

# **Committee On The Grant Of Honours Decorations And Medals**

## **The Naval General Service Medal**

### **The General Service Medal (Army And Royal Air Force) Service in Parts of South-East Asia Command After 2nd**

**September, 1945**

### **Minesweeping Service After the Termination of Hostilities on 8th May and 2nd September, 1945**

### **Mentions In Despatches King's Commendations**

Presented by the Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury To Parliament by Command of His Majesty February 1947

1.
  - i. The Committee on the Grant of Honours, Decorations and Medals have had under consideration the need for the recognition by some general award or awards of service in specific operations in the South- East Asia mine clearance generally since that date and since the conclusion of hostilities in Europe.
  - ii. There recommendations have been duly submitted to The King, who has been advised by the Prime Minister on matters likely to give rise to difference of opinion. His Majesty has now graciously approved the recommendations set out below. The manufacture and issue of the Medals themselves will be undertaken when circumstances permit. The ribbons will be issued as soon as supplies are ready.
2. The Pacific Star and the War Medal 1939-45 will not be granted for any service after 2nd September, 1945. Consideration has been given to the possibility of recommending the institution of a new General Service Medal. There would be something to be said for starting the post-war era with a new award common to all co-operating Forces. There are, however, some obvious objections to the creation of a new award or new awards soon after the institution of a large number of Campaign Stars and Medals; and approval has been given for the award of the two current General Service Medals with an appropriate Clasp or Clasps. For specified service in the Navy, as described below, the Naval General Service Medal, instituted in 1915, will be awarded. For specified Army or Air Force service, the General Service Medal (Army and Royal Air Force) instituted in 1918, will be granted.

#### **SERVICE IN OPERATIONS IN THE SOUTH-EAST ASIA COMMAND**

##### **Navy**

3.
  - i. In the Navy Forces the qualifying period will be, for officers and ratings afloat, a total of 28 days in close support of Army operations as defined in paragraph 4 below. Service in trooping ships, for instance, will not be a qualification.
  - ii. Close support of Army operations means service within five miles of any qualifying land operational areas as defined in paragraph 4 below. Any day, part of which was spent in close support of the Army, will be reckoned as qualifying day.
  - iii. Officers and ratings of the Navy who were landed from ships for operational duty ashore, or who served ashore, in the qualifying land operational areas as defined in paragraph 4 below, will qualify under Army rules.

- iv. For official visits, inspections, &c. on duty in the land operational areas the time qualification will be one week.
- v. Naval air crew will qualify under Air Force rules, e.g. by one operational sortie over the land operational area as defined in paragraph 4 below.
- vi. The grant for gallantry on a specific occasion during the uncompleted qualifying period, not amounting to 28 days, of a British Honour, Decoration or Medal of the status of the British Empire Medal or above or a Mention in Despatches or King's Commendation, will qualify the recipient for the General Service Medal.
- vii. If qualifying service is brought to an end before the completion of 28 days, on account of death or evacuation owing to wounds or other disability due to service, the reduced period of service will be sufficient qualification for the award.

## **Army**

4.

- i. The qualification in the Army will be entry into the land operational area as defined below.
- ii. The qualifying land operational areas for the Army are:
  - a. Java and Sumatra from 3rd September, 1945, until the final date of withdrawal, 30 November 1946, inclusive.
  - b. French Indo-China from 3rd September, 1945, until 28th January, 1946, inclusive. (Although the French assumed command on 1st January, 1946, British troops subsequently remained operational under French overall command. The date of 28 January has been selected as the date on which Major General Gracey handed over command to Brigadier Maunsell, at which time the British forces in French Indo- China has been largely transferred).
- iii. For official visits, inspections, &c., on duty in the land operational areas defined in sub-paragraph (ii) above the time qualification will be one week.

## **Air Force**

5.

- i. In the Air Force, for air crew, one operational sortie over the land operational areas defined in paragraph 4 above will be a qualification.
- ii. Transport service by the air crew who flew in connection with the removal of internees and prisoners of war in South-East Asia to Singapore or other ports for onward shipment, between 3rd September, 1945 and 4th October, 1945, is a qualification. One sortie in the defined service will qualify.
- iii. This transport service included Java, Sumatra, Malaya, Siam, French Indo-China and the Andaman Islands and was undertaken by air crew based outside the qualifying land operational areas defined in a paragraph 4 above.
- iv. Non-air crew personnel of the Air Force serving in the land operational areas defined in paragraph 4 above will qualify under Army rules.
- v. For official visits, inspections, &c., on duty in the land operational areas defined in paragraph 4 above the time qualification will be one week.
- vi. Non-air crew personnel who did not serve in the land operational areas referred to in paragraph 4 above, but belonged to Air Force units which carried out qualifying operational sorties under sub- paragraphs (i) and (ii) above will qualify. The time qualification will be one month.
- vii. Naval or Army personnel, or Air Force non-operational personnel, who served ashore in co-operation with the Air Force units mentioned in sub-paragraph (vi) above, and not in the qualifying land operational areas defined in paragraph 4 above, will not qualify.

- viii. Non-air crew personnel who will qualify under sub-paragraph (vi) above must have rendered one month's service in any of the undermentioned operational units not based in the land operational areas, within the dates indicated:-
  - a. Units operating over Java and Sumatra between 3rd September, 1945, and the date of withdrawal, 30th November, 1946, inclusive-
  - b. Units operating over French Indo-China between 3rd September, 1945, and 28th January, 1946-
  - c. Units engaged in removal by air of internees and prisoners of war in South-East Asia to Singapore or other ports for onward shipment between 3rd September, 1945, and 4th October, 1945.
  - d. No. 321 Squadron is a Netherlands squadron and only British personnel, if any, which served with the unit will be eligible for consideration, as Dutch personnel will be eligible for awards from their own Government. Some units appear under more than one heading because their activities were not confined to one operational area or to the operation in sub-paragraph (c) above.
- ix. The zones in which the operational units shows in sub- paragraph (viii) above were based between the dates indicated, and outside the qualifying land operational areas defined in paragraph 4 above, were as follows:-
  - a. For units operating over Java and Sumatra - The whole of Malaya.
  - b. For units operating over French Indo-China - The whole of Burma and the Indian provinces of Bengal and Assam.
  - c. For units engaged on the removal by air of internees and prisoners of war in South-East Asia to Singapore or other parts for onward shipment - That part of Bengal west of the Brahmaputra, Ceylon and the Cocos Islands.
- x. The grant to non-air crew personnel referred to in sub-paragraph (vi), (viii) and (ix) above for gallantry on a specific occasion during the uncompleted qualifying period, not amounting to a month, of a British Honour, Decoration or Medal of the status of British Empire Medal or above or a Mention in Despatches or King's Commendation, will qualify the recipients for the General Service Medal.
- xi. If qualifying service by non-air crew personnel referred to in sub- paragraphs (vi), (viii) and (ix) above is brought to an end before the completion of one month on account of death or evacuation owing to disability due to service, the reduced period of service will be sufficient qualification for the award.

### **Clasps**

- 6. The Clasps for the above services will bear the inscription "S.E. Asia, 1945- 6," or "South-East Asia, 1945-6."

### **MINESWEEPING. BOMB AND MINE CLEARANCE**

#### **Navy**

7.

- i. Naval minesweeping service afloat will be a qualification for the Naval General Service Medal. The time qualification will be six months since 3rd September, 1945, inclusive.
- ii. Although the War Medal, 1939-45, is granted for service up to 2nd September, 1945, wherever the service was rendered, Naval minesweeping service afloat in Home, Atlantic or Mediterranean waters in the period 9th May to 2nd September, 1945, may also be reckoned towards the total qualifying period of six months.
- iii. The minesweeping zones and probable length of operations are as follows:-  
 Zones Length of Operations Zone Completed  
 N. W. Europe British Isles including, North Sea Icelandic waters to the end of the 1947 sweeping season.

Mediterranean and approaches Gibraltar to October 1946. The British commitment in the Mediterranean was completed in October 1946, One flotilla is however being lent to assist the Greek Government. This work should be completed by the end of 1947.

East Indies

S. W. Pacific and China Coast To October 1946

The main South-East Asia commitment was completed in September 1946, but one flotilla continued minesweeping in the East Indies till the end of 1946.

The closing dates will be fixed in due course.

- iv. The grant of a British Honour, Decoration or Medal of the status of the British Empire Medal or above or a Mention in Despatches or a King's Commendation for minesweeping service in a qualifying period and zone, when there has been some qualifying service but this is short of six months, will qualify the recipient for the General Service Medal.
- v. If qualifying service is brought to an end before the completion of six months, on account of death or evacuation owing to wounds or other disability due to service, the reduced period of service will be sufficient qualification for the award.

## **Army**

8.

- i. At the same time six months, i.e., 180 days' bomb and mine clearance ashore by the Army since 3rd September, 1945, inclusive, will be a qualification.
- ii. Although the War Medal 1939-45 is granted for service up to 2nd September, 1945, wherever the service was rendered, bomb and mine clearance ashore by the Army during the period 9th May to 2nd September, 1945, in the qualifying area for the General Service Medal defined below will also be reckoned towards the total qualifying period of six months (180 days).
- iii. Unexploded bombs were distributed all over the United Kingdom, including Northern Ireland, and beach minefields were laid along many stretches of the coast of the United Kingdom. The qualifying area will be anywhere in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- iv. Since the first qualifying date, viz., 9th May, 1945, Bomb Disposal Units, R.E., have been engaged solely on the clearance of unexploded bombs and beach minefields. Personnel take tours of duty at one or the other of the two tasks. Work is not likely to be completed before the end of February 1948. The closing date will be fixed in due course.
- v. To qualify for the award a soldier must have been actively engaged for an aggregate of not less than 180 days on the actual excavation down to, removal of, or final disposal of, unexploded bombs or on clearance operations inside the perimeter fencing of live minefields, on the disarming of live mines, or acting as water-jet operator. Other service in a Unit engaged on bomb disposal or beach mine clearance will not be counted as qualifying service.
- vi. The grant of a British Honour, Decoration or Medal of the status of the British Empire Medal or above or above or a Mention in Despatches or a King's Commendation for mine or bomb clearance in a qualifying period and zone, when there has been some

qualifying service but this is short of 180 days, will qualify the recipient for the General Service Medal.

- vii. If qualifying service is brought to an end before the completion of 180 days on account of death or owing to wounds or other disability due to service the reduced period of service will be sufficient qualification for the award.
9. Any Officers, ratings or airmen of the Navy or Air Force engaged on bomb or mine clearance on land will qualify under the same conditions as those for the Army.

### **Clasps**

10. The Clasp to the Naval General Service Medal for the above service will bear the inscription "Minesweeping, 1945-7". The Clasp to the General Service Medal will be inscribed "Bomb and Mine Clearance, 1945- 8."

### **MENTIONS IN DESPACHES**

### **KING'S COMMENDATIONS**

- 11.
- i. A Mention in Despatches in the First World War, 1914-18, is
  - ii. denoted by the wearing of the bronze oak leaf Emblem of many leaves. It was granted up to 10th August 1920. A Mention in Despatches in the Second World War, 1939-45, is denoted by the single bronze oak leaf Emblem.
  - iii. The single bronze oak leaf Emblem will now be worn by those mentioned in despatches for operational service in the period between the two World Wars, that is, from August 1920 to 2nd September, 1939, and for service after the cessation of hostilities in the Second World War.
  - iv. In this way, the single bronze oak leaf Emblem will be worn by those granted a Mention in Despatches for service in one or other of the campaigns between the two World Wars, for instance, Waziristan 1921-24, Burma 1930-32, North-West Frontier 1935, &c., and for service in Palestine in the period from 19th April, 1936, to 2nd September, 1939. The Emblem will be worn on the ribbon of the Naval General Service Medal (1915), the General Service Medal (Army and Royal Air Force) (1918) or the India General Service Medal (1908 or 1936).
  - v. Similarly the Emblem will be worn on one or other of the first two named General Service Medal ribbons to denote a Mention in Despatches granted for service, for instance, in the Netherlands East Indies since 2nd September, 1945, or for minesweeping or mine clearance work since 8th May in the European theatre, and since 2nd September, 1945, in the Pacific, &c., theatre.
  - vi. The some instances a Mention in Despatches may have been granted to a person ineligible for the appropriate Medal. The Emblem will then be worn on the coat after all medal ribbons, or, should there be no other medal ribbons, in the position in which a single medal would be worn.
  - vii. A King's Commendation for brave conduct or a King's Commendation for valuable service in the air granted for service in the Forces since the cessation of hostilities in 1945 will be indicated by the wearing of the single bronze oak leaf Emblem. When a King's Commendation for brave conduct is granted for service during duties for which a General Service Medal is awarded, the Emblem will be worn on the ribbon in the same way as an Emblem indicating a Mention in Despatches. Otherwise the Emblem will be worn on the coat in the manner described in sub-paragraph (v) above. (vii) Not more than one oak leaf Emblem will be worn on the ribbon of one Medal. Two or more

Mentions in Despatches or Kings Commendations for brave conduct for service during recognised by the same Medal will be marked by the wearing of one Emblem only.

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY HIS MAJESTY'S  
STATIONERY OFFICE  
1947