



THE SPEAR AND THE KERAMBIT

*The Exploits of VAT 69,
Malaysia's Elite Fighting Force
1968-1989*

A. NAVARATNAM

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FOREWORD

I remember well the day I became the Inspector-General of Police. My first response to the position was to make the rounds of the combat units to familiarise myself with the men under my charge.

It was with some pride that I met a small group of fighting men called VAT 69 whose combat skills and exploits in guerrilla warfare had been hidden from the general public. They worked undercover in deep jungle hunting down Communist Terrorists during the second insurgency of 1968–1989. The value of their work has never been acknowledged but these men risked their lives and limbs to preserve our liberty, enabling sound economic development of the nation to continue at a high and intensive level.

This book tells the story of these brave fighting men. Working in small groups of three to six men, the VAT 69 patrols almost single-handedly mapped out the Communist trails in the country. It was their excellent tracking abilities, which established the main routes used by the Communists at the Malaysia–Thai border to enter into Malaysia, thus enabling the security forces to dominate the area and prevent or interdict incursions.

Their innovative technique of seeking out food dumps and arms caches buried in the ground enabled the security forces to successfully uncover and destroy the lifeline of the Communists throughout the country. It was their guerrilla workforce skills which unearthed an entire “supermarket” of food dumps in Pahang and tracked down the forward movement of the Communists, crippling their advance into that State. Together with the security forces, they secured the ASAL (Orang Asli) areas and deprived the Communists of significant source of aid and refuge.