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REPATRIATION BENEFITS FOR VIETNAM SERVICE

The Minister for Defence, Mr Kim Beazley, today implemented the Government's decision last year to enable all Regular Service personnel who participated in Australia's involvement in the Vietnam conflict to be entitled to repatriation benefits and Defence Services Homes loans. The benefits are available from today.

"Until now some Regular personnel who were in Vietnam for short periods or were in the crews of Naval ships that transported troops and supplies were not entitled to some of the special benefits that apply to operational service", said Mr Beazley.

"As an act of grace, we have decided to remove the distinctions in benefits that previously existed and which depended essentially on length of service in Vietnam", Mr Beazley said.

"However, as I stated previously the concession by the Government does not suggest that a substantial injustice was perpetrated on these personnel."

A description of those groups of Service personnel who are now deemed to have been allotted is attached.

The following units and classes of personnel of the Australian Defence Force which saw service in the Vietnam operational area specified at items 4 and 8 of Schedule 2 of the Veteran's Entitlements Act of 1986 during the period 31 July 1962 and 11 January 1973, are entitled to repatriation benefits and Defence Home Loans:

PART 1:

HMAS ANZAC	HMAS MELBOURNE	HMAS SWAN
HMAS BOONAROO	HMAS PARRAMATTA	HMAS SYDNEY
HMAS DERWENT	HMAS QUEENBOROUGH	HMAS TORRENS
HMAS DUCHESS	HMAS QUIBERON	HMAS VAMPIRE
HMAS JEPARIT	HMAS STUART	HMAS VENDETTA
		HMAS YARRA

PART 2:

1. Members of the RAN, Army and RAAF on staff visits to or inspections of Australian Forces in Vietnam.
2. Members of the RAN, Army and RAAF on equipment visits to or inspections of Australian Forces in Vietnam.
3. Members of the RAN, Army and RAAF on public relations, familiarisation or welfare visits to the Australian Forces in Vietnam.
4. Members of the RAN, Army and RAAF on attache' duties in Vietnam.
5. Members of the RAN who served as crew members of the M.V. JEPARIT.
6. Members of the following units who saw service in Vietnam:
 - No 36 Squadron Richmond
 - No 37 Squadron Richmond
 - No 3 RAAF Hospital Richmond
 - No 4 RAAF Hospital Butterworth
 - No 478 Maintenance Squadron Butterworth
 - Transport Support Flight Butterworth
 - Headquarters RAAF Butterworth
 - RAAF Support Unit Canberra
 - Headquarters Support Command Unit Melbourne
 - Headquarters Operational Command Unit Glenbrook