

## **NZ's Involvement in Malaya/Malaysia**

**The Federation of Malaya (British Colony) - formed 1948, became fully independent on 31 August 1957. On 16 September 1963, the federation, along with North Borneo (Sabah), Sarawak, and Singapore, formed the larger federation of Malaysia. Singapore was expelled from the federation on 9 August 1965.**

### **The Malayan Emergency**

**Notwithstanding fighting alongside the United States in Korea, the New Zealand forces along with their Australian counterparts were part of a British Commonwealth division. Traditional ties with Britain would continue throughout the 1950s.**

**In 1949 New Zealand joined an evolving Commonwealth defence plan known as ANZAM, a name derived from the countries it encompassed – Australia, New Zealand and British-ruled Malaya. Its initial concern was the protection of wartime sea communications in the area. This was provided during the period 1953 to 1955 by the frigates *Kaniere* and *Pukaki* and the cruiser *Black Prince*.**

**In 1955 New Zealand was to respond to its responsibilities under ANZAM, when the British asked for support during the Malayan Emergency. New Zealand promised to commit two ships (four ships rotated during the period 1955 – 1961: frigates *Kaniere*, *Pukaki* and *Rotoiti* and the cruiser *Royalist*), a fighter bomber squadron, half a transport squadron and a Special Air Service (SAS) squadron.**

**In announcing New Zealand's support, Prime Minister Sidney Holland commented that New Zealand needed to pull its weight 'in the British boat ... That, is a British thing to do.' No. 14 Squadron RNZAF was withdrawn from Cyprus in April 1955 to be based in Singapore, and they were re-equipped with de Havilland Venoms leased from the British. The Squadron's first offensive action took place on 1 May when five of the Squadron's original Vampires attacked terrorist positions. The Squadron continued to fly until 1958, when it was replaced by 75 Squadron which was equipped with English Electric Canberra bombers. These aircraft flew alongside No. 45 Squadron RAF until the Emergency in Malaya ended in July 1960.**

**The SAS squadron of 133 personnel was attached to the British 22nd SAS Regiment early in 1956, and was replaced by the 1st Battalion, the New Zealand Regiment consisting of 740 personnel. This in turn was replaced by the 2nd Battalion in 1959.**

### **The Indonesian Confrontation**

**As a part of its withdrawal from its Southeast Asian colonies, the United Kingdom moved to combine its colonies in Borneo – Sarawak and British North**

**Borneo – with those on peninsular Malaya, to form the Federation of Malaysia. The government of Indonesia opposed this move; President Sukarno argued that Malaysia was a puppet of the British, and that the consolidation of Malaysia would increase British control over the region, threatening Indonesia's independence.**

**The Indonesia-Malaysia Confrontation began on 20 January 1963 when Indonesian Foreign Minister Subandrio announced that Indonesia would pursue a policy of Konfrontasi (Confrontation) with Malaysia. British forces conducted a successful counter-insurgency campaign against Indonesian guerillas (often regular Indonesian Army soldiers) but it was a strain on resources and by early 1965, 60,000 British, Australian, New Zealand and Malaysian servicemen were deployed in the region, together with a Far East Strategic surface fleet of more than eighty warships, including two aircraft-carriers. Repeated requests had been made since December 1963 to New Zealand and Australia to provide combat forces for Borneo. Prime Minister Keith Holyoake's National Party government initially refused – while it was felt that Malaysia should definitely be supported against an enemy that had clearly acted as an aggressor, the government did not wish to see New Zealand embroiled in a major war with Indonesia. Indonesia is New Zealand's closest Asian neighbour and there was a fear of spoiling future relations. In refusing, the government argued that present British and Malaysian forces were sufficient to contain the insurgency. In 1964 Sukarno decided to intensify the Confrontation by extending military operations to the Malay Peninsula. When 98 Indonesian paratroopers landed in Johore in September the 1st Battalion of Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment was one of the only Commonwealth units in the region and with the New Zealand government's permission hunted down the infiltrators. The following month, 52 soldiers landed in Pontian on the Johore-Malacca border and were also captured by New Zealand soldiers.**

**During the Konfrontasi, where Indonesia openly opposed the formation of Malaysia, Indonesian saboteurs mounted a campaign of terror in Singapore. There were a total of 37 bombings from 1963 to 1966. They were trained to attack military installations and public utilities. However, when the saboteurs failed in their attempts to attack these installations that were heavily guarded, they set off bombs indiscriminately to create panic and disrupt life on the island. By 1964, bomb explosions became frequent. To help the police and army defend Singapore from these attacks, a volunteer force was set up. More than 10,000 people signed up as volunteers. Community Centers served as bases for the volunteers to patrol their neighbourhoods. In schools, students underwent bomb drills. The government also warned Singaporeans not to handle any suspicious-looking parcels in the buildings or along streets. Despite the efforts of the British, small groups of saboteurs managed to infiltrate the island and plant**

**bombs. Simultaneously, Indonesian Navy divers attempted to lay limpet mines on Commonwealth naval ships at anchor or alongside in Singapore Naval Base. The operation to counter-attack this was known as Operation Awkward. Ships took it in turns every night to provide boats and crews to look for the divers. 1lb scare charges were used to force the divers to the surface and resulted in two divers killed and several arrests.**

**A change in New Zealand policy came as Sukarno increased the flow of Indonesian insurgents into Borneo and British military resources were stretched to almost breaking point. The New Zealand government could no longer deny the genuine appeals for assistance and the first New Zealand deployment was made to fight the insurgency – a Special Air Service detachment and the 1st Battalion of the Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment, along with former Royal Navy minesweepers HMNZS Hickleton and Santon, the cruiser HMNZS Royalist and the frigates HMNZS Taranaki and Otago. The SAS detachment, and its later replacement, took part in Operation Claret alongside British and Australian SAS soldiers. The 1st Battalion did not see action until May 1965, when it relieved a Gurkha battalion in Sarawak, where it was involved in a series of skirmishes. The battalion was relieved in October 1965 and was not to see further combat – when it returned to Borneo in May 1966, Confrontation was essentially over. Towards the end of 1965, General Suharto came to power in Indonesia, following a coup d'état. Due to this domestic conflict, Indonesian interest in pursuing the war with Malaysia declined, and combat ceased. On 28 May 1966 at a conference in Bangkok, the Malaysian and Indonesian governments declared the conflict was over. Violence ended in June, and a peace treaty was signed on 11 August and ratified two days later.**

### **The Second Malayan Emergency**

**The Communist insurgency in Malaysia, also known as the Second Malayan Emergency, was an armed conflict which occurred in Malaysia from 1968 to 1989, between the Malayan Communist Party (MCP) and Malaysian federal security forces.**

**Following the end of the Malayan Emergency in 1960, the predominantly ethnic Chinese Malayan National Liberation Army, armed wing of the MCP, had retreated to the Malaysian-Thailand border where it had regrouped and retrained for future offensives against the Malaysian government. Hostilities officially re-ignited when the MCP ambushed security forces in Kroh–Betong, in the northern part of Peninsular Malaysia, on 17 June 1968. The conflict also coincided with renewed domestic tensions between ethnic Malays and Chinese in Peninsular Malaysia and regional military tensions due to the Vietnam War.**

**While the Malayan Communist Party received some limited support from the People's Republic of China, this support ended when the governments of**

**Malaysia and China established diplomatic relations in June 1974.**

**In 1970, the MCP experienced a split which led to the emergence of two breakaway factions: the Communist Party of Malaya–Marxist-Leninist (CPM–ML) and the Revolutionary Faction (CPM–RF). Despite efforts to make the MCP appeal to ethnic Malays, the organisation was dominated by Chinese Malaysians throughout the war. Instead of declaring a "state of emergency" as the British had done previously, the Malaysian government responded to the insurgency by introducing several policy initiatives including the Security and Development Program (KESBAN), Rukun Tetangga (Neighbourhood Watch), and the RELA Corps (People's Volunteer Group).**

**The insurgency came to an end on 2 December 1989 when the MCP signed a peace accord with the Malaysian government at Hatyai in southern Thailand. This coincided with the Revolutions of 1989 and the collapse of several prominent communist regimes worldwide. Besides the fighting on the Malay Peninsula, another communist insurgency also occurred in the Malaysian state of Sarawak in the island of Borneo, which had been incorporated into the Federation of Malaysia on 16 September 1963.**

**Although New Zealand has had a military presence in South East Asia for most of the post WWII period, it was not until the disestablishment of the ANZUK Force in 1974, comprising Australian, New Zealand and United Kingdom military personnel, that New Zealand established a self-supporting national presence in the region.**

**Formally established on 30 January 1974, NZFORSEA was under the direct command of Ministry of Defence in New Zealand. Although NZFORSEA was based in Singapore, its normal area of operation, the territories of Malaysia and Singapore, was identical with its predecessor, the ANZUK Force.**

**The ANZUK Force operated under the 1971 Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA) between Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom, Singapore and Malaysia. This arrangement provided the framework for NZ FORSEA whose primary role was defined to be:**

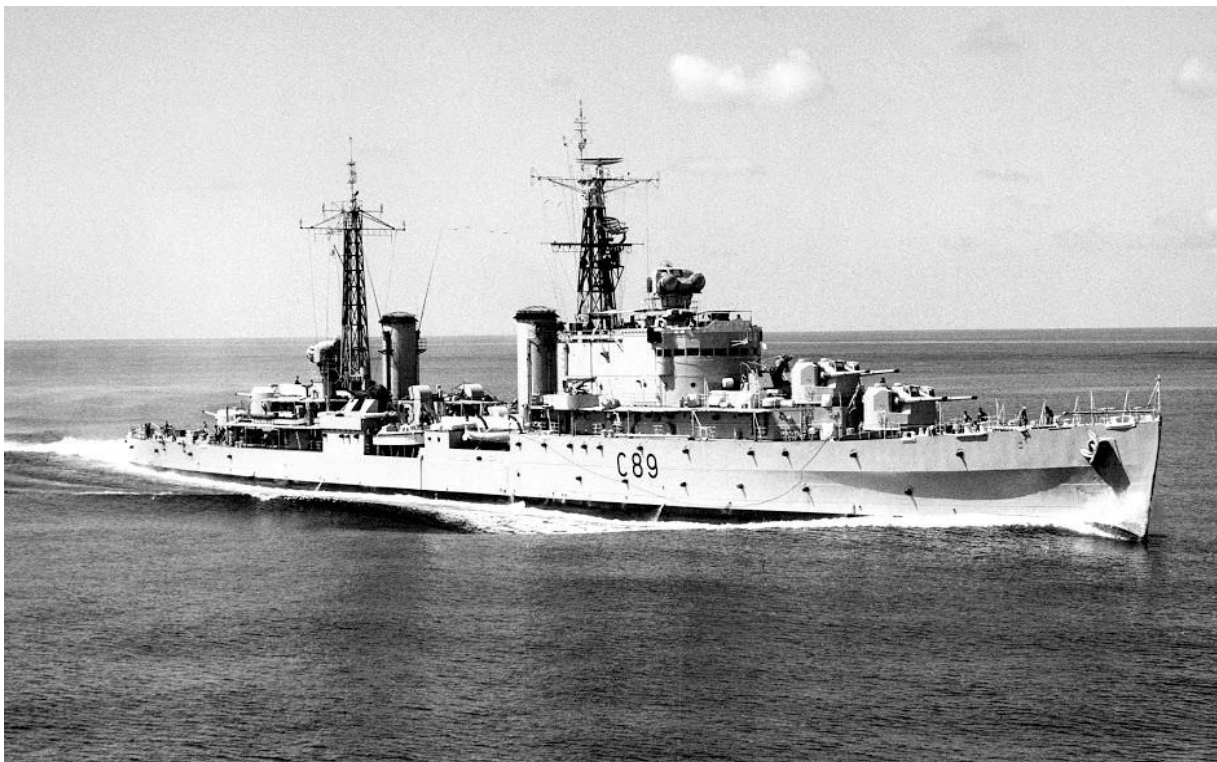
- Promote stability in the area.**
- Enhance New Zealand's political and diplomatic influence in the region.**
- Assist the development of the Armed Forces of countries in the area.**
- Implement the Mutual Assistance Programme, where the force provided assistance and conducted exercises with armed forces of countries in the area, particularly those of Singapore and Malaysia.**

**With the Headquarters sited at the Stores Basin area adjacent to the current Sembawang Naval Basin, This was the last major foreign military presence based in Singapore. Total military strength at the time stood at 850 with some 700 dependants. NZFORSEA took over many of British married quarters, recreational and welfare facilities at Nee Soon, Sembawang and Woodlands.**

**RNZN frigates took extra 4.5 inch ammunition to Singapore in the event of an "emergency" and this was stored in the three large ammunition bunkers at the NZ Advanced Ordnance Depot at Attap Valley just north of the Malaysian Naval Base, KD Malaya.**

**With the signing of the peace accord 2 December 1989, NZ Forces wound down their operations in Singapore as part of Operation Kupe 10 December 1989.**

**The Defence Support Unit Southeast Asia took over from NZ Forces SE Asia and is situated in the Sembawang Shipyard. It comprises NZ, British, Australian, US and Singaporean personnel. Their main responsibility is to attend to visiting allied warships. Normally commanded by a RNZN Commander.**



**The RNZN's last cruiser, HMNZS Royalist.**

**Royalist served in the Suez Crisis, the  
First Malayan Emergency and the Indonesian Confrontation**

Ship Details (RNZN):

**Class: Improved Dido Class**

**Pennant Number: C89**

**Displacement: 7677 tonnes fully loaded**

**Dimensions: 156.1 x 154.2 x 15.4 x 5.6m**

**Machinery: 4-shaft SR geared steam turbine shp 62,000 = 30 knots. Cruising turbine shp 3900 = 21 knots.**

**Armament:**

**8 x 5.25 inch (133mm) guns in four 2-gun turrets**

**Revised in 1950s Royalist was equipped with 6 x 40mm Bofor guns.**

**2 x 2gun mountings (radar controlled) and two single mountings.**

**Complement: 550 in RNZN service.**

**During WW2, Royalist served as a flagship for some of the Arctic Convoys. At one stage, the author Alistair McLean, served onboard her during the convoys and later wrote his story about the ship. The book was HMS Ulysses.**

**In the above picture, you can see things protruding out of the scuttles (port holes). Those "things" are called wind scoops and they bring in fresh air to the mess decks. No air-conditioning in those days.**