



The National Commemoration for Malaya/Malaysia Operations

PUKEAHU NATIONAL WAR MEMORIAL PARK

16 SEPTEMBER 2022

New Zealand Military Operations in Malaya/Malaysia

Between 1949 and 1966 New Zealand soldiers, sailors and airmen played a small but significant role in two South-East Asian conflicts: the Malayan Emergency (1948–60) and Indonesia's Confrontation Campaign against Malaysia (1964–66).

The Emergency arose out of an attempt by the Malayan Communist Party to overthrow the British colonial administration of Malaya. New Zealand forces ultimately made an important contribution to the Commonwealth effort to defeat the communist insurgency.

New Zealand's involvement began in 1949 when a flight of RNZAF Dakotas began dropping supplies to anti-guerrilla forces. Several New Zealand Army officers served in Malaya while on secondment with British units from 1949, and in January 1951, 10 Kiwi officers and 14 Non-Commissioned Officers arrived with the 1st Battalion, Fiji Infantry Regiment. In 1954, a RNZN frigate, HMNZS *Pukaki*, bombarded a suspected guerrilla camp, the first of many such operations by RNZN ships serving with the British Royal Navy's Far East Fleet.



HMNZS Hickleton steams up the Sarawak River toward Kuching, June 1966. Image courtesy of the National Museum of the Royal New Zealand Navy, Te Waka Huia o Te Taua Moana o Aotearoa, Ref: ACY 0025

New Zealand became more directly involved in 1955, following its decision to contribute forces to the British Commonwealth Far East Strategic Reserve. The Army's initial contribution, a Special Air Service (SAS) squadron commanded by Major Frank Rennie, was particularly suited for operations seeking out the guerrillas in their jungle sanctuary. RNZAF squadrons also operated against the guerrillas from 1955, carrying out strike missions using Vampire, Venom and later Canberra jets, and conducting supply drops with Bristol Freighters.

From March 1958, the 1st Battalion, New Zealand Regiment took part in operations designed to clear Perak of insurgents. By the time it was replaced by the 2nd Battalion, NZR in late 1959, most of the guerrillas had retreated across the border into southern Thailand. The greatly improved security situation was reflected in the official termination of the Emergency on 31 July 1960.

In 1964, New Zealand began helping the new federated state of Malaysia resist Indonesian President Sukarno's Confrontation Campaign – an undeclared war designed to destabilise Malaysia's North Borneo territories of Sarawak and Sabah. As well as encouraging subversive elements in North Borneo, Indonesia deployed army regulars, posing as guerrillas, on covert cross-border raids. In response, British SAS forces began operating across the border.

The New Zealand Government, led by Prime Minister Keith Holyoake, initially resisted requests to commit New Zealand forces. However, when Indonesia extended military operations to the Malay Peninsula later in 1964, the 1st Battalion, Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment (1RNZIR) was used to help capture the infiltrators. RNZAF Canberras based in Singapore and RNZN warships also helped deter Indonesian aggression.

In February 1965, a small New Zealand SAS detachment was sent to North Borneo, where it operated successfully alongside British equivalents. 1RNZIR was deployed to Sarawak between May and October that year, before returning in 1966, by which time the Confrontation was all but over.

In October 1965, Indonesian army forces loyal to Major-General Suharto effectively overthrew the Sukarno regime, triggering bloody anti-communist purges. The new leadership quietly abandoned Sukarno's Confrontation policy. On 11 August 1966, representatives of Indonesia and Malaysia signed a peace treaty in Bangkok. Hostilities were officially at an end. The New Zealanders completed their withdrawal from Borneo in October that year.

The New Zealand roll of honour records 20 service personnel as having died on operational service during the Malaya and Malaysian campaigns.

Order of Ceremony

KARANGA

Pekaira Rei, Taranaki Whānui

response by

April Nepia Su'a, Rongowhakaata

NATIONAL ANTHEMS

NATIONAL ANTHEM OF MALAYSIA

Aniz Aqeelah Afrina Mohd Raduan

NATIONAL ANTHEM OF NEW ZEALAND

Anon Vocal Ensemble

OPENING KARAKIA

Te Ahu Jason Hamilton,
Taranaki Whānui

COMMEMORATIVE ADDRESS

The Honourable Peeni Henare,
Minister of Defence

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Chaplain Class 2 David Lacey

LAYING OF WREATHS

The Honourable Peeni Henare,
Minister of Defence
on behalf of the Government and people of
New Zealand

and

**Her Excellency
Nur Izzah Wong Mee Choo**,
High Commissioner of Malaysia
on behalf of the Government and people of
Malaysia

Ray Marshall,
on behalf of the New Zealand Malaya
veterans

and

**A New Zealand Defence Force
Representative**,
on behalf of the Chief of Defence Force

**His Excellency
Ahmad Salem Alwehaib**,
Dean of the Diplomatic Corps
on behalf of the Diplomatic Corps

and

Ian McKelvie MP,
on behalf of the Leader of the Opposition

Colonel (Rtd) Marty Donoghue,
Chief Executive, RNZRSA
on behalf of the Royal New Zealand
Returned and Services Association

ODE FOR A WANDERING WARRIOR

Bill Russell,
New Zealand Malayan Veterans'
Association

THE COMMEMORATION

THE ODE IN TE REO MĀORI

Warrant Officer Kathleen Nikau,
New Zealand Defence Force

THE ODE IN ENGLISH

Colonel (Rtd) Marty Donoghue,
Chief Executive, Royal New Zealand
Returned and Services Association

THE ODE IN MALAYSIAN

Lieutenant Colonel Razlan bin Razali,
Defence Attaché, High Commission of
Malaysia

LAST POST

Uniformed personnel salute

The flags of Malaysia and New Zealand are
lowered to half-mast head

ONE MINUTE OF SILENCE

ROUSE

The flags of Malaysia and New Zealand are
raised to full-mast head

CLOSING KARAKIA

Te Ahu Jason Hamilton, Taranaki Whānui



*New Zealand soldier of No. 1 Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment watches supplies being dropped from No. 41 Squadron Bristol Freighter NZ5906, over the Borneo jungle, 1965.
Image courtesy of the Air Force Museum of New Zealand (RNZAF Official),
Ref: SeaPRAF227-3-4*



The Pingat Jasa Malaysia (PJM) medal was instituted by the King of Malaysia for award to British Commonwealth personnel who served during the Malayan Emergency and the Confrontation. It is awarded to those who served in Malaya/Malaysia for at least 90 days, between 31 August 1957 and 31 December 1966. Service in Singapore between 31 August 1957 and 9 August 1965 is also recognised by the PJM medal.

This National Commemorative Service was arranged by the Visits and Ceremonial Office, Te Tari Taiwhenua Department of Internal Affairs, in partnership with Manatū Taonga Ministry for Culture and Heritage, Manatū Aorere Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Te Ope Kātua o Aotearoa the New Zealand Defence Force and the Malayan Veterans' Association.



Cover image: Troopers N Pepene, G Otene, A J Allen, P N Hurst, S Watene and T A Stevens relax at patrol base, Malaya, circa 1955. Image courtesy of Alexander Turnbull Library, Ref: M-2080-F