

Submission to Inquiry - Mr Keran Francis Carsburg

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 *

Keran Francis

Surname *

Carsburg

Post-nominals (if applicable)

C.Dec

Street Number and Name *

[REDACTED]

Suburb *

[REDACTED]

Postcode *

[REDACTED]

State *

Queensland

Email Address: *

[REDACTED]

Primary Contact Number *

[REDACTED]

Secondary Contact Number

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

Part 3 – Desired outcome

Provide a summary of your submission:

The Defence statement in Submission 96b at page 12 that the Malaysian Government had not asked for RAAF/Military assistance since 1966. This is contrary to Correspondence from the Australian High Commission in Kuala Lumpur to the Secretary of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs dated 21st July 1971 in which it was discussed that the Malaysian Military requested that the RAAF conduct photographic reconnaissance to assist them in the Thai border area.

Part 4 - Your submission and Supporting Documentation

File Attached: Submission-081b-by-Mr-Keran-Carsburg-19-April-2023.pdf

Correspondence-requesting-RAAF-assistance-with-photorecon-21-July-1971-1.jpg

Correspondence-requesting-RAAF-assistance-with-photorecon-21-July-1971-2.jpg

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

Keran F Carsburg

Date

19/04/2023

*Mr Keran Francis
Carsburg*

Signed by Mr Keran Francis Carsburg

Signed on: 19 April, 2023

Submission 081b by Mr Keran Carsburg

19 February 2023

DHAAT,

Defence stated in Submission 96b at page 12 states that **the Government of Malaysia did not ask for Military assistance after 14 September 1966, which marked the end of the Indonesian Confrontation*. This is contrary to *Correspondence from the Australian High Commission in Kuala Lumpur to the Secretary of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs dated 21st July 1971* in which the Malaysian Military requested that the RAAF conduct photographic reconnaissance of the Thai border area, as discussed in the correspondence.

- *'A state of declared war.'* Australia did not declare or recognise that a state of war existed in Malaysia and was not involved in internal Malaysian affairs.
 - The Government of Malaysia did not ask Australia for military assistance after 14 September 1966, which marked the end of the Indonesian Confrontation.

**Extract from Defence Submission 96b at page 12.*

The statement by Defence that ****Both Rifle Company Butterworth and the Royal Australian Air Force aircraft were not authorised to be involved in internal Malaysian affairs nor therefore into direct contact with a hostile force.* Is in conflict with *Correspondence from the Australian High Commission in KL to the Secretary of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs dated 21st July 1971* which specifically states that a request had been received from the Malaysian Government for military assistance in the form of Photographic Reconnaissance.

- d. There was no expectation of casualties as there was not expected to be an engagement with hostile forces. **Both Rifle Company Butterworth and Royal Australian Air Force aircraft were not authorised to be involved in internal Malaysian affairs nor therefore drawn into direct contact with a hostile force.**

***Extract from Defence Submission 96b at 2.65 d.*

It also intimates that the RAAF had previously provided assistance, including providing equipment to Malaysian Special Branch.

It also states that: *'Security in this field has worked well in the past, for example, in our use of Butterworth in support of our forces in Vietnam.'* This indicates a decision to withhold actions from public view.

The Attachment, in the writer's opinion, shows that the Australian Government, through the Defence personnel at Air Base Butterworth, were providing assistance to Malaysia against the Communist Insurgent groups.


Had Communist Insurgents been aware of the assistance being provided to and requests for RAAF assistance their actions against Butterworth would, in the writer's opinion, have been quite different. Actions to provide negative media coverage in Australia to try to force withdrawal of Australian Military Forces at Air Base Butterworth could be gained in several ways:

- Indirect assault of the RAAF Mirage lines;
- Direct assault by individual Sappers on the Mirage lines;

- Direct assault on off duty RAAF/Army personnel and their dependents by booby-traps or direct assault.

Any one of these actions could have resulted in the loss of one or more of, at the time, Australia's' most sophisticated aircraft and loss of life of personnel or dependents. What would have been the impact of a negative press in Australia and its impact on the *Five Powers Defence Arrangements*.

This Submission indicates to the writer that the Australian Government through Australian Military Forces and or Intelligence was in a covert manner aiding the Malaysian Government in their fight against the Communists.



Keran F. Carsburg C.Dec

PS I do not have access to the *Memorandum N° 200 dated 11th February 1971* which is referred to at the start of the Attachment. It would provide more information on this issue.

/Attachment A: Copy of *Correspondence from the Australian High Commission in KL to the Secretary of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs dated 21st July 1971.*

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SECRET

21st July, 1971

AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION,
44 JALAN AMPANG,
KUALA LUMPUR.

In reply quote No. 225/38/1

Memorandum No. FA.1382
D.217

21st July, 1971.

The Secretary,
Department of Foreign Affairs,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

C.C.1 The Secretary,
Department of Defence,
CANBERRA. A.C.T.

MALAYSIAN REQUEST FOR RAAF PHOTOGRAPHIC
RECONNAISSANCE

Please refer to your memorandum No. 200
dated 11th February, 1971.

We note that it has been decided not to give any decision, in principle, on what our response should be to future requests by the Malaysians for tactical photographic reconnaissance by the RAAF.

2. Because the RMAF's photographic reconnaissance capability is limited to hand held cameras carried in aircraft, it is quite possible that situations similar to what which took place in October, 1970, could recur. As then, our response must be quick, otherwise we might as well decide now to day "no".

3. The Services Attache has confirmed with the OC Butterworth (Air Cdr. Parker) that the RAAF could fly the missions from within the present allocation of flying hours and with the present staff doing what they have been trained for. There would be no additional costs, apart from the film, as far as the RAAF is concerned. Photographic reconnaissance missions would provide good operational experience for all personnel involved, thus improving their efficiency in one of the operational roles of the Mirage Squadron.

4. There would be no more danger of violating Thai airspace on a photographic reconnaissance mission than on any other type. The crews are well briefed and their approach to and breakaway from the target area could be planned to take into account the proximity of the Thai/Malaysian border. The Mirage's self contained navigation aids give the pilot accurate position information and additional information would be available if the target area was within radar cover.

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5. Normally, aircraft do not operate below 1500 feet. This can be varied to meet operational requirements. The height for a particular mission would be dictated by the type of coverage required. Danger to the aircraft from possible ground fire is slight. In forested country, it becomes difficult even to see a fast flying aeroplane from the ground, much less to aim accurately.

6. The film would be processed at Butterworth and the print would take less than 30 minutes. The OC Butterworth believes it would be possible to safeguard against any possible leakage of knowledge of RAAF involvement in such flights. The Malaysians could be told that the RAAF would provide the information on the clear understanding that they did not disclose the source of the photographs unnecessarily. Security in this field has worked well in the past, for example, in our use of Butterworth in support of our forces in Vietnam.

7. Similarly, within the RAAF knowledge of any photographic reconnaissance flights would be restricted on a need to know basis and the appropriate security precautions would be applied.

8. With the present CT activity in Kedah and Perak, any intelligence on the situation is to be welcomed. Photographic reconnaissance flights would contribute to this and would provide an opportunity for a better exchange of information with Malaysian Special Branch and Military.

9. On the other hand, there are of course the political aspects of the question: involvement of this kind in advance of any process of consultation under the Five Power arrangement might, you may think, be undesirable as laying the ground for our being drawn into the CT situation at some future date and making it difficult for us to take a stand on the principle that we keep our hands free in advance about the kind of situation that the consultation provision applies to. My only comments on this, from the point of view of this post, are that the OC Butterworth's present directive already allows him to give "indirect support" (see attached copy); that the Malaysians have always assumed that the CT trouble on the borders is precisely the kind of situation in which our help would be looked for; that our interest is to see it effectively dealt with; and that we have, of course, provided some kind of assistance in equipment to Special Branch already - though the use of the RAAF would be rather a different matter.

10. One possible solution might be to equip one of the new batch of Sabre jets so that the Malaysians could do the job themselves, but our belief is that the Sabres are not camera-equipped.

11. You might care to think about this matter and let us have your views.

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