

BORNEO VISIT 4th – 15th MARCH 2013

20 members of 845 Naval Air Squadron (NAS) are heading to Borneo 4-15 March to visit a memorial at Nanga Gaat, dedicated to comrades who fell there in the 1960s. A group of mixed ranks and rates will be taking off for a battlefield tour of Borneo as part of the squadron's commitment to honouring their heritage, and as the finale to the 845 NAS 50th Anniversary celebrations of becoming a Commando helicopter squadron.

From 1962-66 845 NAS, and other Commando helicopter squadrons, were sent to Borneo as part of a Royal Navy taskforce to support the Malaysian government during their confrontation with Indonesia. The daring flying in support of the soldiers fighting in the jungle earned the commando squadron pilots the nickname "Junglies". Sadly, 16 Junglies were killed during the action, and a memorial at Nanga Gaat was erected to honour them. This memorial is the focus for today's members of 845 NAS who will fly to Borneo in order to visit and refurbish it.

The 12 day trip will be a busy affair commencing with acclimatisation and an introduction to Jungle Survival in Brunei, in order to prepare them for a river expedition inland to Kapit District where the Nanga Gaat memorial is sited. The group will be refurbishing the memorial, as well as meeting the local population to re-establish the links 845 had all those years ago. This will be underpinned by providing support to a local community project, before holding a memorial ceremony at Nanga Gaat. Before heading back home to RNAS Yeovilton, the team will just have time to take in a couple of the sights for which Borneo is renowned, including climbing Mt Kinabalu and some scuba diving.

This trip is extremely important to the heritage of 845 NAS, allowing today's members of 845 to re-trace the steps of their predecessors who cut their teeth in the jungles of Borneo and earned the still-coveted nickname of the 'Junglies'. If you would like to donate to the expedition fund, or if you were deployed to Borneo with any of the Commando squadrons during the 1960s and wish to have your messages/ stories passed on to the locals in Kapit, please contact the organisers Lieutenants Chris Mason and Charlie Peschardt on 01935 455892 or by email: peschardtc409@mod.

There has also been interest from the regional media in this trip. They are keen to talk to any Borneo veterans so if you were there and are happy to share your story please contact Tina Cullen of the Jungle Association at tinamcullen@aol.com .

Yours Aye,

Charlie Peschardt