



# The National Commemoration for Malaya/Malaysia Operations

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**HALL OF MEMORIES**

**PUKEAHU NATIONAL WAR MEMORIAL PARK**

**16 SEPTEMBER 2023**

# 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.



*Supplies being loaded into No. 41 Squadron Bristol Freighter NZ5906 at Royal Air Force Base Kuching, East Malaysia, Borneo Island, 1965. Image courtesy of the Air Force Museum of New Zealand, RNZAF Official, Ref: SEAPRAF227-12-2*

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

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## KARANGA

**Pekaira Rei**

Taranaki Whānui

*response by*

**April Nepia Su'a**

Rongowhakaata

## NATIONAL ANTHEMS

### NATIONAL ANTHEM OF MALAYSIA

**Sofea Abd Razak**

### NATIONAL ANTHEM OF NEW ZEALAND

**Anon Vocal Ensemble**

## KARAKIA TĪMATANGA

**Peter Jackson**

Taranaki Whānui

## WELCOME

**Major Fiona Cassidy (Rtd)**

Chair of the National War Memorial

Advisory Council

## COMMEMORATIVE ADDRESS

**The Honourable Andrew Little**

Minister of Defence

## HISTORICAL READING

Major Stan McKeon's description of patrolling the Borneo border, quoted in *Voices From a Border War* by Robert Gurr

Read by **Ray Marshall**

New Zealand Malaya Veterans Association

## MUSICAL ITEM

*Pokarekare Ana*

Arranged by Sheena Phillips

Sung by **Anon Vocal Ensemble**

## PRAYER OF REMEMBRANCE

**Chaplain David Lacey**

New Zealand Defence Force

## LAYING OF WREATHS

**The Honourable Andrew Little**

Minister of Defence

on behalf of the Government and people of New Zealand

**Her Excellency Ms Mazita binti Marzuki**

High Commissioner for Malaysia

on behalf of the Government and people of Malaysia

**Brigadier Rose King**

Acting Chief of Army

on behalf of the New Zealand Defence Force

*and*

**Paul Anderson**

President, New Zealand Malaya  
Veterans Association  
on behalf of the New Zealand  
Malaya veterans

**His Excellency Mr Alfredo Perez Bravo**

Ambassador of Mexico and  
Acting Dean of the Diplomatic Corps  
on behalf of the Diplomatic Corps

*and*

**The Honourable Gerry Brownlee**

on behalf of the Leader of the Opposition

**Rear Admiral Jack Steer ONZM (Rtd)**

National Vice-President  
Royal New Zealand Returned and  
Services Association  
on behalf of the Royal New Zealand  
Returned and Services Association

*and*

**Riley Greenhough and  
Muhammad Arif Rusli**

on behalf of the youth of New Zealand  
and Malaysia

**THE ODE FOR A  
WANDERING WARRIOR**

**Bill Russell**

New Zealand Malaya Veterans Association

## **THE COMMEMORATION**

### **THE ODE**

Te Reo Māori recited by

**Warrant Officer Class One Mario Ropitini**

New Zealand Army

English recited by

**Rear Admiral Jack Steer ONZM (Rtd)**

Malaysian recited by

**Lieutenant Colonel Razlan Razali**

Defence Attaché

High Commission of Malaysia

### **LAST POST**

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

### **ONE MINUTE SILENCE**

### **ROUSE**

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

### **CLOSING PRAYER**

**Chaplain David Lacey**

### **KARAKIA WHAKAMUTUNGA**

**Peter Jackson**



*Privates Sonnie Cribb and George Horsefall stocking up with corn to take into the jungle, January, 1958. Image courtesy of Alexander Turnbull Library, Ref: M-3101-F*

*Cover image: The jungle and mountains ahead for this SAS [Special Air Service] patrol during the Malayan Emergency, April 1957. Image courtesy of Alexander Turnbull Library, Ref: M-2061-F*



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.

