



RIFLE COMPANY BUTTERWORTH REVIEW SUPPORTERS GROUP

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Senator the Hon David Feeney

30 June 2013

Parliamentary Secretary for Defence

Parliament House, Canberra

ACT 2600

Dear Senator

I must apologize for not acknowledging or responding to your letters to me of the 20th Mar 2012 and the 19th May 2012 with copies of the Nature of Service Branch deliberations.

Unfortunately for me in August 2012 I was struck with a particularly virulent form of cancer, which gave me months to live. After a grotesque form of treatment of Radio Therapy and Chemotherapy it seems I may have survived. In the recovery period I have had plenty of time to reflect and continue to collect evidence in support of RCB claims for recognition.

The form of this letter is to highlight inconsistencies in the NOS Branch submissions, ask you a policy question, and, introduce some new evidence and to offer you a possible solution to this issue.

I continue these approaches to you, as I consider, even more so, that those who served in RCB have been badly treated in the recognition area. I do not care for the financial approach, by some under the VEA, but tend to concentrate on the recognition area.

I know you and I differ in opinion on the role of Defence in all of this, but I believe their submissions are terribly focused towards the negative and they do not consider any positive or support of the RCB position of evidence in the discussion. Many of the facts put forward by them are irrelevant or plainly misleading.

I ask how many times is a Defence submission considered irrelevant before it is discounted. I audited both documents under the following criteria:

1. Cat 1 – Statement is technically incorrect.
2. Cat 2 – Statement is not appropriate to actual responsibilities conducted.

3. Cat 3 – Intentionally misleading.
4. Cat 4 – Leaving out evidence for discussion in support of RCB claims.
5. Cat 5 – Making statements with no evidence.

So the document Background Information Paper Nature of Service Classification- ADF Service at RAAF Butterworth (attached as A) has the following inconsistencies:

1. Cat 1 – 6
2. Cat 2 – 1
3. Cat 3 – 3
4. Cat 4 – 3
5. Cat 5 – 4

The document 2011 Nature of Service Branch review ADF Service at RAAF Butterworth – 1970-1989 (attached as B) has the following inconsistencies:

1. Cat 1 – 4
2. Cat 2 – 4
3. Cat 3 - 2
4. Cat 4 – 6
5. Cat 5 – 2

As an example of intentionally misleading statements about Butterworth is the paras 32, 33, 34 and 35 of Attachment B what Defence does not say is that a Malaysian Army Military Police Company was resident in the high rise married quarters adjacent to the Officers Mess and their responsibilities included external quick reaction, manning the 2 major roadblocks on a 24hr basis at either end of the base and armed patrolling of all the facilities including married quarters, messes and the hospital on a 24hr basis.

So the environment was not as benign as Defence has stated.

In regards to the Communist Terrorist situation Defence have consistently downplayed this history to further their own agenda and to claim they and RAAF cannot find the monthly Intelligence briefings.

For further evidence on the Malaysian CT Situation I commend to you a paper written by Weichong Ong of the University of Exeter (UK) titled Securing the Population from Insurgency and Subversion in the Second Emergency (1968-1981). Unfortunately this paper is 238 pages long, but it is very important, in that it is, an academic paper based on evidence not the private musings of a desk bound staff officer in Canberra. I have included a CD of the document.

Important facts in the paper state that the Second Insurgency lasted longer than the First, That the Second Insurgency had greater impact on Malaysia than the First, shows that Butterworth Air Base was surrounded by three CT Assault units, gives numbers and capability of the CT's but most importantly gives extensive Australian references including threat assessments held in National

Archives and The Australian War Memorial. The document can be viewed at ore.eric.exeter.ac.uk/repository/bitstream/handle/10036/119566/OngW.pdf?sequence=2

It should be noted that these references could not be found by Defence and RAAF but a couple of academics from the UK seemed to find them with ease!

On the policy question previous governments accepted the Mohr and Clarke reviews especially their interpretations on Danger and Implied Danger, which led to recognition being given to RAAF Ubon. Now Defence chooses to completely ignore these interpretations and does not even discuss them in their decision process when preparing their submissions. FOI documents have shown the CDF and others recognized the impact of these statements, but now Defence just chooses to ignore them or pretend that they do not exist. How is it so? and has there officially been an authority to withdraw Mohr and Clarkes Reviews?

The last issue that I write about is the possibility of a win/win for both sides of the argument. In 2004 The Malaysian Government awarded a medal (PJM) for all those troops who served in Malaysia up until the end of the Second Insurgency. Australia choose to accept the medal for service up until 1966 believing that they had no troops involved in the Second Emergency.

Minister for Defence Stephen Smith stated on 10 Nov 2011 on the public record stated, "in 1973 an Australian Army Infantry Company was established as Rifle Company Butterworth in Malaysia. This provided a Protective and Quick Reaction Force to assist our regional partners during a resurgence of the Communist Insurgency".

This means that RCB was established to protect during the Second Emergency and it equally protected RMAF air assets as well as Australian air assets. The award is not linked to war service and it is just for service in Malaysia up until 1989.

Australia needs to say to Malaysia, that on examination of the facts, a further group of servicemen are eligible for the award. This will not be popular within Defence and RAAF but if they have a case for the award they need to justify it and not crucify RCB for its circumstances.

So at no great cost to Australia recognition could be given to a group of soldiers who did their duty and would have fought to do their duty if the Communist Terrorists had engaged them and have been maligned ever since.



M DENNIS, MBE

LTCOL (RTD)

Attached: A. Background Information Paper Nature of Service Classification – ADF Service at RAAF Butterworth.

- B. 2011 Nature of Service Branch Review ADF Service RAAF Butterworth 1970-1989
- C. CT Map
- D. List of references
- E. CD Rom