



# Confrontation: The War with Indonesia 1962 - 1966

*Nick Van der Bijl*

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"For over four years in the 'Swinging Sixties' the armed forces of the UK were engaged in a little publicized but crucial jungle war against communist aggressive on the vast island of Borneo.

At any one time up to 50,000 troops (half of the Army's strength today) were deployed along a 1,000 mile front. Their enemy were the communist led Indonesians whose leaders were determined to seize the states of Sarawak, Sabah and the oil rich Brunei, all of whom for their part wished to maintain their Commonwealth links. The catalyst for the war was the 1962 uprising in Brunei which was quickly crushed by the bold intervention of British army units.

The arrival of Major General Walter Walker, himself a controversial figure, gave the subsequent campaign a clear direction. Indonesian incursions were rigorously defended and ruthlessly pursued. Top Secret 'Claret' operations took the fight to the enemy with cross border operations initially using Special Forces and later with Chindit-style long range patrols. The outcome was a text book military victory thus avoiding a British 'Vietnam' debacle. "

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