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Submission to Inquiry - Mr Barry Albrighton

Part 1 – Name of Inquiry

Name of Inquiry *

Medallic recognition for service with Rifle Company Butterworth

Part 2 – About the Submitter

Title or Rank *

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Surname *

Albrighton

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Is the Submission on behalf of an organisation? If yes, please provide details:

No

Part 3 – Desired outcome

Provide a summary of your submission:

An attempt to demonstrate the Ready Reaction Force and Quick Reaction Force roles performed by the Rifle Company Butterworth and the associated risks. Submitted to aid the tribunal in their deliberations.

Part 4 - Your submission and Supporting Documentation

File Attached: Albrighton-Rifle-Company-Butterworth-Submission-v1.0.pdf

944864_911272928990440_2316513002070645607_n.png

Ready-Reaction-Force-Reference.jpg

A-standard-risk-matrix.png

Part 5 – Consent and declaration

✓ I consent to the Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal making my submission publicly available.

✓ I also consent to the Defence Honours and Awards Appeals Tribunal:

- using information contained in my submission to conduct research;
- providing a copy of my submission to a person or organisation considered by the Tribunal to be appropriate; and
- providing a copy of my submission to a person or organisation the subject of adverse comment in the submission;
- using content in my submission in its report to Government.

The Tribunal will decide which person or organisation is appropriate, and this may include:

1. persons or organisations required to assist with the inquiry; and
2. persons or organisations with an interest in the inquiry.

✓ I declare that the information I have provided is correct.

Name

Barry Alexander Albrighton

Date

29/06/2022 /

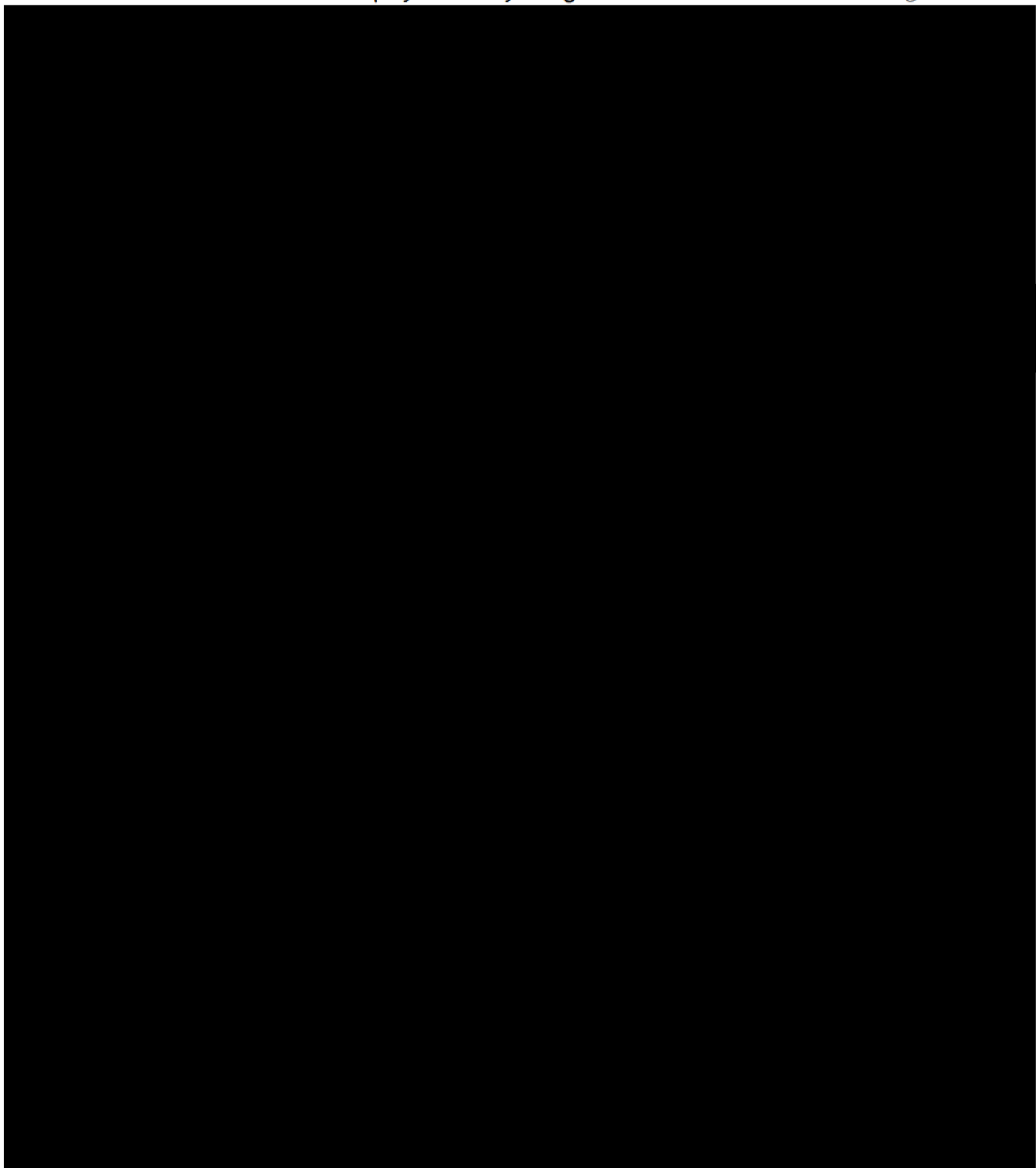
Mr Barry Albrighton

Signed by Mr Barry Albrighton

Signed on: 30 June, 2022

Signature Certificate

Document name: Submission to Inquiry - Mr Barry Albrighton



Submission to The Defence Honours & Awards Appeals Tribunal - Enquiry into Medallic Recognition for Service with Rifle Company Butterworth

The Australian Army Rifle Company
Butterworth Malaysia during the
Second Malayan Emergency

Service Classification Submission

Barry Albrighton

29 June 2022

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Introduction

I hadn't planned on making a submission to this enquiry, but have put this paper together quickly, in an effort to provide somewhat of a different perspective for the tribunal to consider. I recognise and appreciate the work of the tribunal and I wish you well in your deliberations.

The Communist Insurgency in Malaysia, also known as the 2nd Malayan Emergency, was an armed conflict which occurred in Malaysia from 1968 to 1989, involving the Malayan Communist Party and Malaysian government security forces. Casualties during the Communist Insurgency in Malaysia totalled 1221, consisting of 367 killed and 854 wounded.

CIA reports estimated there were about 2400 Communist Insurgents operating in Peninsular Malaysia in 1975. These Insurgents were known to be armed with mortars, small arms, rocket propelled grenades, explosives and were proficient in setting booby traps. They were supported by a propaganda radio operating out of China, were thought to be receiving arms and supplies from Vietnam and Thailand and food and other supplies from the local population.

Early in the 1970s, the RAAF Commander at Air base Butterworth was concerned that the physical security measures employed by the Malaysian Security Forces at Air Base Butterworth had shortcomings that placed Australian personnel and their families and Australian RAAF assets at risk. It was agreed that these shortcomings were to be filled by a company of armed infantry soldiers from Australia.

The Australian Army deployed an infantry Company of about 130 Soldiers to the Malaysian Airbase Butterworth and these soldiers were replaced every 3 months for 18 years until the end of the Insurgency. This Company became known as the Rifle Company Butterworth.

The Insurgency ended in 1989 when the Peace Agreement of Hat Yai was signed between the leader of the Malayan Communist Party Chin Peng and the Malaysian and Thai Governments.

The reason for this paper is to provide the Defence Honours and Awards & Appeals Tribunal another perspective whilst they consider the nature of this service and how it should be classified. This perspective is related to the implied roles of the Ready Reaction Force and the Quick Reaction Force provided by Rifle Company Butterworth during the Insurgency and the associated risks.

Casualties During the Second Malayan Emergency

Operational casualties in Peninsular Malaysia in the period 1969-1989 totalled 1221, consisting of about 367 killed and 854 wounded. Of these casualties, Security Forces incurred a total of 1009 casualties, 155 killed and 854 wounded. This meant that security forces incurred on average 1 casualty every week for the duration of the insurgency over 50 casualties each year. This regularity suggests that casualties could reasonably be expected to occur every year during that period and in fact did occur. There were no Australian casualties.

All military installations in Peninsular Malaysia recognised the threat of attack by Insurgents. There was no evidence to suggest that Airbase Butterworth would be excluded from attack in preference to other military installations in Peninsular Malaysia. The CIA referred to Airbase Butterworth as a 'Prime Target' in one of their reports. Other military installations were attacked with the Royal Malaysian Air Force Base in Kuala Lumpur being attacked twice in 1975.

With Air Base Butterworth being just as likely to be targeted as any other military installation in Peninsular Malaysia, there was a similar expectation of casualties at Airbase Butterworth should the base be attacked by insurgents. If we accept that Australian soldiers were in some respects standing in for Malaysian forces during the Insurgency, then perhaps they were similarly involved and at risk.

On 11 April 1975 Maj. Barry Petersen, an Australian Army Officer working with the Malaysian School of Training for the Land Army, reported being telephoned by Communist Terrorists who demanded he provide military information in return for his life (Petersen Tiger Men p212 1988). Clearly the Insurgents did not regard the Australian military operating in Malaysia as off limits.

Rifle Company Butterworth - Casualty Risk Assessment

Using a conventional risk matrix populated by data from our intelligence reports, we could calculate the overall risk level. The likelihood of an attack was always reported by our intelligence services as unlikely with the consequences of an attack rated as major. Employing a risk matrix tool, we would calculate the overall level of risk to be high. By deploying Ready reaction Force to an actual overt breach of security, it is reasonable to assume that we reduce the consequences by responding in force almost immediately. Alternatively, how would this risk be assessed from the perspective of a deployed Ready Reaction Force?

When we look at the casualty statistics during the insurgency numbering 1221, security forces suffered 1009 casualties whilst insurgents suffered 212. This would suggest that for every terrorist casualty, security forces could expect 5 casualties. The risk matrix would show that once deployed the level of risk our Ready Reaction Force would suffer casualties would be rated as 'almost certain' and the consequences rated as 'catastrophic', given that the minimum number of expected casualties would be 5 out of 10 where only a single terrorist

was encountered. This team would be devastated, casualties replaced and the team re-formed.

Rifle Company Butterworth - Ready Reaction Force

The rifle company provided a Ready Reaction Force of usually 10 soldiers that were armed, mobile, immediately contactable and on duty 24 hours per day, 7 days a week. This ready force could deploy an armed response to a terrorist incursion at a number of identified Vital Points within a few minutes. The remainder of the Infantry Company provided a Quick Reaction Force that could be armed and deployed in quickly stages should the need arise to retake the initiative from the enemy.

Rifle Company Butterworth soldiers were filling a role that belonged with the Malaysian Security Forces during the Communist Insurgency. For this reason, Australian soldiers had to know who the enemy was, their capabilities, movements, weapons and tactics and their allies. Australian soldiers were required to keep up-to-date with enemy movements and were regularly briefed on Malaysian Security Forces engagements with the enemy.

Given the role, our Ready Reaction Force were always fully armed, well drilled, well briefed and READY to respond immediately to an actual overt breach of security by Communist Insurgents. They knew the Ready Reaction Force could be taking fire from an enemy incursion onto the base at any time day or night and within 5 minutes of being deployed.

The Ready Reaction Force was not in place to respond to trespassers, like petty thieves etc. The Ready Reaction Force were in place to fill gaps in Malaysian Security Forces defences. Does this imply their service classification should be the same as the Malaysian soldiers they were standing in for?

Rifle Company Butterworth - Ready Reaction Force – Implied Military Objectives

The Rifle Company Butterworth Ready Reaction Force had a specific role in relation to the threat of enemy attack on Airbase Butterworth. They were regularly placed on high alert prior to periods where additional unrest might be expected like during Chinese New Year celebrations and immediately following Communist Insurgency attacks. They were fully armed well drilled, had been issued Rules of Engagement and were in place to respond to the threat of attack by a significant active enemy force nearby. Should Airbase Butterworth have been attacked by Communist Insurgents the Ready Reaction Force were most likely to be the first group to incur casualties because of their role.

As an operational arm within Air Base Butterworth, the Ready Reaction Force implied military objectives were to:

1. Seek out, intercept, challenge, arrest and open fire if necessary on persons who by their nature, location and purpose were attempting to or in the process of making an

effective contribution to the military action of the Communist Insurgents operating in Malaysia, by entering a Protected Place being Airbase Butterworth and:

- a. Threatening to destroy or damage by fire or explosives a building, vehicle, aircraft or tent or the property therein.
- b. Threatening the security of friendly forces by attacking a person or persons in such a way as to give reason to believe that death or grave bodily injury will result.

Rifle Company Butterworth Ready Reaction Force – Authority to Shoot

The Ready Reaction Force were issued weapons, ammunition and orders in the form of 'Rules of Engagement', that reflected the risk of attack by an armed adversary on Airbase Butterworth.

The force was authorised within the Rules of Engagement to:

1. Open fire on any person carrying out a deadly attack, including those persons firing from outside the base.
2. Open fire on any person carrying out an action of destruction or damage.
3. Open fire on any person entering a Protected Place who refused to stop when ordered to do so.
4. Open fire on any person whom once arrested who attempted to escape and refused to stop when ordered to do so.

Within the rules of engagement, soldiers were warned that there were 'friendly' forces and civilians present on the base and that extra care had to be taken. The presence of these types of people increases the risk of death or injury to members of the Ready Reaction Force during a terrorist incursion, because the extra consideration necessary, could result in a fatal delay in responding to an armed adversary.

The Quick Reaction Force

The Rifle Company Butterworth Quick Reaction Force was comprised of those soldiers who were not allocated for Ready Reaction Force duty. The remainder of the platoon providing the duty Ready Reaction Force were required to remain on Air Base Butterworth. A second platoon were required to remain in the local area whilst the third platoon may be elsewhere, possibly undertaking jungle training however this platoon had to maintain communications with ABB in the event they were required.

The role of the QRF in relation to the Communist Insurgency was to respond to an actual overt breach of security at ABB where the RRF was outnumbered and unable to defeat the enemy insurgents i.e., they would retake the initiative from the enemy insurgents. This is not a peacetime role.

Quick Reaction Force - Armed Patrols

Following receipt of intelligence, elements of the Quick Reaction Force would mount armed patrols along the base boundary fence seeking out signs of enemy infiltration. During these patrols our soldiers were generally in plain view, very close to Malaysian villages and at risk of coming under enemy fire from outside the base. Our soldiers were physically searching for enemy soldiers inside the base and visually looking for signs of enemy activity outside the base.

Rifle Company Butterworth - Soldier Profile

1. Had to be over 18 years of age.
2. Posted to Rifle Company Butterworth Malaysia for 3 months.
3. Was required to complete a Last Will & Testament before deployment.
4. Was required to attain a War Service Fitness Level.
5. Was briefed on the Communist Insurgency situation in Malaysia and the likely support they were receiving from China, Vietnam and Thailand.
6. Was advised that any offences would result in their being charged under the War Service Act.
7. Advised there were about 2400 Insurgents operating in Malaysia, sometimes escaping across the Thai border only to return.
8. Was warned about the weapons the enemy had like rifles, pistols, machine guns, rocket propelled grenades, mortars and told they were very good at booby traps.
9. Underwent anti-terrorist incursion training.
10. Was told never to become complacent, because our military installation was just as likely to be attacked as any other.
11. Was regularly briefed about Insurgent attacks taking place across Malaysia.
12. Was brought to a higher alert when there was a new attack.
13. Was warned about how close the enemy was operating.
14. Was advised by veterans of Vietnam and Malaya of their experiences and warned take care and be vigilant.
15. Was regularly drilled in responding to attack by Insurgents, using live ammunition.
16. Was regularly challenged by friendly forces armed with fully loaded firearms.
17. Whenever there was a 'Red Letter Day' and/or an increased risk of an attack by insurgents, was required to take extra precautions.
18. Witnessed helicopters and trucks being loaded with weapons, ammunition and Malaysian soldiers departing on operations.
19. Saw helicopters arriving and ambulances taking away casualties.
20. Set roadblocks on the base, stopping every car and searching the cars for weapons and ammunition.
21. Took part in medical emergency exercises in preparation for dealing with mass casualties.

22. Conducted armed patrols of the Airbase boundary fence looking for breaches in the fence, passing close to villages and rice paddy fields. When passing the South Gate the Malaysian guard would take his machine gun off his shoulder, cock it and aim it at you until you passed.
23. Passed through Malaysian Army roadblocks on the way to the rifle range.
24. Always had someone with a loaded weapon in their truck.
25. When training in the jungle always kept a magazine of live ammunition in case of wild animals or an encounter with belligerents.
26. On returning to Australia after 3 months arrived quietly and without fanfare.
27. Was awarded The Australian Service Medal for operational service.
28. Was told that it wasn't Qualifying Service for repatriation because it was Peacetime Service and whilst arduous, was no more dangerous than serving in Australia.

Conclusion

I've attempted to provide some insight into service with Rifle Company Butterworth from the perspective of an infantry soldier serving there during 1976-77 and 1979. I've described some aspects of the role of the Ready Response Force and the Quick Response Force and what constitutes being 'READY' to deploy with arms against a known armed adversary actually means. I've also tried to demonstrate how the role performed by the Ready Response Force relates to the level of risk they operate within. I've included somewhat of a profile of the average soldier deploying to Rifle Company Butterworth.

In my experience as a member of the Ready Response Force, we deployed with arms to secure a vital point at least once every night. Sometimes we were later advised that the deployment had been a drill and sometimes we were not so advised.

There were occasions when I was challenged by armed friendly forces including Malaysian Special Police and on one occasion by our own Ready Response Force. I am not suffering any adverse effects from these incidents.

I'm proud of my service in the Australian Army and in particular my service with Rifle company Butterworth.

Thank you for your consideration

Barry Albrighton

Year	CT DESTROYED				SF CASUALTIES			ACTIVITIES						
	Killed	Captured	Surrendered	Total	Killed	Wounded	Total	Clashes	Incidents	Movements	FINDINGS			
											Camps	Resting places	Food Dumps	Total
1969	-	-	1	1	6	22	28	-	5	83	-	18	-	18
1970	9	2	5	16	13	28	41	11	18	192	6	25	2	33
1971	9	1	3	13	9	35	44	17	13	316	7	46	12	65
1972	1	1	2	4	4	17	21	8	11	18	14	34	37	85
1973	8	-	1	9	4	19	23	16	22	181	17	50	76	143
1974	41	8	10	59	3	38	41	34	63	377	25	86	48	159
1975	7	1	5	13	33	150	183	22	76	323	34	117	35	186
1976	16	10	19	45	3	6	9	41	168	571	25	83	53	161
1977	23	28	27	78	13	85	98	31	35	285	17	58	32	107
1978	15	5	8	28	14	124	138	60	116	396	89	84	36	209
1979	26	7	9	42	15	80	95	54	64	449	58	102	52	212
1980	17	-	1	18	12	27	39	36	33	362	53	81	32	166
1981	6	3	18	27	9	34	43	16	32	314	18	28	11	57
1982	4	-	1	5	2	38	40	36	42	249	19	32	9	60
1983	10	-	3	13	5	23	28	15	34	171	22	43	20	85
1984	5	-	1	6	5	40	45	18	32	105	18	36	11	65
1985	-	-	-	-	3	23	26	3	14	142	18	45	10	73
1986	6	-	2	8	1	28	29	9	3	136	38	56	68	162
1987	7	2	-	9	1	28	29	10	6	35	40	73	40	153
1988	2	82	1	85	-	8	8	2	7	55	12	34	13	59
1989	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	2	8	10	21	4	35
Total	212	150	117	479	155	854	1009	439	796	4768	540	1152	601	2293

■ Figure 4.42: Statistics of Operational Achievement in Peninsular Malaysia from 1969 until 1989.

Source : National Security Council.

- (e) The shortcomings of the Malaysians have been pointed out to them and will continue to be pointed out to them, but there is a limit to what the traffic will bear in this connection, without significant bad feeling being created. Some training is also being provided. Other measures that are open to us without obtrusively getting into the Malaysians' areas of responsibility have been or are being introduced, including where possible, discrete RAAF "spot checks" on Malaysian surveillance of vital points. The Miragelines, of course, are under constant and direct RAAF surveillance. In addition, Malaysian reluctance having been overcome, the ANZUK force will now provide one infantry company on rotation through Butterworth on a full-time basis, ostensibly for training, flag-showing and a change of scene. The presence of this company will provide the Commander with a ready-reaction force which he can use inter alia to supplement the elements available to him under the joint Malaysian-RAAF Plan, but short of an actual overt breach of security the Commander cannot use these troops for guard or other security duties.

		Consequence				
		Negligible 1	Minor 2	Moderate 3	Major 4	Catastrophic 5
Likelihood	5 Almost certain	Moderate 5	High 10	Extreme 15	Extreme 20	Extreme 25
	4 Likely	Moderate 4	High 8	High 12	Extreme 16	Extreme 20
	3 Possible	Low 3	Moderate 6	High 9	High 12	Extreme 15
	2 Unlikely	Low 2	Moderate 4	Moderate 6	High 8	High 10
	1 Rare	Low 1	Low 2	Low 3	Moderate 4	Moderate 5