

## The Pingat Jasa Malaysia



In 2005 the Malaysian Government approached the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) to seek approval to present their new medal, known as the Pingat Jasa Malaysia (PJM), to British veterans and others who served in operations in Malaya/Malaysia between August 1957 and August 1966. The British Government believed it to be important to recognise the generous gesture by the King and Government of Malaysia, and their wish to acknowledge the service given by veterans and others in the years immediately after Malaysian independence in 1963. During the qualifying period I had served in the theatre of operations on two separate occasions. Firstly, in 1957 & 1958 whilst serving in HMS *Cossack* in charge of the wireless communications – it was Morse code in those days, not mobile phone technology of today - when the ship had provided naval gunfire support at various times for the army in areas held by the communists.



Secondly, in 1966 as the Communications Officer on the staff of the Commander Naval Forces in Borneo (there were only three naval officers – the Captain, Operations Officer and me – amongst many army and RAF officers) based in Labuan (an island north-east of Brunei). Indonesia had attempted to overthrow the Sultan of Brunei in 1962 to get its hands on the oil fields and had then started infiltrating into Sarawak and Sabah when it opposed the

countries joining the Malaysian Federation in 1963. It was a very interesting job which required flying from one end of Borneo to the other – Kuching and Sibiu to the west in Sarawak and to Tawau in the east in Sabah – visiting Brunei, liaising with army and RAF personnel, visiting the naval radio operators and the naval helicopter squadrons based in the dense jungle sites. The latter was particularly interesting as it meant flying in small Beaver aircraft piloted by an army sergeant over the jungle tree tops and landing on small fields or dirt tracks in a jungle clearing – real flying! The border between Sarawak and Sabah with Kalimantan (Indonesia) is 999 miles in length, so it was a large area for the military to stop infiltration with most of the terrain dense jungle – but it did.



*Colin Carter*