR contingencies. Members were required to be 'on call 'for the duration of their posting cycle. They therefore fulfilled the criteria for eligibility for award of the CT/SR Clasp.

11. Based on this all source / public domain information and consultations with previous Commanders Special Forces/Directors Special Action Forces Australia, I recommend that the members of 1 Cdo Regt nominated as fulfilling the roles prescribed above, be awarded the CT/SR clasp.

12. If required, validation by further researching this claim in the National Archives to locate Chief of the Defence Force, Joint Operations Command Operational Preparedness Requirements (JOC OPR) or their predecessors Headquarters Australian Theatre (HQAST) or Chief Of Army Capability Directives (CACD) can be undertaken. Although on the balance of probabilities it is unlikely that contradictions to the information quoted would occur. In fact it is more likely that further validation of the recommendations would occur.

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