

Submission to Inquiry - Mr George Lovett

Part 1 – Name of Inquiry

Name of Inquiry *

Medallic recognition for service with Rifle Company Butterworth.

Part 2 – About the Submitter

Title or Rank *

Mr

Given Names *

George

Surname *

Lovett

Post-nominals (if applicable)

Street Number and Name *

██████████ ██████████

Suburb *

██████████

Postcode *

██████

State *

██████████

Email Address: *

████████████████████

Primary Contact Number *

██████████

Secondary Contact Number

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

Australian Rifle Company Butterworth Veterans Group

Part 3 – Desired outcome

Provide a summary of your submission:

In response to the Hearing held on the 4th April 2023 we wish to bring to attention of the Tribunal assertions of fact relating to the two levels of anticipated threat / attack both Major and Minor as forecast in the Threat Assessments. The primary focus of the submission is to assist the Tribunal in understanding the full extent of the Threat situation.

Part 4 - Your submission and Supporting Documentation

File Attached: [DHAAT-Submission-ARCBVGrp.pdf](#)

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

George Lovett

Date

16/04/2023



Signed by Mr George Lovett

Signed on: 16 April, 2023

Signature Certificate

Document name: Submission to Inquiry - Mr George Lovett



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RIFLE COMPANY BUTTERWORTH VETERANS GROUP SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

Soldiers deployed overseas with Rifle Company Butterworth, Malaysia, were under no disillusion that they may be subjected to hostile elements, threats, expect casualties and to engage, if necessary, with those elements that intend on causing harm to personnel and damage to property.

We would like to add the following supplementary information to previous submissions. This supplementary report is in support of the recognition for service with Rifle Company Butterworth be deemed and acknowledged as warlike service. The reasons are as demonstrated below:

INCORRECT TRIBUNAL ANALYSIS. We are of the belief, that the Tribunal in its wisdom, has made an incorrect analysis of the Intelligence Assessments (IA). The IA advised that it was: **“Unlikely”** the Air Base in Malaysia would be attacked by the MCP/CTO Organisations and therefore was of the opinion the threat was categorised as LOW. This opinion is in contrast to the (IA) which also states – **there was “ definitely a risk of attack by subversive groups or individual cts acting alone without consideration of CTO Policy.**

The Communist Terrorists Organisations, (CTO), comprising of three splinter group after a leadership struggle broke away from the Malaysian Communist Party (MCP) and began acting on their own initiative. They did so by consolidating their power bases, building their manpower and military assets separate from one another. They operated throughout the Malaysian peninsula, thus creating a warlike environment which directly affected all personnel based at Butterworth. Thus began a time of uncertainty, insecurity and developed into a warlike environment that became to be known as the Second Malaysian Emergency.

It is important to understand that although the Intelligence assessments forecast an attack on the airbase as **“Unlikely”** , this forecast was focussed in the main towards the CTO. This was categorised as a **Major attack.**

Subversive groups aligned to the CTO were however forecast in a different light with the intelligence assessments stating that there was **“ definitely a risk of attack** by subversive groups or individual cts acting alone without consideration of CTO Policy. . This was categorised as a **Minor attack.**

The analysis of risk assessment by the Tribunal on face value appears to have been overlooked or furthermore , not considered as being relevant.

9. The 1971 JIO assessment of the threat to Air Base Butterworth may be briefly summarised as follows:

- a. It is unlikely that any armed action by formed bodies of troops from the CTO or Malaysian Nationalist Liberation Front (MNLF) will be mounted against the base within the next twelve months unless a favourable situation resulted from the diversion of the base security forces and local forces to quell civil disturbance,
- b. There is a continuing threat from unco-ordinated action by dissident individuals which could result in loss or damage to the assets of the base,
- c. There is no evidence to indicate that potential enemies have any indirect-fire weapon capability such as mortars,

10. The acceptance of this threat assessment leads to a requirement for two phases of defensive arrangements, apart from the arrangements necessary to protect members, dependants and nominated personnel in the event of civil disturbance. These are:

- a. day to day security measures to protect the base against the minor threat stated at paragraph 9.b, consisting of routine guarding measures; and, Protective Security role RCE applied
 - b. the capability to adopt an expanded security posture to counter the unlikely, but nevertheless possible, threat summarised at paragraph 9.a. Rcb troops were kept at the threshold in the event of this occurrence.RCE applied.
- Defensive Phase 1
- Defensive Phase 2

THREAT IDENTIFICATION.

In reference to previous submissions by the, Rifle Company Butterworth Veterans Group which advised on a Security meeting held at Butterworth Air Base in May 1971 at which the Defence and Security of Butterworth was discussed. This meeting was held in response to a Threat Assessment prepared by the Joint Intelligence Organisation (JIO).

As a result of that meeting it was decided to adopt two distinct phases of defensive arrangements to meet a possible direct attack (**Major**) by the CTO (9)(a) and to protect the base against a **minor threat** (9)(b).

It can be seen that there is a reference to "potential enemies" at (9)(c).

THREAT FROM CPM/CTO.

The major threat of attack was from the Communist Terrorist Organisations (CPM / CTO) which was considered to be "**Unlikely**" although not totally discounted with a possibility of attack. As shown above in the previous paragraphs, the CPM / CTO were in a building phase and it was considered unlikely that they would launch an armed attack in toto at that time. Regardless, for those who were tasked with the actual defence of the Air base **the threat was real and the warlike environment at Butterworth did not change.**

In fact, the Rifle Company Butterworth focussed on counter insurgency training and ensured that all its members were kept aware of the threats through an initial briefing and through chain of command being updated on a regular basis of known and/or unknown terrorists operating in the region. These threat briefings instilled a heightened vigilance among personnel serving at Butterworth.

THREAT FROM SUBVERSIVE GROUPS.

The Australian New Zealand United Kingdom (ANZUK) Intelligence Threat Assessment dated November 1971 identified the threat to the air base indicating that a major threat of attack by Communist terrorist organisations was unlikely however remotely possible for that period. As indicated above, although the communist threat was real, there was no intelligence to indicate that an attack was planned **whilst the communist forces were rebuilding their power bases.**

However as evidenced in the Threat Assessment it was concluded that there was "definitely a risk" of attack regardless of CTO Policy by subversive elements aligned with the CTO.

It goes without saying that if there was definitely a “risk of attack” then casualties can also definitely be expected. The Cambridge Dictionary clearly defines the word **Definitely** as being “without doubt”.

The fact remained that RCB / QRF were briefed on the threat of attack , were Ordered to carry out patrols to counter any attempted attack whether of a minor or major nature and were deployed at Butterworth Air Base by the various Australian Governments who were fully aware through Intelligence reports of that there was “**Definitely**” a risk of attack from communist agitators and their sympathisers that were active on the Malaysian peninsula at that time.

Australian troops deployed to Rifle Company Butterworth were highly trained, skilled in the techniques of jungle warfare , many from the earlier rotations having combat experience in other theatres. They were all briefed as to what was expected of them, the need to be vigilant, aware and always conscious of the rules of engagement and the reasons for carrying live ammunition in a foreign country. We are talking here about fully trained Infantry personnel whose primary role is to place themselves in harms way in order to carry out their duties and regardless of whether or not an attack eventuates this requires a mindset which over rides the normal flight or fight response. A civilian faced with a threat has a choice to either take flight or fight, an Infantry soldier only has one option.

The intelligence briefings ensured that the soldiers were under no illusion of the threats prevalent at the time. Australian soldiers were and still are trained to high levels which does not leave room for errors of judgement and while deployed overseas”.

INTELLIGENCE BY RAAF

It was no secret that it was in the interests of the Royal Australian Airforce (RAAF) to ensure that they were kept up to date with the activities of communist terrorists operating in their region and in doing so kept abreast of all forms of intelligence gathered by the Malaysian government and that of Australian operatives in Malaysia at the time.

It is more than reasonable to assume, that the RAAF leadership at Butterworth would demand and expect timely intelligence involving the Communist terrorist (CTO) threats against the Air Base, of paramount importance, given their military aircraft and personnel under their care, notwithstanding

53. These local intelligence arrangements might give RAAF Butterworth advance warning of a reasonably large group of CTs making an approach from the border area. The CTs do not, however, usually operate in this manner and it is assessed that advance warning of any form of attempted attack, whether by CTs or members of subversive groups, would most probably not be received.

the unpredictability of threats by Malaysian communist party terrorists acting alone or in conjunction with , subversive groups was an unknown as evidenced in the Threat Assessments..

This unpredictability, as such, placed all personnel stationed or deployed at Butterworth on alert at all times, irrespective of tactical intelligence.

It thus became difficult at the most of times to predict when or where an attack may take place. To compound the threat situation, it was felt that despite the intelligence network, if an attack were to occur by individual communist terrorist or subversive elements there would most probably not be any form of advance warning given .

- (c) methods and strengths which could conceivably be employed, if it were decided to attack the Base, range through a number of possibilities:
- (i) direct frontal assault by a large group of CTs up to 60 strong using small arms fire or explosives;
 - (ii) covert penetration, probably at night, by one or more individual CTs or small groups totalling up to 20 with a view to surprise attack on Vital Points, especially the aircraft, by small arms fire and explosives;
 - (iii) mortar or other indirect weapon attack, if the CTs acquired this capability, using a small force of up to 10 men located in the surrounding ricefield/kampong areas, especially those to the east; and
 - (iv) sabotage by the planting of explosive devices or booby traps, designed to damage Vital Points and injure personnel, by one or more CTs, members of subversive groups, or sympathetic or suborned LEC/contractor personnel;
- (d) of these methods, sabotage is by far the most likely, although covert penetration and surprise attack by a small group should not be discounted, and a mortar attack would be likely if the CTs acquired this capability; and
- (e) a sabotage attempt, if made by suborned LEC/contractor personnel or members of subversive groups, might well be directed against those Vital Points outside the
- .../24

A description of the forms of likely attack whether from the CTO or minor attack from subversive Groups were given in the ANZUK Threat Assessment and the 1974 Joint Intelligence Organisation (JIO) Threat Assessment as follows:

The threat of attack defined at Paragraph C (ii) and (iv) could occur at any time from individual communist terrorists and/or subversive elements and was never removed, remaining in place throughout the period 1970 through to 1989 when the peace accord was entered into.

The expectation of casualties must be measured against the likely methods of attack by subversive elements in particular those listed under C(ii) & C(iv).

The threat of attack by communist terrorists acting on their own initiative or in conjunction with subversive elements was a real and active threat to the security of the air base. The RCB personnel and Quick reaction Force (QRF) daily patrols of the base perimeter were implemented to react to threats posed by dissident individuals and or subversive groups referred to collectively as subversive elements.

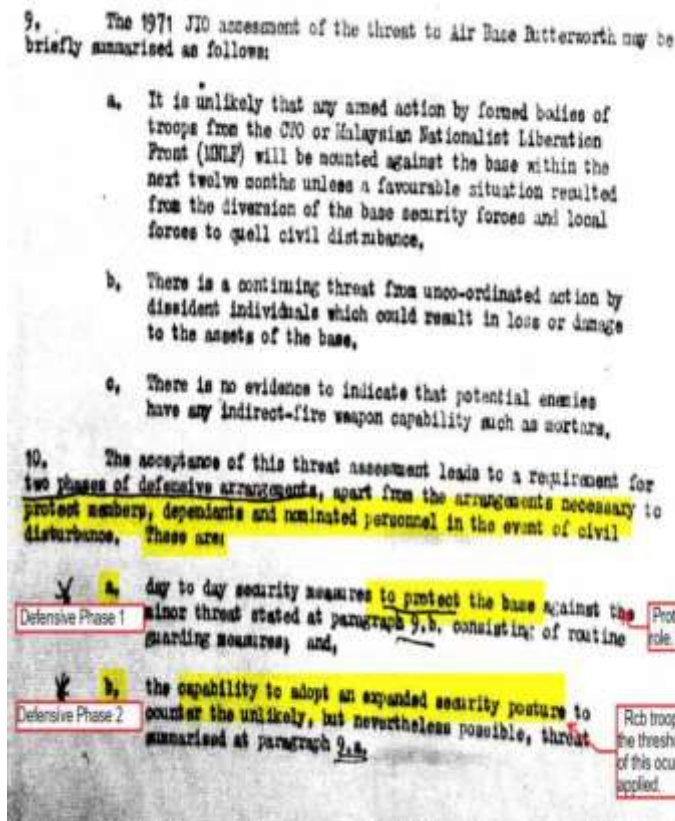
(C) (ii) *“covert penetration, probably at night, by one or more individual cts or small groups totalling up to 20 with a view to surprise attack on Vital Points, especially the aircraft , by small arms fire and explosives”*

(d) *“of these methods, sabotage is by far he most likely , although covert penetration and a surprise attack by a **small group** should not be discounted, and a mortar attack would be likely if the cts acquired this capability-“*

You have to ask yourself the question – What would you do as a Commanding Officer (RAAF) or during the ANZUK period (CMDANZUK) in a situation where you are tasked with the protection of vital strategic assets in a foreign SE Asian Country that was at war, which by the way was in closeness to the Air Base perimeter against a background where an intelligence assessment states that there is *“ definitely a risk of attack.” from subversive groups who are aligned with the Communist Terrorists.?*

In a situation where if a minor attack were to occur comprising a small group of up to 20, which in itself is a sizable engagement, an expectation of casualties is a predictable outcome.

TWO PHASES OF DEFENSIVE ARRANGEMENTS.



In emergency situations the Ground Defence Operations Centre (GDOC) were also activated. The QRF came under control of the OCGDOC at alert times, providing the Officer Commanding GDOC with the specialist capability to counter any threat to the air base.

Perimeter patrols carried out by the QRF not attached to GDOC were carried out by the Officer Commanding the Infantry unit. It was during these periods of infantry personnel were exposed to harm.

PHASE TWO.

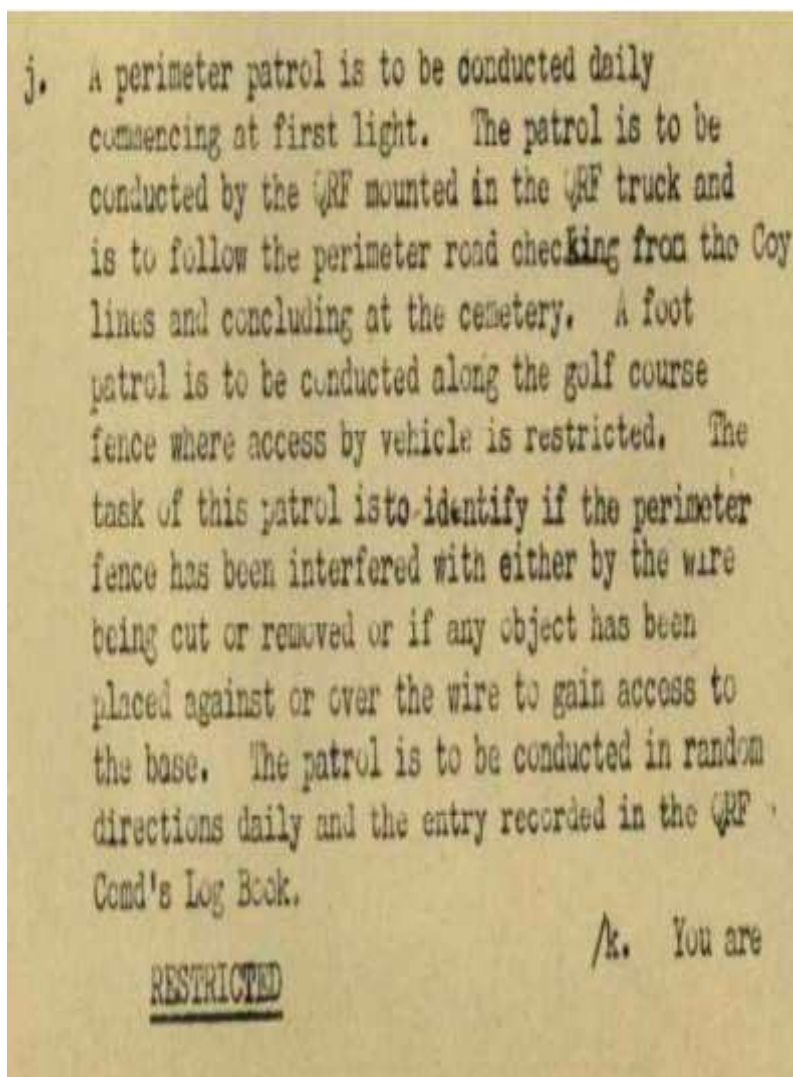
10 (b) The Capability to adopt an expanded security posture to counter the unlikely but nevertheless possible threat from the CTO or MLNF. This level of threat was managed through the Ground Defence Operations Centre GDOC. Primarily RCB was an infantry-based unit which had the specialist capability to counter and defend a major attack against the air base. The anticipated enemy force size if the CTO decided to attack the base was a force of up to 60 by way of a direct frontal attack. The size of a normal Infantry Company would not be able to sustain a prolonged attack from a much larger force unless it had reinforcement support. During the ANZUK period this support would most likely have been provided by the other two ANZUK Infantry Battalions 1RNZIF & 1RHF .

PHASE ONE.

10(a) The day-to-day guarding measures to protect the base against the **minor threat from dissident individuals. – consisting of routine guarding measures.** This level of threat was managed through RCB/ QRF when not attached to GDOC.

Once again we need to turn our mind to a major or minor threat situation in which it was anticipated that if a major attack was planned by the CTO then intelligence reports would avail the GDOC to take timely action and prepare for a frontal attack by a group of up to 60. In a minor threat situation it was forecast that forewarning of an attack would most likely not be received.

The day to day guarding measures is where RCB / QRF spent most of its time.



RIFLE COMPANY UNIT STANDING ORDERS – QRF COMMANDER ORDERS.

The Commander of the QRF was required to arrange for the QRF to carry out a patrol of the perimeter fence every day at first light which included a foot patrol along the golf course fence and when not carrying out a foot patrol by mounting an open sided QRF truck in which a section group of 10 would mount.

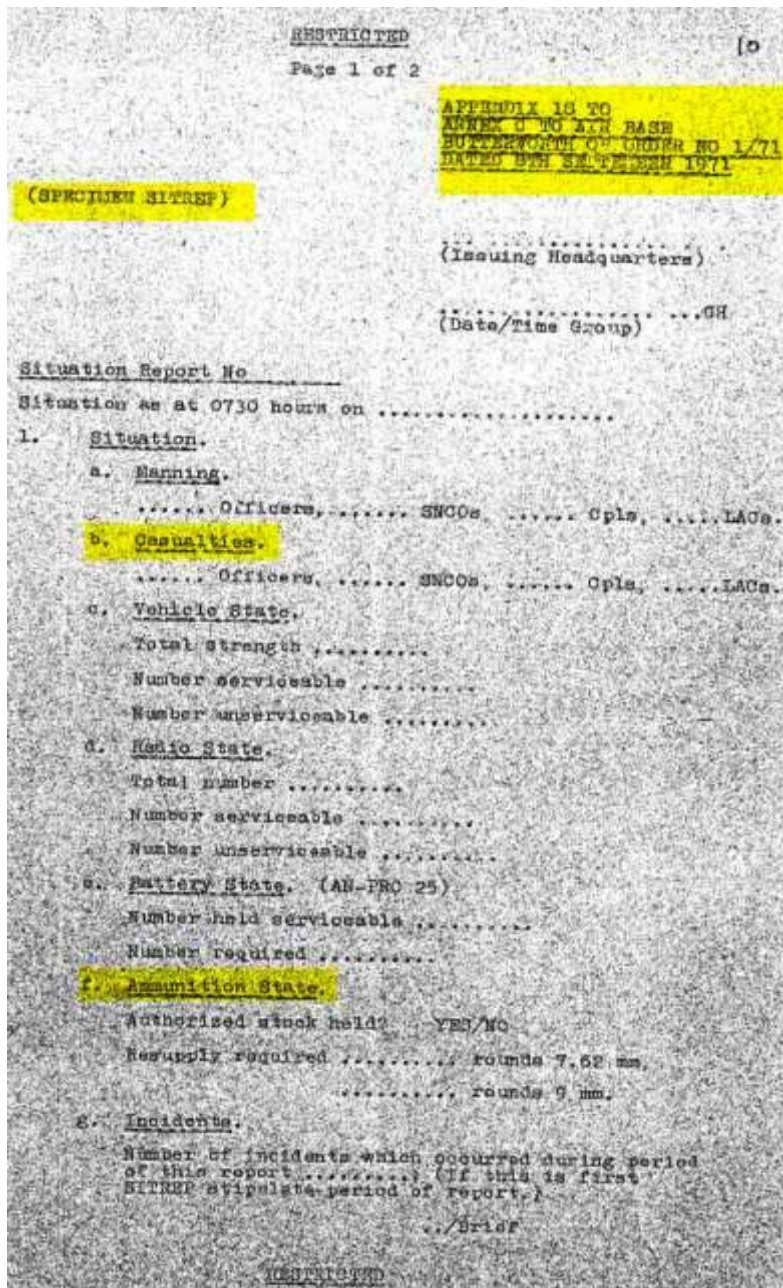
The QRF truck had a large spot light mounted above the driver's cabin. At other times perimeter patrols were carried out on foot without the use of a QRF truck and at random hours throughout the night or early morning prior to sunrise. The QRF/RCB troops were faced with an unknown threat and in the mind of the soldier tasked with QRF or RCB tasks, there was always an expectation of casualties.

In the eyes of the soldier the threat element was always present with an expectation of casualties. An expectation of casualties must be measured against the threat environment, the forecast likely methods of attack and Operational Orders all of which required RCB to respond with lethal force.

OPERATIONAL ORDER 1-71. A template Situation Report (SITREP) is included in the annexes and forms part of the Operational Order. The template Sitrep sets out the reporting requirements in instances where an incident arises.

The report must identify **any casualties along with any enemy sightings or movements.** Clearly at the planning stages there was an expectation of casualties and reference to an enemy.

During the planning stages, there was an expectation of casualties and a clear reference to a risk of meeting with and engaging elements who may display hostile intent in the main from subversive elements and / or ct acting alone outside of CTO policy.



OPERATIONAL ORDER 1-71

A Situation Report (SITREP) template (left) is included in the annexes and forms part of the Operational Order.

The Sitrep template on the left sets out the reporting requirements in instances where an incident arises

The report must identify any
(b) casualties
(f) ammunition state
(h) any enemy sightings or movements

Clearly at the planning stages there was an expectation of casualties and an expectation of encountering an enemy.

APPENDIX 13 TO
ANNEX C

Brief summary of incidents
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h. Reports of Enemy Sightings or Enemy Movement.

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i. Administration. Administrative and other factors affecting operations (eg messing, accommodation welfare, etc)

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B: This SITREP is prepared for ease of transmission by radio or telephone.)

.....
Officer in Charge
.....

CONCLUSION.

In viewing the Threat Assessments it is clear that there were two fronts on which an attack on Air Base Butterworth could arise. The two types of attack are given in the pretext of a Major attack by the CTO Organisation and a Minor attack from subversive elements acting regardless of CTO policy not to attack the base.

Although there is no intelligence available to the best of our knowledge which shows that a Major attack was imminent which would place RCB on a combat footing there is however an intelligence summary which assessed that there was “ definitely a risk of attack in the form of a Minor attack from subversive elements aligned to the CTO.

The form of a Minor attack promulgated in the Threat Assessment was described amongst other likely methods of attack as including covert penetration by one or more individual cts or small groups totalling up to 20 with a view to a surprise attack by small arms fire and explosives. This in itself gives rise to an expectation of casualties.

When one considers the rotational over lapping of each deployment which provided for continuous protection of the Air Base , records show the relief Company arriving the same day as the departing Company. One must wonder why the continuous rotations when it is being put by Defence that it was for training purposes.

We humbly request the Tribunal to consider the matters raised in this submission which provides a basis off fact to allow the Tribunal to reach a decision in support of the award of AASM central to the assertion of fact where the Threat to Air Base Butterworth was continuously regarded as being “definitely at risk of attack” regardless of CTO policy.

For and on behalf
Australian Rifle Company
Veterans Group