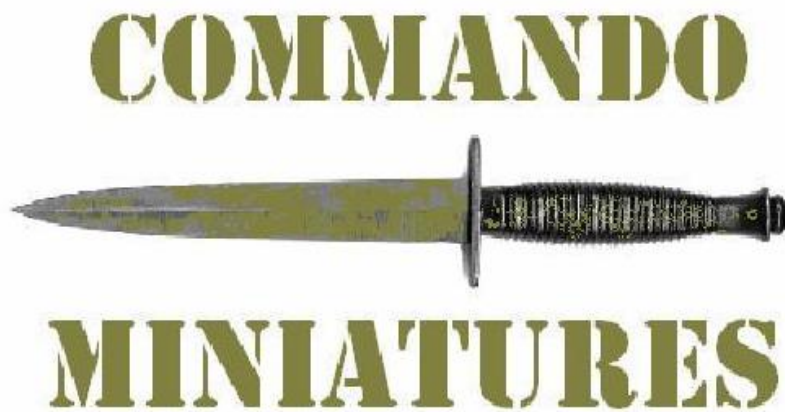


**THE COMMANDO MINIATURES
GUIDE TO
THE CONFRONTATION AND EMERGENCY**



**AN INTRODUCTION TO THE ADEN EMERGENCY AND INDONESIAN CONFRONTATION
1960-67**

THE BRITISH ARMY ON CAMPAIGN IN THE 1960S

An introduction to the Aden Emergency and Indonesian Confrontation

The Background

The 1960s are recognised as being a decade of change. Everyone knows or has heard of the “Swinging Sixties”, the time of Beatlemania, flower power and the youth revolt, but the international political turmoil that went on in the world was even more profound than the social changes. It was the decade of the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Kennedy assassination, the Six Days War and of the Vietnam War. It was during the Sixties that the Cold War probably came closest to turning hot.

In 1961 Britain was still a colonial power controlling vast territories. The movement to de-colonise had commenced almost as soon as World War Two had finished, but a smooth and peaceful handover of power was not a process which could be achieved overnight. During the Sixties many British Colonies would attain independence. Most of these new nations were created peacefully, but in others there was conflict, either internally or due to hostile neighbours eager to swallow all or part of the nascent state.

A significant legacy of this colonial inheritance was that Britain retained substantial armed forces, with bases and garrisons throughout the old imperial lands. This was in addition to the role that Britain played as a member of NATO, the defence of Western Europe against potential Soviet conventional attack and the creation and maintenance of nuclear forces. During most of the ‘60s British defence spending plateaued at over 7% of Gross Domestic Product, more than double the current rate (2014 figures), with total armed forces personnel numbering over half a million. In 1964 a new Government came into power, one of whose aims was to scale down imperial commitments and thus the financial burden on the British taxpayer, but it was to be nearly the end of the decade before this policy was to bear fruit. In particular two areas of the old empire were to play a major part in preventing any short term reductions in forces or expenditure, Malaysia and Aden.

Malaysia consisted of Malaya, Singapore and the former British Territories on Borneo (Sabah and Sarawak – tiny but oil rich Brunei remained separate). During the 1950s a decade long State of Emergency had existed in Malaya due to Communist infiltration. This was successfully countered and it allowed the Federation of Malaysia to be formed in 1961. Malaysia, however was saddled with a large and potentially troublesome neighbour in Indonesia, an independent state formed out of the former Dutch East Indian Colonies. Indonesia occupied three quarters of the island of Borneo (a region known as Kalimantan), in addition to the large islands of Sumatra and Java. Its population was many times that of Malaysia.

In the Middle East, the situation was infinitely more complicated. Britain held the port of Aden which was a Crown Colony and an important staging post on the shipping route to the Gulf and India. But Aden was more than a port. There was a vast hinterland, the size of England and Wales. This territory formed the Aden Protectorate, in effect the tribal fiefdoms of many local sheiks. Aden also had a potentially disruptive neighbour. To the North lay Yemen, like

the Protectorate an arid, backward land largely untouched by twentieth century developments. In 1962 the King was overthrown in an Egyptian backed coup. The resultant civil war inevitably spilled across the ill-defined border into the Aden Protectorate.

The ‘Confrontation’

Between 1962 and 1967, British and Commonwealth forces fought a war in all but name in Malaysia to protect that country from Indonesian aggression. The conflict was termed a “Confrontation” (Indonesian *Konfrontasi*) rather than a war, a term coined by the Indonesians who had pledged to confront the newly created Malaysian Federation. The Indonesian leader, President Sukarno, wanted Indonesia to absorb the infant state, in part because he saw it as being a component of his dream of a Greater Indonesia which would include mainland Malaya, the Indonesian archipelago and even the Philippines. He called this imaginary confederation ‘*Maphilindo*’.

The Confrontation started with a revolt by Chinese Communist sympathisers in Brunei which was soon suppressed by the British garrison reinforced by a detachment of Royal Marines. After Sukarno had announced his intentions towards Malaysia, the British government pledged to support and protect the infant state. More troops, aircraft and naval vessels were despatched to the area.

In early 1963 Indonesian Regular troops started to cross the border from Kalimantan and raid villages in Borneo often aided by a local guerrilla movement known as the TNKU. The commander of British forces, Major General Walter Walker had one firm strategy in mind to prevent this infiltration, “dominate the jungle.” By the 1960s, British troops had had 20 years of experience of fighting in the jungles of Burma against the Japanese and in Malaya during the “Emergency” of the 1950s. There was a jungle warfare school in Singapore and a Commonwealth Brigade had already carried out training to prepare them for potential deployment to Vietnam. In the end they were not required there but would fight an intense, close-quarter war of their own in the rain forest of Borneo. It was a successful war, but one which attracted far less publicity.



The British and Commonwealth Forces

At the peak of operations, 17,000 British and Commonwealth troops were deployed in Borneo with another 10,000 in reserve on the Malayan mainland. Most of the Royal Navy's then active aircraft carriers, a cruiser and numerous destroyers, frigates and minesweepers saw service in Malaysian waters, while twenty RAF squadrons were involved. Wessex, Whirlwind and Belvedere helicopters operated by all three services played a major role. Troops from Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia's own infant Defence Force and of course the redoubtable Gurkhas were also actively involved. The Royal Australian and New Zealand Navies contributed to the naval task force.

At this point the British Army and Royal Marines had been re-equipped with the Self-loading Rifle (SLR - UK variant of the FN-FAL rifle), and the 1958 pattern webbing and equipment. However some units including the Australians retained their 1937 pattern equipment, while the Gurkhas used the 1944 pattern gear which had been specially designed for jungle warfare but had not reached the frontline before VJ Day in 1945. Other small arms included the Sterling submachine gun, the L4A1 light machine gun (the WW2 Bren re-chambered for the NATO 7.62mm round) and the General Purpose Machine Gun or *Jimmy*. This latter weapon replaced the venerable Vickers machine gun during the period.



Choose your weapon!

**A selection of small arms used by British and Commonwealth forces during the Confrontation, from top to bottom
Lee Enfield sniper rifle, L1A1 SLR' L4A1 ("NATO" Bren)' M79 Grenade Launcher (aka Wombat Gun)**

A perhaps surprising addition to the British armoury at this time was the then brand new Armalite AR-15. This had been trialled by the British and had proved popular for jungle warfare because of the light weight of both the firearm and its ammunition. Lord Mountbatten of Burma, then Chief of the Defence Staff, went to the US and ordered 40,000 for the British Army before it had even been adopted by the Americans (as the M-16). It remained in British use with the SAS, Paras and Marines until after the Falklands War.



SLR armed Signalman about to go on guard duty at Sibu Airfield Camp, Borneo. Not yet 18.00hrs otherwise his sleeves would be rolled down (Photo courtesy John Plunkett).

This was not a war of mechanisation; the British Army of the Rhine retained its force of Chieftains and armoured personnel carriers back in West Germany. Some Saladin and Ferret armoured cars were deployed to Malaysia but for most soldiers this was a footslogging conflict. Nevertheless as the Confrontation developed the helicopter became recognised as the most efficient way of getting the infantry to their start point, even if the rest of the job had to be done on foot. Land-based RAF and Army Air Corps helicopters were backed up by Fleet Air Arm machines based on the RN's Commando Carriers offshore.

The Indonesian Armed Forces

In the 1950s and '60s Indonesia was a new country, keen to shake off the trappings of colonial rule but not yet sure of its place in the world. Politically it was divided into factions. The Communists were a powerful group with a lot of influence but they did not rule the country. Sukarno coined the term “guided democracy”. In effect this was cover for his dictatorship, ie the people would have a little democratic freedom, and a bit more when they were ready for it, whenever that would be.

The Armed Forces were as divided as the rest of the country. The Army was least in favour of the Confrontation; it was Air Force and Naval troops (the Para-Commandos) who did most of the fighting in Borneo. Yet despite this, Indonesia never risked its considerable if somewhat obsolete Naval and Air assets in an all-out attack on the Malaysian enclave in Borneo. The Commonwealth fleet offshore and the substantial RAF presence in Singapore probably ensured this.



Indonesian Para-commando Infiltrators

Like many emerging Third World countries, Indonesia obtained its weapons from a variety of sources. At the start of the period ex-British and US World War Two equipment predominated. No doubt a huge amount of it must have been left in the archipelago at the end of hostilities. However the Eastern Bloc, also keen for new customers and with strong connections to the Indonesian Communist Party, supplied weapons of all types from small arms to jet fighters and even an ex-Soviet Sverdlov Class cruiser the *Ordzhonikidze*, (renamed *Irian* in 1963). As a result Indonesian combat troops carried a wide variety of weapons. The FN-FAL was purchased from Belgium for use by Special Forces, while there are accounts of AK47s being found on captured Indonesians or abandoned after fire fights. There are even reports of the then brand new Armalite AR15 being captured, allegedly provided by the CIA in an attempt to balance the Eastern Bloc influence. Uniforms and load carrying equipment were predominately American in origin.



Lethal Warning sign at Malaysian/Indonesian Border (Imperial War Museum Exhibit)

“Strict Warning

People coming from Indonesia in peace and with good intentions, must immediately inform the authorities. People coming from Indonesia with hostile intent, will be killed by our security forces, unless they surrender immediately.” (Approximate translation)

Hearts and Minds

An essential component of Walker’s “dominate the jungle” strategy was to ensure that the local population was on his side. In jungle areas away from the main towns and cities, the typical building is the long house, often built on stilts and usually housing several generations of an extended family. British patrols, particularly those by the SAS, used deep immersion tactics, disappearing into the jungle for weeks, living in the long houses, befriending the natives, setting up medical clinics and giving general assistance to the local population. One SAS Troop Sergeant even built a hydro-electric generator for a native village. In return they got to know the area, recruited local guides and got advanced warning of Indonesian raiding parties. In addition to the native guides a regiment of Border Scouts was formed to help with information gathering. The British also made use of tracker dogs to hunt down Indonesian infiltrators.



Sentry at a typical British base (Photo courtesy John Plunkett).

The terrain in Borneo is of course mainly rain forest but there are two varieties. Primary jungle is virgin rain forest. Because of the thickness of the leaf canopy at high level, little light penetrates downwards so at ground level the going can be easier due to less undergrowth. Secondary jungle (or *belukar*) is where primary jungle has been cleared for farming or plantation and later allowed to regenerate. Because this is at lower level, with no tree canopy to provide shade, the undergrowth is much thicker and difficult to negotiate. Most inhabited areas will have belts of secondary jungle around them as well as areas under current cultivation (*ladang*). Borneo also has areas of palm oil plantation.

In the jungle areas of Borneo a “good road” is often no more than 10 feet wide. Most tracks are just that, suitable only for single file. Standard practice was to space a patrol well out, so that in the event of ambush only the pointman would be caught in the line of fire. Rivers were often a main artery of communications, particularly for the Indonesians bringing up supplies for their raiding parties. Many operations early in the conflict involved interdicting these routes.

Operation Claret

While Walker’s “dominate the jungle” tactics worked at first, they were not effective enough. The British could intercept and destroy Indonesian raids on the Malaysian side of the frontier without difficulty, but Walker wanted to do more. He could see the advantage in crossing the border and breaking up the enemy’s raiding parties early, destroying his camps and supplies or pursuing retreating raiders. He needed to take the fight to the enemy in the best traditions of the British Army.

Defence Secretary Dennis Healy was approached to seek permission for this change of tactic. Healy gave his consent but there were to be strict conditions. The depth of penetration was limited, troops used had to be those conditioned to the region and experienced in jungle fighting, no casualties could be left on Indonesian territory. The concept of plausible deniability would apply. Any British troops discovered in Indonesia (a sovereign independent state with which Britain was not officially at war) had to look like they had strayed across the border due to a map reading error.

The cross-border incursions were known as Operation Claret and naturally the SAS were the first troops deployed. Again their role was largely reconnaissance but they were permitted to engage should the opportunity arise although a check with HQ was usually required. Sometimes they had to stake out the area for days in complete stealth, only a few feet from Indonesian Regulars until a satisfactory firing opportunity was identified.

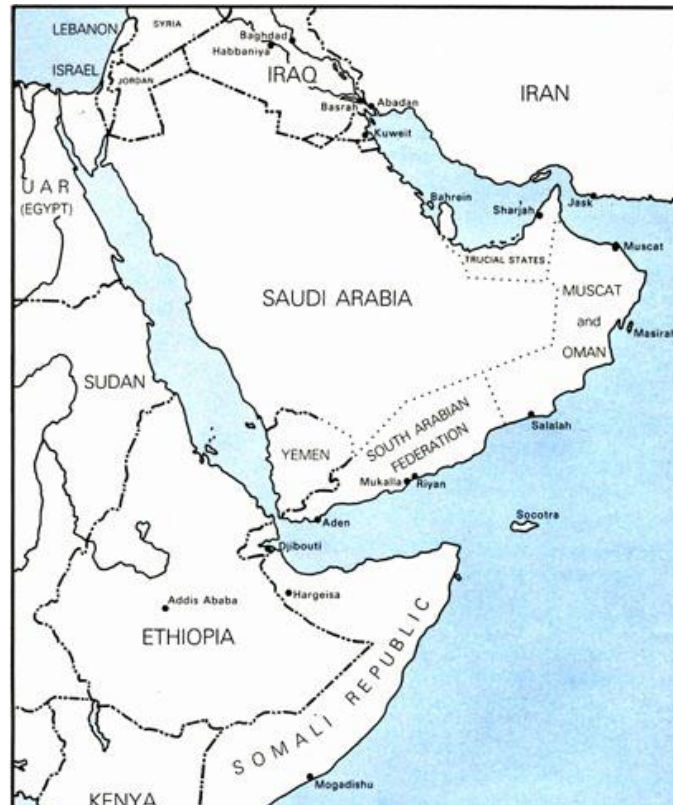
Unlike operations in Sarawak and Sabah, once across the Indonesian border no man was a friend. Just as they had once intercepted Indonesian infiltrators, they were now the raiders and potentially subject to surprise and ambush. Despite their reputation as fearsome fighters their role was still principally reconnaissance. Once the position of an enemy forming-up area had been identified it could be taken out, either by a conventional infantry attack or by artillery or mortars firing across the border.

In the event of being ambushed the standard SAS operating procedure was “Shoot-and-Scoot”. This entailed a short fierce volley of fire followed by rapid withdrawal to a previously identified “lying-up” area where once again they could use their concealment skills until the pursuit had died down.

Eventually the depth of penetration of Indonesia was increased from 2,000 to 10,000 yards. Cross border operations for the Indonesians became more difficult and they had no safe rest camps on their side of the border. More British and Commonwealth units were trained and authorised for cross-border operations. Indonesian casualties began to mount and the annexing of Malaysia no longer appeared to be the walkover Sukarno had promised. The Indonesian President had also been fatally weakened by a psychological operation aimed at him by MI6 and the British Foreign Office, what would nowadays be called “black ops”. In 1967 he was forced to the negotiating table to recognise Malaysia then in a coup organised by his own military commanders, was replaced by General Suharto. At long last Britain was able to wind down its military commitment to this region.

The Aden Emergency Historical Background

Aden, situated on the South-Western corner of the Arabian Peninsula was first occupied by British Royal Marines in 1837 as an anti-pirate measure. The port became a coaling station on the route to India and became even more important to British interests following the construction of the Suez Canal. Originally it had been under the administration of British India but was designated a Crown Colony in 1937. After World War 2 Aden remained an important staging post although following the independence of India in 1947, its strategic value to Britain began to decline.



Aden's strategic position in the Middle East

During the 1950s there was an upsurge in Arab nationalism led by President Nasser in Egypt but spreading throughout the Middle East. In Aden, a number of Trade Unions were formed around this time. The port had become very busy and there was work in the BP oil refinery so workers were attracted from throughout southern Arabia. Strikes and demonstrations began to occur, motivated by politics rather than purely economic reasons. A State of Emergency was declared in 1958 following a General Strike and widespread rioting. British punitive action, which included deporting 250 Yemins, was not well received by the indigenous population, forcing many into the arms of anti-British dissident groups.



Argylls deploy from their Land Rover for a house-to-house search

By the early 1960s these had coalesced into two larger, rival organizations, the Egyptian-supported National Liberation Front (NLF) and the Front for the Liberation of Occupied South Yemen (FLOSY), who fought each other as well as the British. Serious hostilities started with a grenade attack by the NLF against the British High Commissioner on 10 December 1963, killing one person and injuring fifty.

The administrative situation in Aden was complex. In addition to the port city of that name, there were the various territories of the Aden Protectorate, in effect the tribal fiefdoms of local sheiks assisted by British District Officers. In 1963 these territories were combined into the "State of Aden." This was then adjoined to the Crown Colony of Aden (ie the port city and its environs) to form the Federation of South Arabia. The new State would be internally autonomous, while allowing the British to control foreign affairs and the oil refinery at Little Aden. In the same year, the British announced their intention to leave Aden in 1968, but the dissidents (nicknamed *dizzies* by British troops) kept up their bombings and assassinations of civilians and military until the actual British departure. An NLF spokesman explained the policy as follows: "Some may ask, why fight for independence when the British will grant it freely? Comrades, true independence is not given away, but taken." The Fronts wanted to show the world "that it was they who were evicting the British."

Military Operations

From 1963 to 1967 there was an extensive British military presence in Aden, with the RAF alone operating nine squadrons from their main base at Khormaksar, in addition many army and navy units were rotated through the Colony. British Middle East Command had been moved to Aden in 1961 after the loss of bases in Egypt and the Gulf so as well as frontline troops there was a large administrative staff. Infantry operations were extremely varied and included patrols in the mountainous hinterland as well in the back streets of the city of Aden.

Instructions to Servicemen employed on guard duties, internal security and duties in aid of the Civil Power in Aden State.

General.

1. Before you use force it is your duty to assess the situation and then use the minimum amount of force necessary to deal with it. If you have done this and you are absolutely satisfied that there is no effective force at your disposal except opening fire, you may do so in the circumstances detailed below.

When to Fire

2. You may fire in the following circumstances :
 - a. On the lawful orders of your superior officer, by word or through written orders.
 - b. To protect yourself or other persons from death or grievous bodily harm.
 - c. To protect property which you have been ordered to guard and which is in the act of being forcibly destroyed or removed.

How to Fire

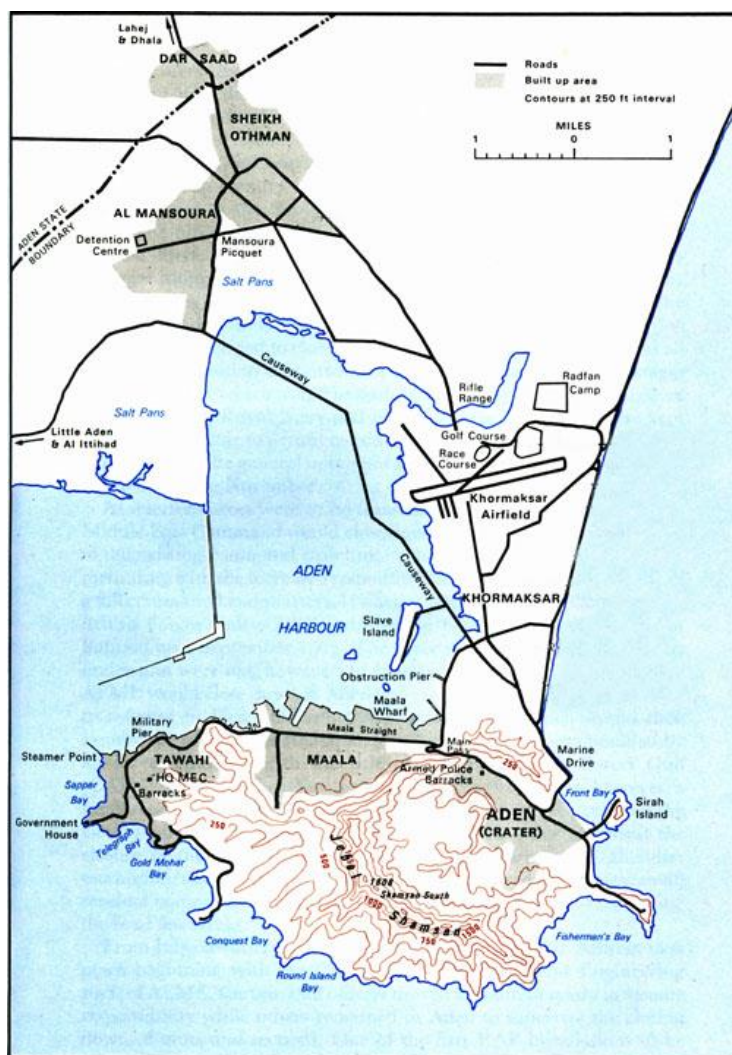
3.
 - a. Fire only aimed shots.
 - b. Aim at the target e.g. the middle of the body.
 - c. Fire only the minimum number of aimed shots to achieve your purpose.

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Rules of Engagement – try working these into a set of wargames rules!

Out in the Radfan Mountains, on the border with Yemen, a seemingly successful operation was concluded against the Arab guerillas. A lot of footslogging by infantry backed up by air strikes from rocket firing Hawker Hunters of the RAF saw the Arab dissidents defeated, at least temporarily. But this was a war fought with propaganda as well as guns and bullets. Egypt flooded South Arabia with transistor radios meaning that even the most remote village could listen to Nasser's words on Radio Cairo.

This propaganda was to have its most dramatic effect in Aden and its most infamous district, Crater. As its name suggested this conurbation was situated in the crater of an extinct volcano. The climax of the Emergency occurred in 1967. The aircraft carrier HMS Victorious, returning to Britain following the successful conclusion of the Indonesian Confrontation had been one of the last ships to pass through the Suez Canal before the Six Day War. Nasser's allegation that the ship had aided the Israelis goaded the locally-recruited army and police of the Federation of South Arabia into mutiny. A British Army patrol in Crater was surrounded by mutineers and terrorists and virtually wiped out. Order was not restored until Operation Stirling Castle was carried out, the re-occupation of Crater by the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, led by Lt-Colonel Colin Mitchell (dubbed "Mad Mitch" by the press).



Port of Aden and surrounding area

The last troops to leave were, appropriately, the Royal Marines, with a huge British fleet offshore covering their departure. The vacuum created in the new state of South Yemen by the British withdrawal was first filled by FLOSY but in a dramatic coup its principle leaders were assassinated and it was replaced by the NLF.

The withdrawal was in line with long term British foreign policy to eliminate all East of Suez military commitments apart from Hong Kong. However it coincided with the closure of the Suez Canal which in effect made Aden a backwater and seriously hampered the economic development of the fledgling South Yemeni state.

Wargaming the Emergency

Like the concurrent Confrontation with Indonesia in Borneo, the Aden Emergency gives much scope for small unit actions. The difference is that instead of jungle, the terrain is either barren desert and mountain, or the streets of the city of Aden itself. In the 1960s British troops were equipped with '58 pattern webbing, the SLR, and the Stirling. The Armalite AR15 was also used, by SAS, Marines and some officers and NCOs. The GPMG and 3" mortar (later 81mm) provided light support. Uniform headgear was usually the beret,

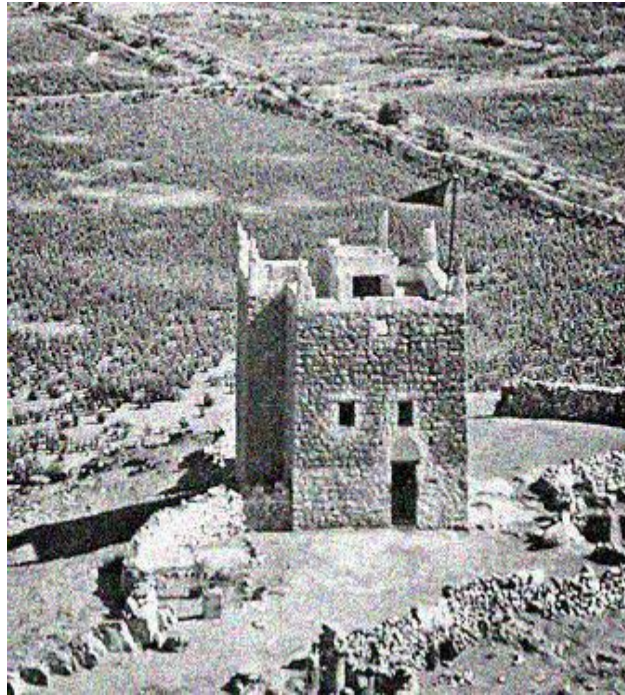
with hackles or plumes as appropriate and of course the Argylls famously wore their Glengarries when re-occupying Crater. Bush hats were also worn out in the mountains. Trousers could be short or long, the rule of thumb being that the further troops got from their HQ the more casual and unofficial the uniform became. In the searing heat of the desert, infantry often went out on patrol stripped to the waist. Unlike Malaysia, no Gurkha units were sent to Aden although individual Gurkhas may have served with specialist units such as the SAS. Vehicles included the usual Land Rovers and trucks such as the Stalwart, plus light armoured vehicles such as the Ferret, Sultan and Saladin. Centurion tanks are known to have been deployed during one operation in the Radfan, while a contemporary newsreel film shows an FV432 tracked APC clanking through Aden's streets. The locally recruited Federation police force and army appear to have been equipped with obsolete British light weaponry such as SMLE4s and .303 Bren guns.

Arab dissidents seem to have been initially armed with ex-British equipment. This was probably WW2 surplus and may well have been given to them by the Egyptians as they re-equipped with more modern Soviet weapons. An Imperial War Museum photograph shows a Bren gun and two MP40s amongst captured rebel equipment – where had the latter come from – the Afrika Korps?

The mountain tribesmen probably had more in common with the Mahdists of the 19th Century in dress and appearance, Mauser 98s were the weapon of choice of many. It is said that a good marksman could hit a Maria Theresa dollar at twenty paces with a round from his Mauser. The Belgian made Blindicide rocket launcher, a copy of the US Super Bazooka, was a particular favorite for weapon for ambushes and night attacks on District Officer's bungalows. Some equipment originating behind the Iron Curtain also made its way into S Arabian hands especially towards the end of the conflict so weapons such as the AK47 began to replace the older firearms.

The dissidents could rely on a plentiful supply of arms and ammunition coming across the border from Yemen, itself the site of a continuing civil war between Egyptian backed Republicans and a Royalist army supplied with weapons from Israel and mercenary military advisers from Britain and France. As the civil war progressed many Radfan tribesmen were kitted out in Egyptian fatigues, a very basic uniform of unbelted jacket and trousers with a simple knapsack for carrying ammunition, food and water. The border was nothing more than a line on a map and so provided no barrier to men or weapons. In the port of Aden however, terrorists would have worn urban dress and been no different in appearance from any other city-dwelling Arab.

Out in the Radfan Mountains, the British forces sought to occupy the high ground against fierce insurgent resistance. Due to the intense heat, it is said that 12 pints (7 litres) of water per day were required for each man. Prominent hills were quickly dubbed with code names, like Cap Badge, in true British Army fashion. They would be supplied by helicopter and could bring down artillery fire on suspected dissident positions. Hawker Hunter FGA6s of the Middle East Air Force were also called in to attack strongholds with rockets and 30mm cannon fire.



Hill fort in the Radfan Mountains

For the wargamer the Aden emergency can be seen as one component of a continuing conflict in S Arabia which lasted from the late 1950s until the mid-70s. After the withdrawal from Aden, fighting continued in neighbouring Oman for another seven years, in what was known as the Dhofar Rebellion. It was during this time that members of the SAS fought one of its most famous engagements, the Battle of Mirbat. In most respects, the dress, weapons and equipment of all the participants is very similar throughout the period.

Rules

Wargame rules are very much a function of two criteria, namely fashion and personal taste. Every so often we see new rules launched for a particular period which seem to take the wargames world by storm and everyone is using them. Then again, there are those who stick to particular rule sets because they are familiar with them, they are used by friends and fellow club members or because they like their “playability”.

The author once had a conversation with the owner of another miniature company who referred to Commando figures as *modern*. Jokingly I pointed out that the figures were clearly historical, depicting a period of some 50 years ago. Now in wargaming circles we have a distinction in which the post-World War Two period is often divided into *post 1945* and *post 2000*. I would however suggest that a more prominent division probably exists around about the early 1980s. The kind of war that troops fought in Aden or Borneo was much more akin to that of 1939-45 than that recently waged in Afghanistan. The rifles may be self-loading rather than bolt action and the fighters may be jets rather than propeller driven but any soldier in Burma in 1945 transported by time-machine forward 20 years to Borneo would have quickly adapted.

What I am trying to suggest is that any set of WW2 rules, especially those designed for small unit actions could easily be used for the Confrontation or Emergency. In particular I am thinking about the *Bolt Action* rules which have become popular in recent years; they have already been migrated 20 years backwards to WW1, I see no reason why they should not go forwards in time as well.

Another recent set of rules that seem to have been made for Confrontation and Emergency is *Force on Force*. Although this mostly seems to be aimed at the post-2000 period, there is plenty of high-tech stuff, the rules could also be used for the simpler weapons and equipment of the earlier generation. We should add that Commando Miniatures is a registered ally of Force on Force's originators, Ambush Alley Games.

About ten years ago the author was involved in a multi-player campaign based on Peter Pig's *AK47* rules. This was terrific fun, the rules being designed to ensure that nothing can go according to plan within even the end of the game being dependent on random factors. Although set in Africa there is no doubt that the factions in *AK47* can be translated to Aden or Malaysia. In both cases the British are the Colonial Power. In Aden FLOSY and NLF would be People's Popular Front while Egypt is the Super Power backed client. This category could also be given to Indonesia, although the factional nature of the state suggests enough scope for two players, one representing the army and the other the navy/airforce, while a TNKU player could also be accommodated.

Finally an intriguing new set of rules has just hit the market, *Black Ops*. Again this may be principally aimed at the current era, and I understand that the rules may be closer to role playing than conventional wargaming, But black ops? What were the Claret Patrols but black ops? Until a few years ago the Australian Government refused to even admit that they had ever happened. And in Aden there were plenty of undercover operations in the back streets of Crater or even cross-border arms smuggling into Yemen for the Royalists..

Conclusion

I hope you have found this guide helpful. It can only scratch the surface of the tale of British Armed Forces Operations during the 1960s. For instance British troops were also deployed amongst other locations, in a peace-keeping role in Cyprus, quelled a mutiny in East Africa and were rushed to Kuwait as a deterrent to a possible Iraqi invasion (Operation Vantage in 1961 predated Desert Storm by thirty years).

Nowadays both the Confrontation and the Emergency would be termed *asymmetric warfare* ie a situation in which one side has seemingly overwhelming force but must find a way of fighting an enemy who despite fewer numbers and resources can simply melt into the background and whose principle tactic is one of surprise attack

In summary this is a recent historical period which is almost completely unwargamed yet gives much scope for interesting actions and varied troop types. Wargamers, figure manufacturers and even historians appear to have over looked the entire period between the

end of the Korean War and the beginning of the Falklands War and yet a lot more happened in this period than just the Vietnam War. It's time to restore the balance.

The Cost

We must never forget that no matter how interesting we find the strategy, tactics or equipment of any conflict, war has a human cost. Both the Emergency and the Confrontation are well within living memory, indeed there must be many British Armed Forces veterans who participated in both conflicts. Although casualty figures never seem to give a full picture, it is believed that by the end of the Aden Emergency 382 Arabs had been killed and 1,714 wounded. Casualties among the British military were 92 killed and 510 wounded. There were an additional 17 British civilians killed and 81 wounded. During the Confrontation a total of 91 British and Commonwealth troops were killed and 141 wounded, almost half of the casualties were Gurkhas. The Indonesians lost 590 killed, 222 wounded and 771 prisoners were taken. Civilian casualties amounted to 36 killed and 55 wounded. It appears that Indonesian troops got off lightly compared with their civilian counterparts. The end of Sukarno's reign was followed by a massacre of suspected communist sympathisers by supporters of the new regime.

Aden was to suffer too. The British exit saw the creation of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen. With the victory of the Republicans in the Yemen civil war, two Yemeni Republics were to co-exist for some time until they united in 1990. Today the Yemen is yet again riven by civil war while tanks and snipers rule the streets of Aden city.

After the Confrontation British troops sailed home to a year of peace. Nineteen sixty eight was to be the only year since world war two when no British service personnel were killed on active service, but the back streets of Belfast and the bandit country of South Armagh were just around the corner and were to prove just as lethal as Crater or the Radfan. Australian and New Zealand troops were to have no rest at all and began their deployment to Vietnam almost as soon as they left Malaysia.

Select Bibliography

Unfortunately for the student of this period one of the most dispiriting things is visiting a bookshop and finding nothing between Korea and the Falklands in the British Military History Section, so here are a few worthwhile references to cheer you up!

Britain's Secret War	Will Fowler and Kevin Lyles	Osprey
Confrontation: The War with Indonesia	Nick van der Bijl	Pen and Sword
Aden Insurgency	Jonathon Walker	Pen and Sword
SAS The Jungle Frontier	Peter Collins	Fontana/Collins

Without Glory in Arabia	Peter Hinchcliffe and others	IB Tauris
The War that Never Was	Duff Hart-Davis	Century

Web

www.britains-smallwars.com - unfortunately this excellent site full of personal accounts and photographs is currently unavailable. There is a Facebook page which promises that the main website will be back soon.

www.radfanhunters.co.uk/ - an excellent site, again full of personal reminiscences and some amazing photographs, concentrating but not exclusively so, on the air aspects of the Emergency.

www.se-asia.commemoration.gov.au/emergency-and-confrontation/index.php - An Australian site.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=J94dwNP18yl End of Empire – Chapter 9, Aden. *End of Empire* chronicles the last days of British rule around the globe, through the remarkably candid reminiscences of both colonisers and the colonised.

I would also recommend perusal of the regimental histories, both published and online, of many of the units involved for more detail.

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THE BRITISH RETREAT FROM EMPIRE - TIME LINE 1945-82

Year	Near East	Middle East	Africa	Asia	Other
1945 – '58 WW2 small arms and equipment still largely in use by British Land Forces					
1946-1948		Civil War in Mandatory Palestine. Withdrawal from Israel. Jordan independent	Campaign against Shifta rebels in Eritrea	Murder of plantation managers signals outbreak of Malayan Emergency. India, Pakistan, Burma and Sri Lanka Independent	
1950				Korean War begins	
1951			Shifta campaign completed.	British Instigate "Hearts and Minds" campaign in Malaya; murder of British High Commissioner. 1 st Commonwealth Division formed in Korea	
1952	Riots in Cairo lead to a Coup by Colonel Nasser and the overthrow of King Farouk		Outbreak of Mau Mau rebellion in Kenya		
1953				Korean War Armistice	
1954	British garrison quits Egypt; Cyprus becomes new British Middle East HQ	Outbreak of Jebel Akhdar War: Sultan of Muscat and Oman supported by British troops vs rebels supported by Saudi Arabia	Operation Anvil , Nairobi under military control	1 st Commonwealth Division disbanded	
1955	State of Emergency declared in Cyprus following bombing and attacks on police stations by EOKA terrorists				
1956	British and French troops land and Suez to occupy the canal after nationalisation by Nasser. (Operation Musketeer) US threatens to sell British gold reserves, forcing withdrawal		Sudan Independent		
1957			Ghana Independent	Malaysia Independent	Guatemala threatens to invade Belize
1958	Introduction of Self Loading Rifle (SLR) and '58 pattern webbing equipment to British service				
1959		Decisive attack on the Jebel by SAS brings an end to the war			

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1960	Cyprus gains independence from Britain which retains massive Sovereign Base Areas at Akrotiri and Dhekelia		Mau Mau rebellion ended Nigeria Independent. Sharpeville massacre in S Africa	The Malayan government declared the state of emergency over	
1961		Kuwait independent. British forces deployed to Kuwait to protect against possible Iraqi attack (Operation Vantage)	Sierra Leone, Tanzania Independent South Africa declares a republic and leaves the Commonwealth		
1962		Coup d'état in North Yemen inspired by Nasser. Republic formed, civil war between Republicans and Royalists. Dhofar rebellion breaks out in Oman	Uganda independent	Brunei Revolt. The first members of the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam arrive in Vietnam. Exercise Trumpeter , 28 Commonwealth Brigade train for potential deployment to Vietnam	Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago independent
1963	Following increased tension between the Greek and Turkish – Cypriot communities a peacekeeping force is put together by Britain, Greece and Turkey	Hostilities commence in Aden led by the NLF and FLOSY. European, mainly British, mercenaries join Royalist forces in N Yemen.	Kenya independent	President Sukarno declared that he was going to "crush Malaysia."	
1964	A United Nations peacekeeping force, UNFICYP, takes over responsibility for security. Malta independent	Clandestine British arms flights to Yemeni Royalists. Operation Cap Badge carried out in Radfan mountains	The Tanganyika Rifles mutiny, suppressed by Royal Marines. Malawi and Zambia independent	Offensive "Claret" Patrols into Indonesian territory authorised by British Government	
1965			The Gambia independent. Southern Rhodesia declares independence. Commencement of Rhodesian Bush War (Zimbabwe War of Liberation)	First New Zealand troops deployed to Vietnam. British troops in Borneo reach a peak of 17,000. Singapore secedes from Malaysia. India-Pakistan War.	
1966			Lesotho and Botswana independent. Commencement of S African Border War	Sukarno deposed in coup. Indonesians begin to wind down the Confrontation	Guyana independent
1967		Aden police mutiny. Operation Stirling Castle to re-occupy Crater. (July) Final withdrawal of British troops from Aden (Nov). NLF massacres FLOSSY		End of Confrontation allows Australia and New Zealand to expand commitment to Vietnam	
1968	No British service personnel killed on active service anywhere in the world				

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1969					British troops deployed in N Ireland to aid the civil authorities (The Troubles)
1970		Cease fire in Yemen, Saudi Arabia recognises Republic and civil war ends. Sultan of Oman deposed and replaced by his son			
1971		British Army training teams mobilised to Oman. RAF pilots seconded to Oman Air Force. United Arab Emirates independent.		India-Pakistan War, Bangladesh Liberation War	
1972		Battle of Mirbat – small contingent of SAS and native troops hold off attack by hundreds of Adoo rebels		Australia and New Zealand begin the withdrawal of forces from Vietnam	14 demonstrators shot by British troops in Derry. Over 100 British troops killed during the year. Operation Motorman , re-occupation of “no-go” areas using Centurion AVREs
1973					The Bahamas independent
1974	Turkey invades Northern Cyprus setting up an autonomous state not recognised by UN.				
1975					Guatemala again threatens Belize. British garrison reinforced
1976		Dhofar Rebellion finally defeated.			
1977					
1978					
1979					18 British soldiers, mostly members of the Parachute Regiment, killed by bombs at Warrenpoint

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1980					
1981					Guatemala refuses to recognise independence of Belize, 1,500 British troops required to garrison.
1982					Argentinian Troops invade Falkland Islands and S Georgia. Falklands War (Operation Corporate)
1985 - SA80 (LA85) rifle introduced					

The purpose of this list is to demonstrate the wide variety of conflicts associated with or derived from the British decolonisation experience. It is intended to provide an outline for wargamers and military historians so that they can carry out further research into this fascinating historical period. Please note the independence dates of some smaller colonies in areas like the Caribbean have been omitted.

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