

Campaign Service Medal with 'Borneo' Clasp 24th December 1962 – 11th August 1966

Qualifying Period – Thirty days or more, service, not necessarily continuous in North Borneo (now Sabah, Sarawak or Brunei).

Indonesia–Malaysia confrontation

The Indonesian–Malaysian confrontation (also known by its Indonesian/Malay name, *Konfrontasi*) was a violent conflict in 1963–66 that stemmed from Indonesia's opposition to the creation of Malaysia. The creation of Malaysia was the amalgamation of the Federation of Malaya (now West Malaysia), Singapore and the crown colony/British protectorates of North Borneo and Sarawak (collectively known as British Borneo, now East Malaysia) in September 1963.

The confrontation was an undeclared war with most of the action occurring in the border area between Indonesia and East Malaysia on the island of Borneo (known as Kalimantan in Indonesia). The conflict was characterised by restrained and isolated ground combat, set within tactics of low-level brinkmanship. Combat was usually conducted by company or platoon sized operations on either side of the border. Indonesia's campaign of infiltrations into Borneo sought to exploit the ethnic and religious diversity in Sabah and Sarawak compared to that of Malaya and Singapore, with the intent of unravelling the proposed state of Malaysia.

The challenging jungle terrain of Borneo and lack of roads straddling the Malaysia/Indonesia border forced both Indonesian and Commonwealth forces to conduct long foot patrols. Both sides relied on light infantry operations and air transport, although Commonwealth forces enjoyed the advantage of better helicopter deployment and resupply to forward operating bases. Rivers were also used as a method of transport and infiltration. Although combat operations were primarily conducted by ground forces, aerial forces played a vital support role and naval forces ensured the security of the sea flanks. The British provided most of the defensive effort, although Malaysian forces steadily increased their contributions, and there were periodic contributions from Australian and New Zealander forces within the combined Far East Strategic Reserve stationed then in West Malaysia and Singapore.

Initial Indonesian attacks into East Malaysia relied heavily on local volunteers trained by the Indonesian Army. With the passage of time infiltration forces became more organised with the inclusion of a larger component of Indonesian forces. To deter and disrupt Indonesia's growing campaign of infiltrations, the British responded in 1964 by launching their own covert operations into Indonesian Kalimantan under the code name Operation Claret. Coinciding with Sukarno announcing a 'year of dangerous living' and 1964 race riots in Singapore, Indonesia launched on 17 August 1964 an expanded campaign of operations into West Malaysia, albeit without military success. A build-up of Indonesian forces on the Kalimantan border in December 1964 saw the UK commit significant forces from the UK based Army Strategic Command and Australia and New Zealand deployed roulement combat forces from West Malaysia to Borneo in 1965-6. The intensity of the conflict began to subside following the events of the 30 September Movement and Suharto's rise to power. A new round of peace negotiations between Indonesia and Malaysia began in May 1966 and a final peace agreement was signed on 11 August 1966 with Indonesia formally recognising Malaysia.

Important precursors to the conflict included Indonesia's policy of confrontation against Netherlands New Guinea from March–August 1962 and the Brunei Revolt in December 1962.

Background & Political situation

Before Indonesia's Confrontation of Malaysia, Sukarno had sought to develop an independent Indonesian foreign policy, focused on the acquisition of Netherlands New Guinea as a residual issue from the Indonesian National Revolution, and establishing Indonesia's credentials as a notable international power operating distinct interests from those of the West and East. Indonesia had relentlessly pursued its claim to Netherlands New Guinea during the period 1950–1962, despite

facing multiple setbacks in the UN General Assembly to have its claim recognised by the international community. Indonesia was an important country in developing the Non-Alligned Movement, hosting the Bandung Conference in 1955.

Following the Indonesian crisis in 1958, which had included the Permesta rebellion in eastern Indonesia and the declaration of the PRRI, a rebel revolutionary government based in Sumatra; Indonesia had emerged as a notable and rising military power in Southeast Asia.^[5] With the influx of Soviet arms aid, Indonesia was able to advance its diplomatic claims to Netherlands New Guinea more forcefully. The diplomatic dispute reached its climax in 1962 when Indonesia launched a substantial campaign of airborne and seaborne infiltrations upon Netherlands New Guinea. While the infiltration forces were soundly defeated by Dutch and indigenous forces, Indonesia was able to lend credence to the threat of an Indonesian invasion of Netherlands New Guinea. The Dutch, facing mounting diplomatic pressure from the Indonesians and the Americans, who were anxious to keep Indonesia from becoming Communist aligned, yielded and agreed to a diplomatic compromise, allowing the Indonesians to gain control of the territory in exchange for pledging to hold a self-determination plebiscite (the Act of Free Choice) in the territory by 1969. Thus by the close of 1962 Indonesia had achieved a considerable diplomatic victory, which possibly emboldened its self perception as a notable regional power. It was in the context of Indonesia's recent diplomatic victory in the Netherlands New Guinea dispute, that Indonesia cast its attention to the British proposal for a unified Malaysian state.

Prior to the British Government announcing the East of Suez policy in 1968, the British Government had begun to re-evaluate in the late 1950s its force commitment in the Far East. As a part of its withdrawal from its Southeast Asian colonies, the UK moved to combine its colonies in North Borneo with the Federation of Malaya (which had become independent from Britain in 1957), and Singapore (which had become self-governing in 1959). In May 1961, the UK and Malayan governments proposed a larger federation called Malaysia, encompassing the states of Malaya, North Borneo, Sarawak, Brunei, and Singapore. Initially, Indonesia was mildly supportive of the proposed Malaysia, although the PKI (Partai Komunis Indonesia — Indonesian Communist Party) was strongly opposed to it.

In Brunei, it was unclear whether the Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddien III would support Brunei joining the proposed Malaysian state because of the implied reduction of his political office, and Brunei's oil revenues ensured Brunei's financial viability were it to chose independence. Furthermore, a Brunei politician, Dr. AM Azahari bin Sheikh Mahmud, while supporting a unified North Borneo, also opposed a wider Malaysian federation. In 1961, he had sounded out Indonesia about possible aid in training Borneo recruits; General Abdul Nasution hinted at moral support, and Soebandrio, the Indonesian foreign minister and head of intelligence, hinted at supplying more substantial aid. Azahari was a leftist who had fought in Indonesia in their war for independence. Following these meetings Indonesia began training in Kalimantan a small volunteer force, the North Kalimantan National Army (TNKU).

On 8 December 1962, the TNKU staged an insurrection—the Brunei Revolt. The insurrection was an abject failure, the poorly trained and equipped forces were unable to seize key objectives such as capturing the Sultan of Brunei, seize the Brunei oil fields, or take European hostages. Within hours of the insurrection being launched, British forces based in Singapore were being mobilised for a prompt response.

The failure of the insurrection was clear within 30 hours when Gurkha troops airlifted from Singapore secured Brunei town and ensured the Sultan's safety. On 16 December, the British Far East Command claimed that all major rebel centres had been occupied. Several UK and Gurkha infantry battalions were deployed to Brunei, with significant elements in Kuching and Tawau because the TNKU had the support of the Clandestine Communist Organisation (CCO) in Sarawak. Some 4,000 Kelabits from the 5th Division were also mobilised to help prevent the TNKU's escape to Indonesia.

Mopping up operations continued until 18 May 1963, when the last elements of the TNKU, including its commander, were captured.

The degree of Indonesian support for the TNKU remains a subject of debate. While Indonesia at the time denied direct involvement, it did sympathise with the TNKU's objectives to destabilise the proposed Malaysian state. Following the TNKU's military setback in Brunei, on 20 January 1963 Indonesian Foreign Minister Subandrio announced that Indonesia would pursue a policy of *Konfrontasi* with Malaysia, reversing Indonesia's previous policy of compliance with the British proposal. This was followed by the first recorded infiltration of Indonesian forces on 12 April 1963 when a police station in Tebedu, Sarawak, was attacked.

People and terrain

In 1961, the island of Borneo was divided into four separate states. Kalimantan, comprising four Indonesian provinces, was located in the south of the island. In the north, separated from Kalimantan by a border some 1000 miles long, were the Sultanate of Brunei (a British protectorate) and two colonies of the United Kingdom (UK)—British North Borneo (later renamed Sabah) and Sarawak.

The three UK territories totalled some 1.5 million people, about half of them Dayaks. Sarawak had a population of about 900,000, while Sabah's was 600,000 and Brunei's was around 80,000. Among Sarawak's non-Dayak population, 31% were Chinese, and 19% were Malay. Among non-Dayaks in Sabah, 21% were Chinese and 7% were Malay; Brunei's non-Dayak population was 28% Chinese and 54% Malay. There was a large Indonesian population in Tawau in southern Sabah and a large and economically active Chinese one in Sarawak. Despite their population size, Dayaks were spread through the country in village longhouses and were not politically organised. Sarawak was divided into five administrative Divisions. Sabah, whose capital city was Jesselton (Kota Kinabalu) on the north coast, was divided into several Residencies; those of the Interior and Tawau were on the border.

Apart from either end, the border generally followed a ridge line throughout its length, rising to almost 2,500 metres in the Fifth Division. In the First Division, there were some roads, including a continuous road from Kuching to Brunei and around to Sandakan on the east coast of Sabah. There were no roads in the Fourth and Fifth Divisions or the Interior Residency, and in Third Division, there was only the coast road, which was some 150 miles from the border. Mapping was generally poor, as British maps of the country showed very little topographic detail. Indonesian maps were worse; veterans recall “a single black and white sheet for all of Kalimantan torn from a school text book” in 1964.

Kalimantan was divided into four provinces, of which East Kalimantan and West Kalimantan face the border. The capital of the West is Pontianak on the west coast, about 100 miles (160 km) from the border, and the capital of the East is Samarinda on the south coast, some 220 miles (350 km) from the border. There were no roads in the border area other than some in the west, and no road existed linking West and East Kalimantan.

The lack, on both sides of the border, of roads and tracks suitable for vehicles meant that movement was limited to foot tracks mostly unmarked on any map, as well as water and air movement. There were many large rivers on both sides of the border, and these were the main means of movement, including hovercraft by the UK. There were also quite a few small grass airstrips suitable for light aircraft, as dropping zones for parachuted supplies, and for helicopters.

The equator lies about 100 miles south of Kuching, and most of northern Borneo receives over 3000 mm of rain each year. Borneo is naturally covered by tropical rainforest. This covers the mountainous areas cut by many rivers with very steep sided hills and hilltop ridges often only a few metres wide. The high rainfall means large rivers; these provide a main means of transport and are

formidable tactical obstacles. Dense mangrove forest covering vast tidal flats intersected with numerous creeks is a feature of many coastal areas, including Brunei and either end of the border. There are cultivated areas in valleys and around villages. The vicinity of abandoned and current settlements are areas of dense secondary regrowth.

Sarawakian Opposition

The end of the Second World War had brought an end to the Brooke Dynasty rule in Sarawak. Believing it to be in the best interest of the people of Sarawak, Charles Vyner Brooke ceded the state to the British Crown.^[10] Sarawak became a Crown Colony, ruled from the Colonial Office in London, which in turn dispatched a Governor for Sarawak. The predominantly Malay anti-cession movement, which rejected the British takeover of Sarawak in 1946 and had assassinated Duncan Stewart, the first British High Commissioner of Sarawak, may have been the forerunner of the subsequent anti-Malaysia movement in Sarawak, headed by Ahmad Zaidi Aduce.

According to Vernon L. Porritt and Hong-Kah Fong, Left-wing and communist cell groups had been present among Sarawak's urban Chinese communities since the 1930s and 1940s. Some of the earliest Communist groups in Sabah included the Anti-Fascist League, which later became the Races Liberation Army, and the Borneo Anti-Japanese League, which was made up of the North Borneo Anti-Japanese League and the West Borneo Anti-Japanese League. The latter was led by Wu Chan, who was deported by the Sarawak colonial government to China in 1952. Other Communist groups in Sarawak included the Overseas Chinese Youth Association, which was formed in 1946, and the Liberation League along with its youth wing, the Advanced Youth Association, which emerged during the 1950s. These organisations became the nuclei for two Communist guerilla movements: the anti-Malaysia North Kalimantan People's Army (PARAKU) and the Sarawak People's Guerrillas (PGRS). These various Communist groups were designated by various British and other Western sources as the Clandestine Communist Organisation (CCO) or the Sarawak Communist Organisation (SCO).^[11]

The Sarawak Communist Organisation, was predominantly dominated by ethnic Chinese but also included Dayak supporters. However, the Sarawak Communist Organisation had little support from ethnic Malays and the indigenous Sarawak races. At its height, the SCO had 24,000 members.^[12] During the 1940s and 1950s, Maoism had spread among Chinese vernacular schools in Sarawak. Following the Second World War, Communist influence also penetrated the labour movement and the predominantly-Chinese Sarawak United People's Party, the state's first political party which was founded in June 1959. The Sarawak Insurgency began after the Brunei Revolt in 1962 and SCO would fight alongside the Bruneian rebels and Indonesian forces during the Indonesia–Malaysia confrontation (1963–1966).

The Sarawak Communist Organisation and the Bruneian rebels supported and propagated the unification of all British Borneo territories to form an independent leftist North Kalimantan state. This idea was originally proposed by A. M. Azahari, leader of the Parti Rakyat Brunei (Brunei People's Party), who had forged links with Sukarno's nationalist movement, together with Ahmad Zaidi, in Java in the 1940s. However, the Brunei People's Party was in favour of joining Malaysia on the condition it was as the unified three territories of northern Borneo with their own sultan, and hence was strong enough to resist domination by Malaya, Singapore, Malay administrators or Chinese merchants.

The North Kalimantan (or Kalimantan Utara) proposal was seen as a post-decolonisation alternative by local opposition against the Malaysia plan. Local opposition throughout the Borneo territories was primarily based on economic, political, historical and cultural differences between the Borneo states and Malaya, as well as the refusal to be subjected under peninsular political domination. Both Azahari and Zaidi went into exile in Indonesia during the confrontation. While the latter returned to Sarawak and had his political status rehabilitated, Azahari remained in Indonesia until his death on 3 September 2002.

In the aftermath of the Brunei Revolt, the remnants of the TNKU reached Indonesia. Possibly fearing British reprisals (which never eventuated), many Chinese communists, possibly several thousand, also fled Sarawak. Their compatriots remaining in Sarawak were known as the CCO by the UK but called the PGRS—Pasukan Gelilya Rakyat Sarawak (Sarawak People's Guerilla Force) by Indonesia. Soebandrio met with a group of their potential leaders in Bogor, and Nasution sent three trainers from Resimen Para Komando Angkatan Darat (RPKAD) Battalion 2 to Nangabadan near the Sarawak border, where there were about 300 trainees. Some 3 months later two lieutenants were sent there.

The PGRS numbered about 800, based in West Kalimantan at Batu Hitam, with a contingent of 120 from the Indonesian intelligence agency and a small cadre trained in China. The PKI (Indonesian Communist Party) was strongly in evidence and led by an ethnic Arab revolutionary, Sofyan. The PGRS ran some raids into Sarawak but spent more time developing their supporters in Sarawak. The Indonesian military did not approve of the leftist nature of the PGRS and generally avoided them.

Beginning of Conflict 1963

Sukarno's motives for beginning Confrontation are contested. Former Indonesian Foreign Minister Ide Anak Agung Gde Agung argued years later that Sukarno intentionally muted Indonesia's opposition to the proposed Malaysian state while Indonesia was preoccupied with advancing its claim to West New Guinea. Following Indonesia's diplomatic victory in the West New Guinea dispute, Sukarno may have been emboldened to extend Indonesia's dominance over its weaker neighbours. Conversely, Sukarno may have felt compelled by the ongoing pressure of the PKI and the general instability of Indonesian politics to divert attention towards a new foreign conflict. Sukarno argued that Malaysia was a British puppet state, a neo-colonial experiment, and that any expansion of Malaysia would increase British control over the region, with implications for Indonesia's national security. Similarly, the Philippines made a claim to eastern North Borneo, arguing that the Borneo colony had historic links with the Philippines through the Sulu archipelago.

President Sukarno had stated in at least four public speeches in 1963–64 that Indonesia had no territorial ambitions over North Kalimantan, and that Indonesia's territorial pursuit was completed with the "return" of West Irian in January 1963. Nevertheless the Indonesian name for the territory "Kalimantan Utara" had the same form as the names of Indonesia's Kalimantan provinces. Furthermore, later events in East Timor demonstrated that influential elements in Indonesia did aspire to other territory when the colonial powers left. However, while Sukarno made no direct claims to incorporate northern Borneo into Indonesian Kalimantan, he saw the formation of Malaysia as an obstacle to the Maphilindo, a non-political, irredentist union spanning Malaya, Philippines and Indonesia.^[16] President of the Philippines Diosdado Macapagal initially did not oppose the concept and even initiated the Manila Accord, but while the Philippines did not engage in hostilities, Malaysia severed diplomatic ties after the former deferred recognising it as the successor state of Malaya.

In April 1963, the first recorded infiltration and attack occurred in Borneo. An infiltration force training at Nangabadan was split in two and prepared for its first operation. On 12 April 1963, one infiltration force attacked and seized the police station at Tebedu in the 1st Division of Sarawak, about 40 miles from Kuching and 2 miles from the border with Kalimantan. The other group attacked the village of Gumbang, South West of Kuching, later in the month. Only about half returned. Confrontation could be said to have started from a military perspective with the Tebedu attack.

Manila peace talks, 30 July - 5 August 1963

Prior to Indonesia's declaration of Confrontation against the proposed Malaysian state on 20 January 1963, the Cobbold Commission in 1962 had reported on the viability of a Malaysian state, finding that there was sufficient support in the Borneo colonies for the creation of a larger Malaysian state. However, due to firming Indonesian and Philippine opposition to the Malaysia proposal, a new round of negotiations was proposed to hear the Indonesian and Philippine points of opposition. To resolve the dispute the would-be member states of Malaysia met representatives of Indonesia and the Philippines in Manila for several days, starting on 30 July 1963. Just days prior to the summit, on 27

July 1963 President Sukarno had continued his inflammatory rhetoric, declaring that he was going to "crush Malaysia" (Indonesian: *Ganyang Malaysia*). At the Manilla meeting, the Philippines and Indonesia formally agreed to accept the formation of Malaysia if a majority in North Borneo and Sarawak voted for it in a referendum organised by the United Nations. While the fact-finding mission by the UN was expected to begin on 22 August, Indonesian delaying tactics forced the mission to start on 26 August. Nevertheless, the UN expected the referendum report to be published by 14 September 1963.

Prior to the Manilla meeting the Malayan Government had set 31 August as the date on which Malaysia would come into existence, (coinciding with Malaya's independence day celebrations of 31 August) but during the Manilla negotiations it was persuaded by the Indonesian and Philippine Governments to postpone Malaysia's inauguration until 15 September 1963 by which time a UN mission was expected to report on whether the two Borneo colonies supported the Malaysia proposal.

However, following the conclusion of the Manilla talks, the Malayan Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman announced that the proposed Malaysian state would come into existence on 16 September 1963, apparently irrespective of the latest UN report.

North Borneo and Sarawak, anticipating a pro-Malaysian UN report, declared their independence as part of Malaysia on the sixth anniversary of Merdeka Day, 31 August 1963, even before the UN report had been published. On 14 September the UN report was published, once again providing general endorsement of the proposed Malaysian state.

Malaysia was formally established on 16 September 1963. Indonesia immediately reacted by expelling the Malaysian Ambassador from Jakarta. Two days later, rioters burned the British embassy in Jakarta. Several hundred rioters ransacked the Singapore embassy in Jakarta and the homes of Singaporean diplomats. In Malaysia, Indonesian agents were captured, and crowds attacked the Indonesian embassy in Kuala Lumpur.

Ongoing Campaign of Infiltrations

Even as peace talks progressed and stalled, Indonesia maintained its campaign of infiltrations. On 15 August, a headman reported an incursion in the 3rd Division and follow up indicated they were about 50 strong. A series of contacts ensued as 2/6 Gurkhas deployed patrols and ambushes, and after a month, 15 had been killed and 3 captured. The Gurkhas reported that they were well trained and professionally led, but their ammunition expenditure was high and their fire discipline broke down. The prisoners reported 300 more invaders within a week and 600 in a fortnight.

Battle of Long Jawai

The Battle of Long Jawai was the first major incursion for the centre of the 3rd Division, directed by an RPKAD Lieutenant Mulyono Soerjowardojo, who had been sent to Nangabadan earlier in the year.

1964

The deliberate attack by Indonesian forces on Malaysian troops did not enhance Sukarno's "anti-imperialist" credentials, although the Indonesian government tried blaming the KKO as enthusiastic idealists acting independently. They also produced Azahari, who claimed that Indonesian forces were playing no part in active operations. Sukarno next launched a peace offensive and, in late January, declared he was ready for a ceasefire (despite having denied direct Indonesia involvement). Talks started in Bangkok, but border violations continued, and the talks soon failed. They resumed mid-year in Tokyo and failed within days but allowed time for a Thai mission to visit Sarawak and witness smart, well-equipped Indonesian soldiers withdrawing across the border, which they had crossed a short distance away earlier in the day.

Expansion of the conflict to the Malaysian Peninsula, August 1964

Coordinated to coincide with Sukarno announcing a 'Year of Dangerous Living' during Indonesian Independence Day celebrations, Indonesian forces began a campaign of airborne and seaborne infiltrations of the Malaysian Peninsula on 17 August 1964. On 17 August 1964 a seaborne force of about 100, composed of airforce Pasukan Gerat Tjepat (PGT — Quick Reaction Force) paratroopers, KKO and about a dozen Malaysian communists, crossed the Malacca Straits by boat. They landed southwest of Johore. Instead of being greeted as liberators, they were contained by various Commonwealth forces and most of the infiltrators were killed or captured within a few days.

On 2 September, three C-130 set off from Jakarta for Peninsula Malaysia, flying low to avoid detection by radar. The following night, two of the C-130 managed to reach their objective with their onboard PGT paratroopers, who jumped off and landed around Labis in Johore (about 100 miles north of Singapore). The remaining C-130 crashed into the Malacca traits while trying to evade interception by an RAF Javelin FAW 9 launched from RAF Tengah. Due to a lightning storm, the drop of 96 paratroopers was widely dispersed. This resulted in them landing close to 1/10 Gurkhas, who were joined by 1st Battalion, Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment (1 RNZIR) stationed near Malacca with 28 (Commonwealth) Brigade. Operations were commanded by 4 Malaysian Brigade, but it took a month to round up or kill the 96 invaders and a New Zealand officer was killed during the action.

Indonesia's expansion of the conflict to the Malaysian Peninsula sparked the Sunda Straits Crisis, involving the anticipated transit of the Sunda Strait by the British aircraft carrier *Victorious* and two destroyer escorts. Commonwealth forces were readied for airstrikes against Indonesian infiltration staging areas in Sumatra if further Indonesian infiltrations of the Malaysian Peninsula were attempted. A tense three week standoff occurred before the crisis was peacefully resolved.

By the concluding months of 1964 the conflict once again appeared to have reached stalemate, with Commonwealth forces having placed in check for the moment Indonesia's campaign of infiltrations into Borneo, and more recently, the Malaysian Peninsula. However, the fragile equilibrium looked likely to change once again in December 1964 when Commonwealth intelligence began reporting a build-up of Indonesian infiltration forces in Kalimantan.

1965

Due to Indonesia's troop build-up in Kalimantan, Australia and New Zealand agreed to begin deploying combat forces to Borneo in early 1965.

Expulsion of Singapore from the Malaysian Federation

During the height of Konfrontasi, Singapore, much to the embarrassment of British officials, was expelled from the Malaysian Federation on 9 August 1965 due to ongoing political deadlock between the warring political parties of the Malaysian government with its respective power bases in Malaya and Singapore. Although Indonesia's Konfrontasi tactics of covert infiltrations had no direct effect on Malaysia's internal stability, the expulsion of Singapore was seized upon by Indonesia as evidence that the Malaysian state was an artificial British construct as Indonesia had consistently claimed.

30 September 1965 events and the easing of conflict

On the night of 30 September 1965 an attempted coup took place in Jakarta. Six senior Indonesian military leaders were killed, while General Nasution narrowly escaped from his would be captors. In the ensuing confusion Sukarno agreed to allow Suharto to assume emergency command and control of Jakarta and the armed forces stationed there. Blame for the failed coup was attributed to the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), and in the following weeks and months a campaign of imprisonment and lynching of PKI members and sympathisers broke out across Jakarta and Indonesia. With Suharto's grip on power in Jakarta and Indonesia delicately poised, the scale and intensity of Indonesia's campaign of infiltrations into Borneo began to ease. The train of events set off by the failed coup led to Suharto's gradual consolidation of power and marginalisation of Sukarno. At

the same time, the anti-communist purge spread throughout Indonesia. Suharto's steady consolidation of power after 30 September events allowed him to form a new government and in March 1967 Suharto was able to form a new Cabinet that excluded Sukarno.

1966 Peace Treaty

On 28 May 1966, at a conference in Bangkok, the Malaysian and Indonesian governments declared the conflict was over. However, it was unclear if Suharto was in full control of Indonesia (rather than Sukarno), and vigilance in Borneo could not be relaxed. With Suharto's co-operation a peace treaty was signed on 11 August and ratified two days later.

During Suharto's rise to power Claret operations continued and, in March 1966, a Gurkha battalion was involved in some of the fiercest fighting of the campaign during two raids into Kalimantan.^[29] Minor action by Indonesian forces continued in the border area, including an attempt at counter-battery fire against a 105 mm gun position in Central Brigade (reports from locals said the British return fire had turned over the Indonesian gun, thought to be 76 mm).

At the beginning of 1966, with Indonesia's political hiatus beginning to stabilise (it had stopped a major RPKAD operation to capture a British prisoner), the RPKAD linked up with PGRS to establish guerrilla forces in Sabah and Sarawak. The Sabah effort never crossed the border; however, two groups entered Sarawak in February and May and obtained support from local sympathisers. The first group, despite losses in several contacts, lasted until June and exfiltrated on hearing about the end of Konfrontasi. Survivors of the second, after a contact with Australian troops, also made it back to Indonesia.^[30] However, the final Indonesian incursion was in May and June. Signs of a substantial force were found crossing into Central Brigade. This was some 80 strong, mostly volunteers, led by Lt Sombi (or Sumbi) and a team from 600 Raider Company. They moved fast towards Brunei with 1/7 Gurkhas pursuing and ambushing them; almost all were accounted for. In response to this, a final Claret operation was launched, which was an artillery ambush by 38 Light Battery.

End

Origin	Killed	Wounded
UK	19	44
Gurkha	43	83
AUS Army	16	9
NZ Army	7	7
Rest	29	38
Total	114	181

The conflict lasted nearly four years; however, following General Suharto's replacement of Sukarno, Indonesian interest in pursuing the war with Malaysia declined, and combat eased. Peace negotiations were initiated during May 1966 before a final peace agreement was ratified on 11 August 1966.

Although the Indonesians had conducted a few amphibious raids and an airborne operation against Malaya, the war remained limited throughout its duration and remained largely a land conflict. For either side to have escalated to large scale air or naval attacks "would have incurred disadvantages greatly outweighing the marginal military effect that they might have produced". The UK Secretary of State for Defence at the time, Denis Healey, described the campaign as "one of the most efficient uses of military forces in the history of the world". British Commonwealth forces peaked at 17,000 deployed in Borneo, with another 10,000 more available in Malaya and Singapore.

Total British Commonwealth military casualties were 114 killed and 181 wounded, most of them Gurkhas. The losses included Gurkha casualties of 43 killed and 83 wounded, other British armed

forces were a further 19 killed and 44 wounded, Australian casualties of 16 killed and 9 wounded (although only 7 were killed in action) and New Zealand casualties of 7 killed and another 7 wounded or injured.^{[33][34]} The remaining casualties were that of the Malaysian military, police, and Border Scouts. A significant number of British casualties occurred during helicopter accidents, including a Belvedere crash that killed several SAS commanders and a Foreign Office official, possibly a member of MI6. A Wessex collision also killed several men from 2nd Parachute Battalion, and a Westland Scout crash, on 16 July 1964, near Kluang airfield, killed the two crewmen from 656 Sqn AAC. Finally, in August 1966, there remained two British and two Australian soldiers missing and presumed dead, with the Australians (both from the SASR) probably drowned while crossing a swollen river.^[35] The remains of a Royal Marine were recovered some 20 years later. Altogether, 36 civilians were killed, 53 wounded and 4 captured, with most being local inhabitants.

Indonesian casualties were estimated at 590 killed, 222 wounded and 771 captured.

Forces Command arrangements

In early January 1963, the military forces in northern Borneo, having arrived in December 1962 in response to the Brunei Revolt, were under the command of Commander British Forces Borneo (COMBRITBOR), Major General Walter Walker, who was Director of Borneo Operations (DOBOPS) based on Labuan Island and reported directly to the Commander in Chief Far East Forces Admiral Sir David Luce. Luce was routinely replaced by Admiral Sir Varyl Begg in early 1963.

Politico-military authority lay with the Emergency Committees in Sarawak and North Borneo, including their Governors, who were the Commanders in Chief for their colonies. In Brunei, there was a State Advisory Council answerable to the Sultan.

After independence, supreme authority changed to the Malaysian National Defence Council in Kuala Lumpur with State Executive Committees in Sabah and Sarawak. Military direction was from the Malaysian National Operations Committee jointly chaired by the Chief of the Malaysian Armed Forces Staff, General Tunku Osman, and the Inspector General of Police, Sir Claude Fenner. The British Commander in Chief Far East Forces was a member. DOBOPS regularly attended its meetings.

British forces in Borneo included Headquarters (HQ) 3 Commando Brigade in Kuching with responsibility for the western part of Sarawak, 1st–4th Divisions, and HQ 99 Gurkha Infantry Brigade in Brunei responsible for the East, 5th Division, Brunei and Sabah. These HQs had deployed from Singapore in late 1962 in response to the Brunei Revolt. The ground forces were composed of five UK and Gurkha infantry battalions normally based in Malaya, Singapore and Hong Kong and rotated with others and an armoured car squadron. In the middle of 1963, Brigadier Pat Glennie, normally the Brigadier General Staff in Singapore, arrived as Deputy DOBOPS.

The naval effort, under DOBOPS command, was primarily provided by minesweepers used to patrol coastal waters and larger inland waterways. A guardship – a frigate or destroyer- was stationed off Tawau.

The initial air component based in Borneo consisted of detachments from squadrons stationed in Malaya and Singapore. These included Twin Pioneer and Single Pioneer transport aircraft, probably two or three Blackburn Beverley and Handley Page Hastings transports, and about 12 helicopters of various types. One of Walker's first "challenges" was curtailing the RAF's centralised command and control arrangements and insisting that aircraft tasking for operations in Borneo was by his HQ, not by the RAF Air Command Far East HQ in Singapore.^[36] Other aircraft of many types stationed in Malaya and Singapore provided sorties as necessary, including routine transport support into Kuching and Labuan.

The police deployed a number of paramilitary Police Field Force companies.

At this stage, Indonesian forces were under command of Lieutenant General Zulkipli in Pontianak, on the coast of West Kalimantan about 200 km (120 mi) from the border. The Indonesian irregulars, led by Indonesian officers, were thought to number about 1500, with an unknown number of regular troops and local defence irregulars. They were deployed the entire length of the border in eight operational units, mostly facing the 1st and 2nd Divisions. The units had names such as "Thunderbolts", "Night Ghosts" and "World Sweepers".

British Tactics

Soon after assuming command in Borneo, General Walker issued a directive listing the ingredients for success, based on his experience in the Malayan Emergency:

- Unified operations (army, navy and air force operating fully together)
- Timely and accurate information (the need for continuous reconnaissance and intelligence collection)
- Speed, mobility and flexibility
- Security of bases
- Domination of the jungle
- Winning the hearts and minds of the people (this was added several months later).

Walker recognised the difficulties of limited forces and a long border and, in early 1963, was reinforced with an SAS squadron from the UK, which rotated with another mid-year. When the SAS temporarily adopted 3-man instead of 4-man patrols, they could not closely monitor the border. Increasing the capability of the infantry to create a surveillance network was also considered important.

Walker raised the Border Scouts, building on Harrison's force of Kelabits, who had mobilised to help intercept the fleeing TNKU forces from the Brunei Revolt. He also utilised the experience of the Royal Marines as well as knowledge of the skill and usefulness of the Sarawak Rangers in the Malayan Emergency. This was approved by the Sarawak government in May as "auxiliary police". Walker selected Lieutenant Colonel John Cross, a Gurkha officer with immense jungle experience, for the task. A training centre was established in a remote area at Mt. Murat in the 5th Division and staffed mainly by SAS. Border Scouts were attached to infantry battalions and evolved into an intelligence gathering force by using their local knowledge and extended families.^[39] In addition, the Police Special Branch, which had proved so effective during the Malayan Emergency in recruiting sources in the communist organisation, was expanded.

British jungle tactics were developed and honed during the Malayan Emergency against a clever and elusive enemy. They emphasised travelling lightly, being undetectable and going for many days without resupplying. Being undetectable meant being silent (hand signals, no rattling equipment) and 'odour free'—perfumed toiletries were forbidden (they could be detected a kilometre away by good jungle fighters), and sometimes eating food cold to prevent cooking smells.

In about 1962, at the end of National Service, British infantry battalions had reorganised into three rifle companies, a support company and an HQ company with logistic responsibilities. Battalion HQ included an intelligence section. Each rifle company was composed of 3 platoons of 32 men each, equipped with light machine guns and self-loading rifles. The support company had a mortar platoon with 6 medium mortars (3-inch mortar until replaced by 81-mm mortar around the end of 1965) organised into 3 sections, enabling a section to be attached to a rifle company if required. Similarly organised was an anti-tank platoon; there was also an assault pioneer platoon. The machine gun platoon was abolished, but the impending delivery of the 7.62 mm GPMG, with sustained fire kits held by each company, was to provide a medium machine gun capability. In the meantime, the Vickers machine gun remained available. The innovation in the new organisation was the formation

of the battalion reconnaissance platoon,^[41] in many battalions a platoon of "chosen men". In Borneo, mortars were usually distributed to rifle companies, and some battalions operated the rest of their support company as another rifle company.

The basic activity was platoon patrolling; this continued throughout the campaign, with patrols being deployed by helicopter, roping in and out as necessary. Movement was usually single file; the leading section rotated but was organised with two lead scouts, followed by its commander and then the remainder in a fire support group. Battle drills for "contact front" (or rear), or "ambush left" (or right) were highly developed. Poor maps meant navigation was important; however, the local knowledge of the Border Scouts in Borneo compensated for the poor maps. So tracks were sometimes used unless ambush was considered possible, or there was the possibility of mines. Crossing obstacles such as rivers was also handled as a battle drill. At night, a platoon harboured in a tight position with all-round defence.

A contact while moving was always possible. However, offensive action usually took two forms: either an attack on a camp, or an ambush. The tactic for dealing with a camp was to get a party behind it then charge the front. However, ambushes were probably the most effective tactic and could be sustained for many days. They targeted tracks and, particularly in parts of Borneo, waterways. Track ambushes were close range, 10 to 20 m (11 to 22 yd), with a killing zone typically 20 to 50 m (22 to 55 yd) long, depending on the expected strength of the target. The trick was to remain undetected when the target entered the ambush area and then open fire all together at the right moment.

Fire support was limited for the first half of the campaign. A commando light battery with 105 mm Pack Howitzers had deployed to Brunei at the beginning of 1963 but returned to Singapore after a few months when the mopping-up of the Brunei Revolt ended. Despite the escalation in Indonesian attacks after the formation of Malaysia, little need was seen for fire support: the limited range of the guns (10 km (6.2 mi)), the limited availability of helicopters and the size of the country meant that having artillery in the right place at the right time was a challenge. However, a battery from one of the two regiments stationed in Malaysia returned to Borneo in early to mid-1964. These batteries rotated until the end of the confrontation. In early 1965, a complete UK-based regiment arrived. The short range and substantial weight of the 3-inch mortars meant they were of very limited use.

Artillery had to adopt new tactics. Almost all guns deployed in single gun sections within a company or platoon base. The sections were commanded by one of the battery's junior officers, warrant officers or sergeants. Sections had about 10 men and did their own technical fire control. They were moved underslung by Wessex or Belvedere helicopters as necessary to deal with incursions or support operations. Forward observers were in short supply, but it seems that they always accompanied normal infantry Claret operations and occasionally special forces ones. However, artillery observers rarely accompanied patrols inside Sabah and Sarawak unless they were in pursuit of a known incursion and guns were in range. Observation parties were almost always led by an officer but only two or three men strong.

Communications were a problem; radios were not used within platoons, only rearwards. Ranges were invariably beyond the capability of manpack VHF radios (A41 and A42, copies of AN/PRC 9 and 10), although use of relay or rebroadcast stations helped where they were tactically possible. Patrol bases could use the World War II vintage HF No 62 Set (distinguished by having its control panel labelled in English and Russian). Until the manpack A13 arrived in 1966, the only lightweight HF set was the Australian A510, which did not provide voice, only Morse code.

Special Forces

One squadron (up to 64 men in total in its four patrol troops) from the UK-based 22 Special Air Service deployed to Borneo in early 1963 in the aftermath of the Brunei Revolt to gather information in the border area about Indonesian infiltration. There was a special forces presence until the end of the campaign. Faced with a border of 971 miles, they could not be everywhere, and, at this time, 22

SAS had only three squadrons, although there was also the Special Boat Service (SBS) that had two sections based in Singapore. Tactical HQ of 22 SAS deployed to Kuching in 1964 to take control of all special forces. The special forces shortage was exacerbated by the need for them in South Arabia, in many ways a far more demanding task in challenging conditions against a cunning and aggressive opponent.

The solution was to create new units for Borneo. The first to be employed in Borneo was the Guards Independent Parachute Company, which already existed as the pathfinder force of 16th Parachute Brigade. Next, the Gurkha Independent Parachute Company was raised. Sections of the Special Boat Service were also used, but it seems mostly for amphibious tasks. Finally, Parachute Regiment battalions formed patrol companies (C in the 2nd and D in the 3rd). The situation eased in 1965 when the Australian and New Zealand governments agreed that their forces could be used in Borneo, enabling Australian SAS and New Zealand Ranger squadrons to rotate through Borneo.

Special forces activities were probably mostly covert reconnaissance and surveillance by 4 man patrols. However, some larger scale raiding missions took place, including amphibious ones by the SBS. Once Claret operations were authorised, most special forces missions were inside Kalimantan, although they conducted operations over the border before Claret from about early 1964.

The role of Intelligence in operations and the events of 30 September

A useful factor in the containment of the Indonesian forces was the use of intelligence. The Royal Signals were able to intercept the Indonesian military communications. The ciphers were decrypted by the Intelligence Corps based at Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) listening stations in Singapore, one of which was RAF Chia Keng which was linked directly to the RAF Far East Air Force headquarters at RAF Changi. Intelligence from this may have been used in planning some aspects of Claret cross-border operations.

British Psychological Operations

The role of the United Kingdom's Foreign Office and Secret Intelligence Service (MI6) during the confrontation was brought to light in a series of exposés by Paul Lashmar and Oliver James in *The Independent* newspaper beginning in 1997, and has also been covered in journals on military and intelligence history.

The revelations included an anonymous Foreign Office source stating that the decision to unseat President Sukarno was made by Prime Minister Harold Macmillan and then executed under Prime Minister Harold Wilson. According to the exposés, the UK had already become alarmed with the announcement of the "Konfrontasi" policy. It has been claimed that a Central Intelligence Agency memorandum of 1962 indicated that Macmillan and US President John F. Kennedy were increasingly alarmed by the possibility of the Confrontation with Malaysia spreading, and agreed to "liquidate President Sukarno, depending on the situation and available opportunities". To weaken the regime, the UK Foreign Office's Information Research Department (IRD) coordinated psychological operations (psyops) in concert with the British military, to spread black propaganda casting the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI), Chinese Indonesians, and Sukarno in a bad light. These efforts were to duplicate the successes of the British psyop campaign in the Malayan Emergency.

These efforts were coordinated from the British High Commission in Singapore, where the BBC, Associated Press, and *The New York Times* filed their reports on the Crisis in Indonesia. According to Roland Challis, the BBC correspondent who was in Singapore at the time, journalists were open to manipulation by IRD due to Sukarno's stubborn refusal to allow them into the country: "In a curious way, by keeping correspondents out of the country Sukarno made them the victims of official channels, because almost the only information you could get was from the British ambassador in Jakarta."

These manipulations included the BBC reporting that communists were planning to slaughter the citizens of Jakarta. The accusation was based on a forgery planted by Norman Reddaway, a propaganda expert with the IRD. He later bragged in a letter to the British ambassador in Jakarta, Sir Andrew Gilchrist, that it "went all over the world and back again", and was "put almost instantly back into Indonesia via the BBC". Gilchrist himself informed the Foreign Office on 5 October 1965: "I have never concealed from you my belief that a little shooting in Indonesia would be an essential preliminary to effective change."

In April 2000 Denis Healey, Secretary of State for Defence at the time of the war, confirmed that the IRD was active during this time. He officially denied any role by MI6, and denied "personal knowledge" of the British arming the right-wing faction of the Army, though he did comment that if there were such a plan, he "would certainly have supported it".

Although the British MI6 is strongly implicated in this scheme by the use of the Information Research Department (seen as an MI6 office), any role by MI6 itself is officially denied by the UK government, and papers relating to it have yet to be declassified by the Cabinet Office.

Commonwealth Order of Battle

In addition to the ground and air force units, between 1963 and 1966 there were up to 80 ships from the Royal Navy, Royal Australian Navy, Royal Malay Navy and Royal New Zealand Navy. Most of these were patrol craft, minesweepers, frigates and destroyers patrolling the coast-line to intercept Indonesian insurgents. One of the two Commando Carriers, HMS *Albion* and HMS *Bulwark*, was also committed throughout the period of Confrontation usually in their transport role for troops, helicopters and army aircraft between Singapore and Borneo.