



Government House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

16 August 2022

Honorary Award - General Division - April 2023

The Governor-General is pleased to announce the following award in the Order of Australia:

HONORARY MEDAL (OAM) IN THE GENERAL DIVISION

Mr THAM Yau Kong, Sabah, Malaysia

For service to commemorating the sacrifice of Australian prisoners of war in Malaysia, particularly along the Sandakan-Ranau death march (1942-1945).

By His Excellency's command

Paul Singer MVO

Official Secretary to the Governor-General

**AWARDED AN HONORARY MEDAL (OAM)
IN THE GENERAL DIVISION OF THE ORDER OF AUSTRALIA**

Mr THAM Yau Kong, Sabah, Malaysia

For service to commemorating the sacrifice of Australian prisoners of war in Malaysia, particularly along the Sandakan-Ranau death march (1942-1945).

During World War II (1942-1945), almost 2,500 prisoners of war (POWs) tragically died in Sabah, Malaysia, and more than 1,000 of whom lost their lives on the in famous death marches. The majority of these POWs, 1,800, were Australian.

Mr Tham Yau Kong ASDK, a highly respected tour guide and expert jungle trekker, has been integral in shining a light on the bravery and endurance of these POWs, only six of whom survived the ordeal.

Led by a timeworn, hand-drawn 'mud map', Mr Tham self-funded a rediscovery trek of the Sandakan-Ranau death march and helped to establish several memorials along the route.

In 2006, the Australian Defence Force recognised the importance of what Mr Tham had achieved by sending a delegation to be the first Australians to walk across the 'lost' section of the track since 1947.

Since that first trek, Mr Tham has worked tirelessly to bring the death march story to a wider audience, especially the younger generation of Australians, by establishing a cycling route along the lower part of the track, creating programs aimed at students and regularly lecturing local guides in the importance of bringing the war history to Australians and Malaysians alike.

Mr Tham's service to commemorating the sacrifice of Australian POWs in Malaysia, particularly along the Sandakan-Ranau death march (1942-1945), is thoroughly worthy of formal national recognition with an Honorary Medal in the General Division of the Order of Australia (OAM).