

APA KHABAR

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VOLUNTEERS HONOURED AT CHANGI BY THE PRESIDENT OF SINGAPORE

Seventeen months of careful planning resulted in the special ceremony which took place at the Changi Museum on 12th September 2008, the 63rd anniversary of the signing of the surrender document by the Japanese in 1945. In the presence of 16 MVG members and 80 invited guests, His Excellency, S.R. Nathan, the President of the Republic of Singapore, unveiled the Memorial Board dedicated to the Malayan Volunteer Forces, which had been presented to the Changi Museum by the Malayan Volunteers Group. This great honour underlines the importance which Singapore placed on its Volunteer Forces in the 1930s and 1940s, and which it still remembers today.

The event was twinned with the launch of FEPOW Peter Rhodes' book, "To Japan to Lay a Ghost". Accompanied by his daughter, Janet, who gave an emotional talk about her father's journey to come to terms with his experiences as a PoW, Peter's photograph was printed in "The Straits Times" handing a signed copy of his book to the President. A full report of the ceremony and dinner at the Singapore Cricket Club is included with the newsletter, written by Stephanie Hess who lives in South Africa. Five others who attended the Presentation live in Australia, and it was a wonderful opportunity to meet up with some of our overseas members.

Ex-POW exorcises past

To mark the 63rd anniversary of the end of World War II in Singapore, the Changi Museum yesterday launched a book written by a former prisoner of war (POW).

The book, *To Japan To Lay A Ghost*, describes Mr Peter Rhodes' enlistment as a gunner in the artillery, the time he spent as a prisoner of war in Singapore and Kyushu and his travels back to Japan to find peace and closure.

Yesterday, Mr Rhodes, 89, presented an autographed copy of his book to President S R Nathan at the Changi Museum.

President Nathan also unveiled a World War II memorial plaque donated by the Malayan Volunteers Group.



ST PHOTO: DESMOND LIM

Another first for the MVG was to organize its own V-J Day ceremony on 15th August. The Service took place in the MVG Memorial Garden at the National Memorial Arboretum in Alrewas. On a beautiful sunny day, 16 MVG members and friends gathered at midday to remember the Volunteers in a simple, dignified and meaningful Service. This included the laying of a wreath by Sandy Lincoln, and readings of prayers, poems, hymns and a passage from Geoffrey Mowat's book, "The Rainbow Through the Rain". It was followed by an informal picnic on the lawn outside the Visitor Centre, accompanied by plenty of lively conversation to go with the wonderful array of home-cooked food which had been provided by members. It seemed a very good formula, and one to follow in future years.

After the picnic lunch, Jonathan Moffatt delivered the Folder of Information about the Volunteer Forces to the Archival Section of the FEPOW Building. This is a comprehensive document, and we thank him very much for all his work in producing a valuable piece of research material for users of the Archival Section. If there is anyone who has any information about the Volunteers which would be of interest, whether in general or in the form of personal documents, and which could be added to the Folder, please let Jonathan know. Sandy Lincoln and Rosemary Fell also met Carol Cooper to discuss the inclusion of 2 Volunteer Badges in the building. It was agreed that the SSVF and FMSVF Badges would be displayed on the beam where 14 other Regimental Badges are on show. At present there is no room for the JVE, Kelantan and Kedah Badges. Despite the reduction in the number of tickets allocated to the various civilian groups for the march past in Whitehall on Remembrance Sunday, the MVG has again been given 12 tickets. 10 have already been spoken for, but there are 2 spare tickets if anyone wishes to come.

We are sad to announce the sudden and unexpected death of member Professor Mary Turnbull (Mrs. Leonard Rayner). The report in The Straits Times coincided with the Presentation in Singapore, and mention was made of Professor Turnbull's authoritative work on Singapore's past, entitled "A History of Singapore", by Professor Brian Farrell, in his speech on Volunteers. **STOP PRESS: The Gurkhas win their fight for their right to settle in Britain, if they retired prior to 1997. But the fight is not over yet – the present Government's policy denying those men entry to Britain has to be repealed, and it could appeal against the court's ruling. However this debt of honour must be settled now.**

V-J DAY SERVICE AT ALREWAS. By Jonathan Moffatt.

It was a beautiful day with clear sky and absolutely no sign of rain. Some 15 of our Malayan Volunteers Group, including FEPOWs John Hedley, Harry Hesp and Ron Mitchell, held a 20 minute service at the garden plot with prayers and readings contributed by those participating. John Hedley gave a very appropriate reading from Corinthians 2:1 well worth looking up if you are unfamiliar with it. Michael Mowat read from his father's memoirs of his time as a medical orderly with H Force at Hintock and showed us the boxed razor given to his father by a dying POW. Michael's sister Alison read a poem and Rosemary Fell read Margaret Dryburgh's "The Captives Hymn". We followed our service with a substantial picnic lunch and good chat. We look forward to meeting again at the London Lunch on October 4th.

Before leaving the NMA Rosemary, Sandy and Jonathan delivered a substantial Malayan Volunteers Information File to the FEPOW Building Archive, and Rosemary was able to discuss with Carol Cooper the placing of 2 Malayan Volunteer regimental plaques in the FEPOW Building. Audrey McCormick represented the MVG at the Remembrance Gathering at the Cenotaph in George Square, Glasgow. This was organized by Avril Anderson and Sandy Gibson. About 100 people attended this year, after only a handful last year. They included 2 former POWs from the Kinkaseki Copper Mine, John Marshall and Benny Gough [of the Lanarkshire Yeomanry 155th Field Regiment, Royal Artillery] – one of the vilest Japanese imprisonments on record for POWs.

Right:-

John Hedley reading from Corinthians 2:1 Verse 8. "For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, inasmuch that we despaired even of life...."



FINAL RESTING PLACE OF THE TANJONG PINANG
by
DAVID WINGATE

Some 20 years ago, I found a hand-made green canvas bag in a suitcase in the attic. This I discovered was the POW diary of my mother's first husband **David Rintoul SRA(V)**. I then spent the next couple of years deciphering the tiny and faded handwriting written in various POW camps in Singapore and Thailand from 1942-46. This started my ever growing interest in this turbulent era of Malayan history, and my mother's family, who had lived in Malaya since 1905. Her father **Jim Landon** had moved to Malaya as a Rubber plantation manager and his wife **Penelope** joining him sometime in 1914. They were to live at and manage the Cluny Estate, Slim River, Perak. When war began, Jim joined the Perak Local Defence Corps and was present at the Battle of Slim River. Pen had joined the Medical Auxiliary Service, Selangor, and when evacuated to Singapore, they both volunteered as plane spotters and also worked at First Aid posts. They were fortunate enough to be offered accommodation with a friend of theirs, **E.J.H. Corner**, at his house in the Singapore Botanical Gardens. **John Godber FMSVF**, married to my mother's sister **Thyra**, wrote in his exceptionally well-written POW diary about various visits to see them in Singapore, at 30, Cluny Road, during the Japanese attack on the Island. I had the privilege to read John's POW diary and it is a fascinating and most moving record of those times.

Jim Landon stayed on in Singapore to become a POW in Changi and Sime Road camps, and survived the War (briefly). Unfortunately Pen Landon was evacuated on the Straits Steamship vessel the 'Kuala' which was sunk at Pompong Island south of Singapore on 14 Feb 1942. Pen managed to swim to the Island and helped tend to the wounded with the late Brig. Dame Margot Turner, (see her affidavit later in this account). Both Pen and Margot were later evacuated on the small vessel 'Tanjong Pinang'. This vessel was owned by the Soon Bee Steamship Co and managed by the Heap Eng Moh Steamship Co. She was very small being 97' long with a beam of just 22' 2", 133gt. I have been researching for this ship for many years collecting mostly sketchy accounts written after the War. It is interesting that in the Lloyds Registry, she is referred to as the "Tandjong Pinang". Built at Taikoo Shipyards in Hong Kong in 1936, official entry number: 14521. In a recent e-mail to Mason Nelson (MVG Member) whose father had recorded where the 'Tanjong Pinang' had been sunk, I wrote:

"I have been doing some more ferreting around looking for the 'Tanjong Pinang' wreck site. Your father had the wreck listed as 30 miles north of Pulau Ubar. Well, I was reading through more of the documents I have on this sinking and re-read some accounts of the survivors of another wreck who came across Lt. Basil Shaw RNZNVR who was the captain of the 'Tanjong Pinang'. Lt. Shaw and 2 able seamen survived the sinking (amongst a few others) and landed in a damaged dinghy on the North East coast of Banka Island near the village of Parit 9. According to his narrative, Sub. Lt. E.G.C. Partridge, MRNVR, quotes:-
"My ship, 'FUH WO', was beached and blown up on the morning of the 15th February 1942. Ship's Company slept that night in a deserted house belonging to the Chinese owner of the 'PARIT 9' Tin Mine. On the morning of the 18th I was sent into the jungle by the Captain, to look for a place where we could hide from the Japanese who were organizing search parties all over the island. During my absence the Japanese arrived at Parit 9 village and took the ship's officers and European crew into their custody. Upon my return to the village of Parit 9, I contacted A.B. Lorigan RN. We slept in the village that night, and on the morning of the 19th proceeded to the North shore about 5 miles distant, where we met a party of Royal Air Force personnel under Flt. Sgt. Anderson. I organized this party and billeted all hands in a deserted Chinese hut. On the morning of the 20th (Feb 1942), I was walking along the North Coast when I met Lt. Shaw RNZNVR, who had just come ashore in a damaged dinghy. With Lt. Shaw were two ratings, one British and one Malay. I took this party back to the hut and did all I could for them, as they were suffering from exposure, having been some 26 hours without either food or water. I had some conversation with Lt. Shaw, who stated that his ship had been 'blown out of the water' by enemy action and that a very large number of civilians including women and children had been lost. He stated that this had occurred during the hours of darkness 36 hours before, i.e. the night of the 18/19th February 1942. He had found himself swimming in the water and had got into the damaged dinghy with the other men".

This narrative continues and states that they were all robbed and beaten up by gangs of locals. Another narrative by Able Seaman J. Richardson (ex. H.M.S. Prince of Wales) says that he was at the helm of the 'Tanjong Pinang' the night of the 17-2-1942 at 21:30 when she was sunk. He was on a raft for 8 days before being picked up by a Japanese cruiser and taken to Muntok Hospital, where he met a nurse who had been similarly rescued from the 'Tanjong Pinang', this must have been Margot Turner QARANC, later Brig. Dame Margo Turner D.B.E.

There is a further note in Sub. Lt. Partridge's narrative which states: "On the morning of the 20th February while I was still at liberty, I met Lt. Shaw RNZNVR, commanding officer of H.M.S. 'Tanjong Pinang'. This was in the vicinity of PULO UBAR Light House on Banka Island. He, with one European and one Malay rating,

had just landed from a damaged dinghy. Shaw said that his ship had been crowded with women and children survivors from another ship, and his ship had been sunk by gunfire; that he believed the two ratings and himself were the only survivors. Flight Sgt. Anderson RAF was with S/Lt. Partridge on the 20th February and also refers to meeting Lieut. Shaw. S/Lt. Partridge and Ft/ Sgt Anderson, while foraging that day, were captured and beaten by Chinese (probably Indonesians) who later handed them over to the Japanese. Nothing more has been heard of Lt. Shaw or his companions; in view of their weak state it is probable that they are dead".

There is another narrative by Leading Seaman Robert W. Archer, and I quote some of it:-

"We got ashore on a beach on the south east end of Banka Island at about 18.00 on the 22 February. We were robbed that night of all our money and possessions except clothes, by a party of about 20 Malays armed with poles and knives. We could get no medical help for the nurse, Miss Black, ex Alexandria Hospital. Her leg was badly poisoned. She died on the night 23/24 February. She had been engaged to an RAF officer. We buried her body on the beach about five miles to the north east of the village of Rambut. We lived in or near Rambut village for about seven weeks and were captured on the 25th April. We were brought to Muntok and put in police charge".

Archer continued:- ".....it was an interesting group that consisted of Lt. Shaw (Capt), S/Lt. Gerrard RMNVR., a Lt/Cdr (unknown name other than the name beginning with E, and fair well built!), Eng, Brown, A/B Archer, O/S Baird, A/B Richardson, A/G Hissey (these last 4 survivors were interned as POWs at Palembang). Also ship's Company A/B Young (Devonport), A/B Sanderson Scotch (Portsmouth), Sig. McCue (NZ), 2 other Malay seamen, a Chief P.R.A., one stoker (tall dark), total 14 Europeans, 3 Malays, 4 Chinese".

So last night I was thinking that my previous search was on the south east coast of Banka, but no Pulo Ubar Lighthouse. On re-reading some of these accounts I realized that Pulau Ubar Lighthouse is hundreds of miles to the east so it couldn't be that one. So Lt. Shaw came ashore near Rambut, well nearly, in fact it was Rambut on the north west coast of Banka Island. Parit 9 Tin Mines are nearby. The ship went down 30 miles north of the Lighthouse.....which lighthouse is nearby? Well, of course it had to be TANJUNG ULAR Lighthouse. Both the names of these places are so similar to those in the narratives. Those caught were later taken to Muntok which is a short journey away (a few miles) to the south west..... I have tonight ordered Indonesian Maritime Charts for the area and will be doing a search and maybe we will have come closer to finding the final resting place of the 'Tanjong Pinang' and the final resting place of June's and Thyra's mother and Jen Howe (Godber), Tim, Pen, Jeannie and my maternal grandmother Penelope Landon, Medical Auxiliary Service of Malaya.

Mason, you know that I have been searching for this ship for years and you have helped as well. Your father also recorded where she went down and I assume that his report was from these narratives and as such the different spellings of the names. I should have thought of this before.

The Indonesian Maritime Charts did indeed show an un-named wreck site approx 30 miles north of Tanjung Ular Lighthouse and I have sketched the chart below. Again it is not a confirmation of the wreck position but does finally give some better indication as to her final resting place.

David Wingate.

Affidavit of Margot Turner:

I, Evelyn Marguerite Turner, Sister Q.A.I.M.N.S. of 2, Palmeira Square, Hove, Sussex say:-

I went to Malaya (Tanjong Malim) in March 1941, with 17th Combined General Hospital and met Mrs. Landon in May 1941 and saw her fairly frequently (playing tennis etc.) till I left Tanjong Malim in December 1941 on going to Singapore on the move of the 17th Combined General Hospital.

I saw Mrs. Landon with her husband at the Docks at Singapore on 13th February 1942 the day on which I embarked in the 'Kuala'. We sailed during the early part of the night of the 13th February and I saw Mrs. Landon on the ship and spoke to her.

The 'Kuala' was anchored off an Island Pompong some sixty miles from Singapore. At about 0800 hours on the 14th February the ship was bombed and received a direct hit at about noon. I swam ashore and met and spoke to Mrs. Landon on the island (I cannot say how she got to the Island). I was with her on the Island till 16th February 1942, she helped me nurse the injured and wounded.

During the night of 16th/17th February, all women, children and wounded were taken off the island in rowing boats and placed on board the 'Tanjong Pinang', a small cargo boat which was very crowded. As a nursing sister I remained on deck but all the passengers, including Mrs. Landon, were below decks in the hold. I saw Mrs. Landon on the 'Tanjong Pinang' and spoke to her. The 'Tanjong Pinang' sailed for Java on the morning of the 17th February 1942. She was hit by gunfire at 9.30 p.m. on that day and sank in about 5 minutes. As I was making for the hold to see what help I could give I met Mrs. Stafford, a V.A.D. who told me it was useless to go down to the hold as all the people appeared to have been killed. The ship had heeled at an

acute angle and I just stepped into the water, swam around, got hold of a raft and then during the night picked up 16 people but not Mrs. Landon. I was on the raft for four days, during which time all the sixteen people either died or fell off the raft through exhaustion.

On the night of the 21st February I was picked up by a Japanese Cruiser and taken to Muntok Camp on Banka Island and interned. Sister Mary Cooper Q.A.I.M.N.S. (R) and Mrs. Watts Carter and three Eurasians who got away from the 'Tanjong Pinang', how I do not know, were brought into camp at the same time as myself.

The two ladies have since died.

I was released on 19th September 1945 and went to Singapore.

I have naturally made enquiries as to any survivors from the 'Tanjong Pinang' but have never heard of any".

[There is a good book on Dame Margot Turner D.B.E., R.R.C., by Brig. The Rt. Hon. Sir John Smyth, Bt., V.C., M.C. called "The Will to Live". ISBN 0 70899 1560 4]

To end this, is an extract from a letter from Jim Landon, Pen's husband, when he was released from POW camp in Singapore.

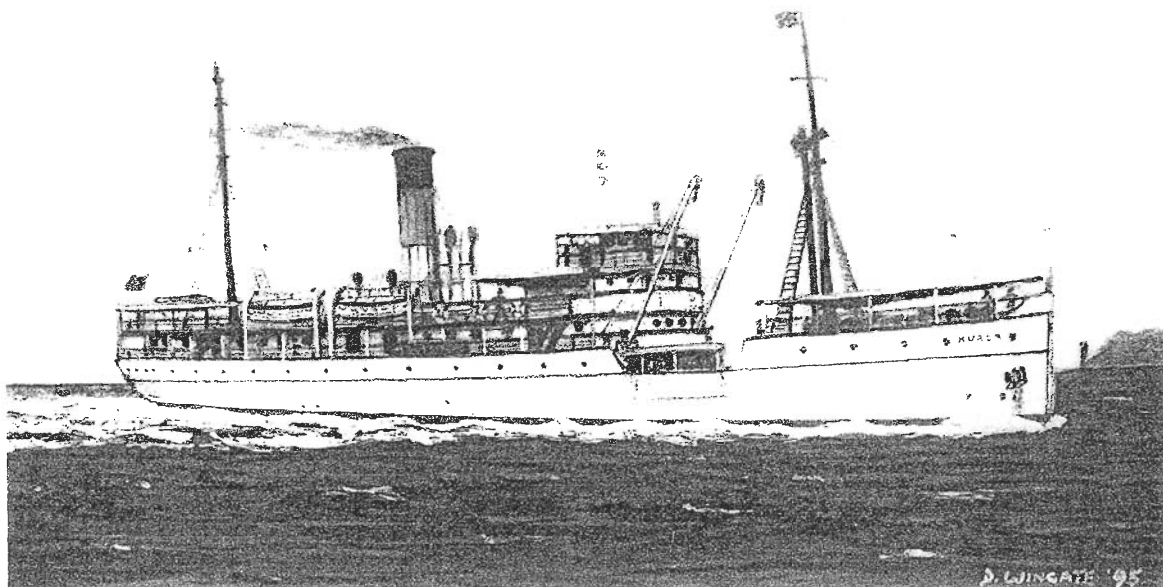
Raffles Hotel, Singapore. 23/9/45

"I have been free for nearly a week now, and before I say anything else I want to thank you so much for the helpful post cards which came in with great regularity, at least as many as the Japs would allow in - I am coming home to England soon, but in the meanwhile I am waiting on here as long as I can bear it, hanging on to the 1% hope I still have that Pen may have been picked up at sea and taken to some unknown camp. I am afraid, however, that the information I had from one of the very few survivors of the sunk boat, leaves very little than a 100 to 1 chance....."

The entry in the Colonial Office Registry of Deaths:

Mrs. Penelope Minna Landon, wife of J.M.P. Landon of Singapore. Date of Death, on or about 17.2.42, Banka Strait. Presumed to have lost her life following the sinking of the S.S. 'Tanjong Pinang'.....

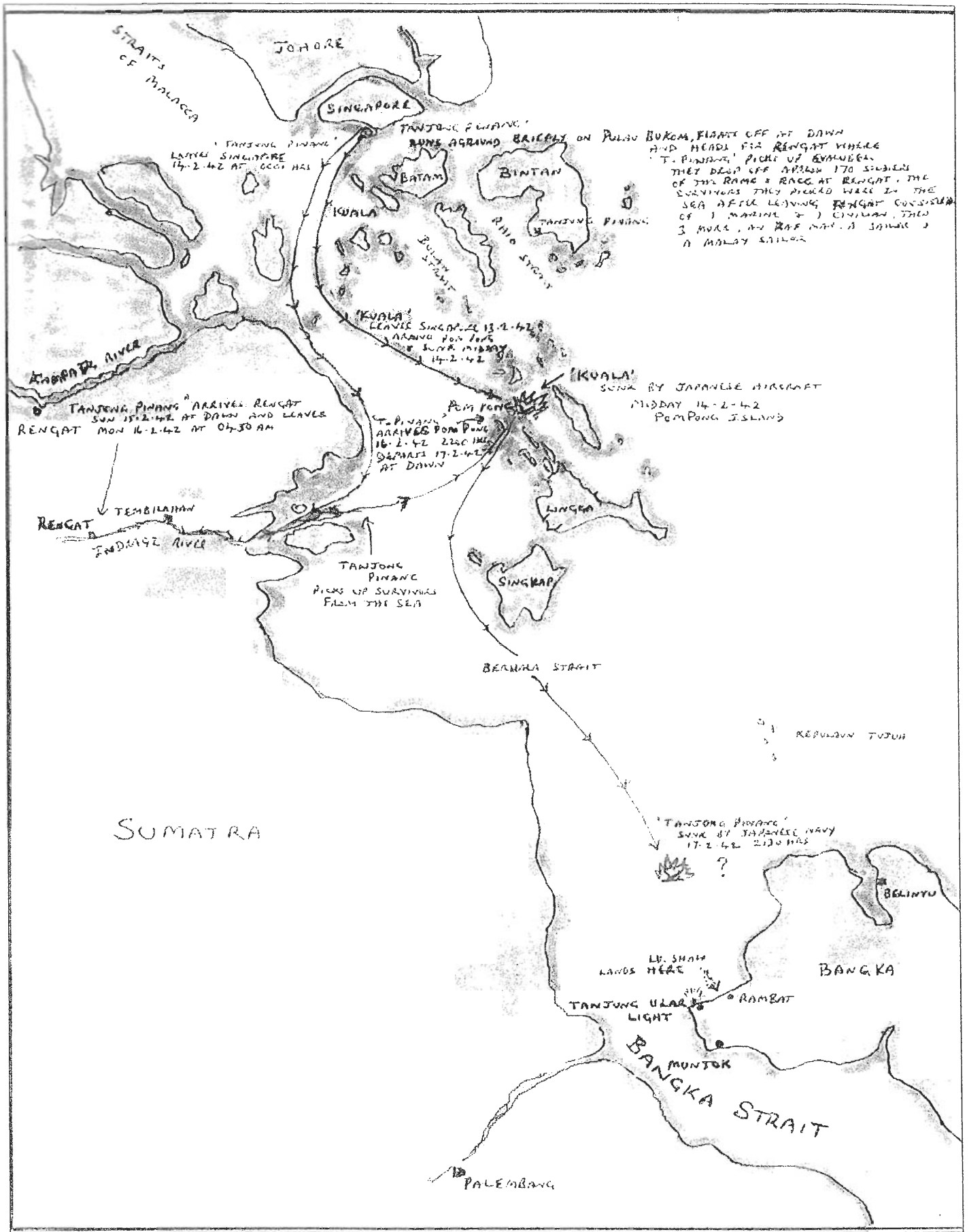
S.S. KUALA

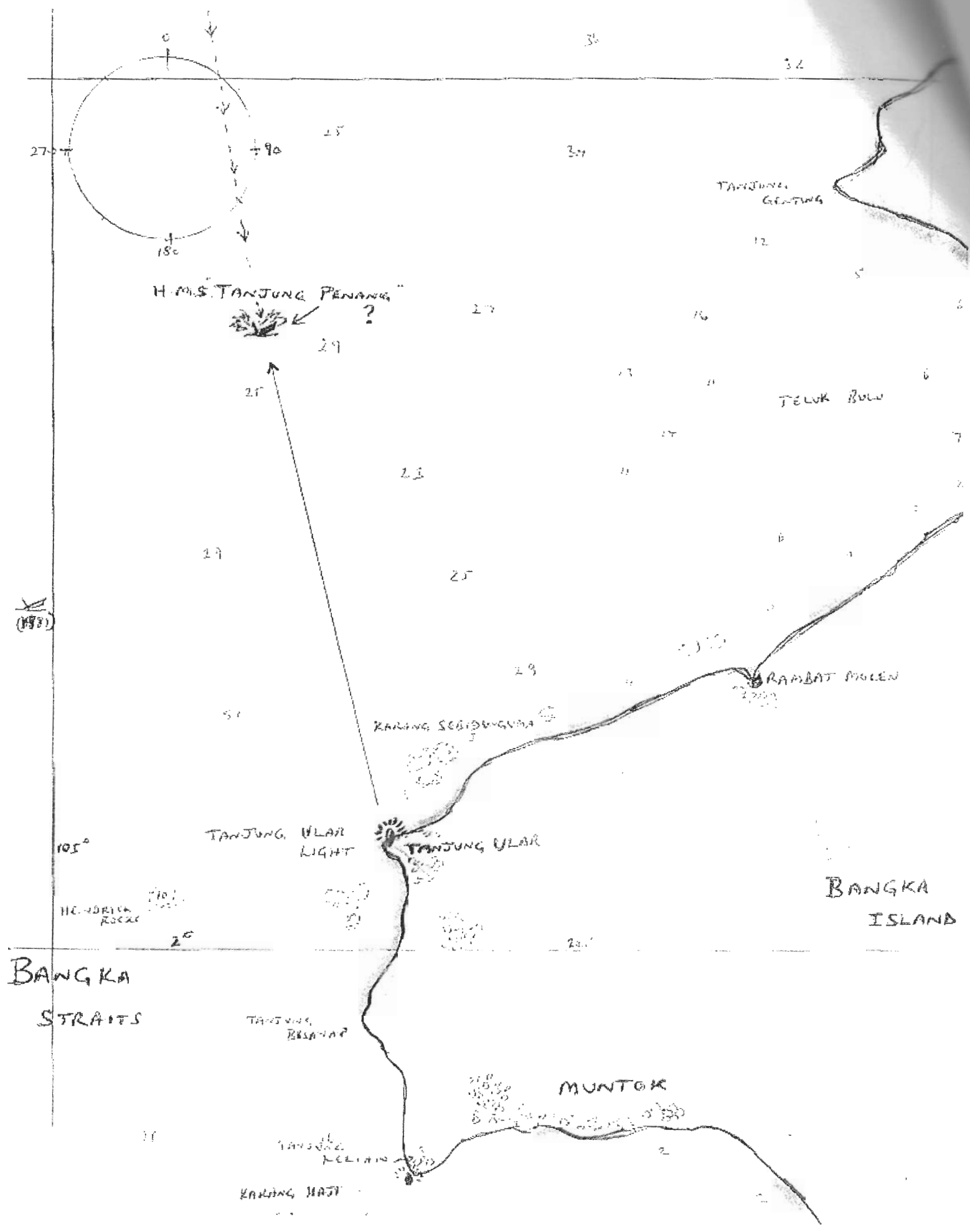




ON ACTIVE SERVICE

LANDON.—Previously reported missing, now officially presumed killed in the sinking of the S.S. "Tanjong Pinang," off Singapore, on Feb. 17, 1942. **PENELOPE MINNA LANDON**, Medical Auxiliary Service, Malaya, younger daughter of the late H. G. M. Conybeare and wife of J. M. P. Landon.





LAST WEEKS IN MALAYA
December 1941

This diary was written by AILEEN GRACE WALLACE, wife of FORBES WALLACE [Federated Malay States Police and The Black Watch (Territorial Army Reserve of Officers) attached to the 5th Battalion The Royal Norfolk regiment] and sister of NORMAN STANLEY WISE of National Employers Mutual, Singapore.
[By kind permission of her daughter Diana Ruffell (nee Wallace)]

According to the official communiqués given over the radio everything was under control in the North of Malaya, but when I was asked to meet the evacuee train from Penang and heard homeless people talk about the fall of that town, the position was obviously very much worse than we had been led to believe. I stood on the platform at Kuala Lumpur awaiting the train, wondering what I should be required to do. All ready in the waiting rooms and on the platform were camp beds, first aid kit, hot soup, tea and sandwiches. The train steamed in at 2.30 p.m. and where I had expected to see a mixture of races everyone I saw was European. I heard later that one Chinese amah had managed to board the train in the darkness of total blackout at Port Wellesley. My Chinese dentist, Mr. Cheok, told me a few days later that much ill-feeling had been caused among the non-European population by this evacuation of white people only. A few days after this Penang was in the hands of the Japanese.

Three hundred women and children tumbled out of the train, shocked, dirty and hungry. Amongst the crowd I found a woman I had known some years previously in Kuala Kangsar. I took her, and her two children, home for a few hours rest etc. The baby girl had lost her pants during the journey but her mother was quite past caring. The boy, about five years old, was blissfully unconscious of the danger they had been in and at one time during the evacuation had been lost. His mother told me that after days and nights of almost non-stop raids they had been ordered to leave by train at 2.00 a.m. the next morning, first having to cross to the mainland, Port Wellesley, by ferry. Raids were in progress at the time and while waiting for the train the boy disappeared in the darkness and the crowds. His mother, tired and anxious, with the baby on her hip, called him but there was no reply. She was shocked by the ordeal she had gone through during the previous week and felt no sorrow at her son's disappearance. Sometime during the crowded, uncomfortable journey the boy was returned to her by a woman to whom he had spoken when he realized he was lost. This sensible woman kept him by her side in the darkness until they had safely boarded the train and then walked through the carriages with him until he saw his mother.

I had strict instructions to see that they were at the station at 9.30 that evening for the continuation of their journey to Singapore. When I had done this I returned home to think seriously of our position. Up to that time I had been optimistic but that afternoon I had heard of events that had never been mentioned on the radio. We had been urged daily over the radio by the Governor Sir Shenton Thomas, and in the newspapers, to stay put and give a good example to the Asiatics, and up to a point the majority did do so until it became obvious to the residents of each town in turn, moving southwards, that the Japanese were not far from their doorstep and that to stay was inviting almost certain death. The Japanese had promised (by leaflets) that no prisoners would be taken on their march of victory. This, of course, did not apply to the Asiatics except those in British uniforms. The civilian Asiatics would be left to carry on with essential work. As each town in turn received its share of air-raids many of the Asiatic population left their jobs and moved out of town. After Kuala Lumpur's first raid my amah gave notice and left as soon as she had packed her belongings. Munisamy, my Indian cook, remained his usual imperturbable self. Nothing ever seemed to worry him. He would stare into the sky when a raid was in progress and inform me that there were six Japanese planes to every one of our outdated Brewster Buffaloes. At first I tried to argue but it was useless because he was always right. All civilian wives were in the same predicament as myself when I began to wonder what sense there was in obeying the Governor when we knew that our husbands would retreat with the Army. Men who were normally in civilian occupation were members of the Volunteers and as such were now front line fighting men. In the evening of December 23rd 1941 my husband returned and told me that the children and I must leave in 24 hours time. I realized I must take only cases that I could manage myself, so I prepared one suitcase of warm clothes, a small case containing my clothes and a similar one of the children's clothes and finally a case containing shoes and medicines. I kept wanting to pack away some treasured material possession but tried to put them out of my mind and concentrate on necessities.

It was arranged that when the time came for my husband to leave, the cats would be left to fend for themselves and Paul, the dog, shot.

We left Kuala Lumpur on Christmas Eve by the night train. After a journey in which we stopped a few times in the middle of nowhere for reasons unknown to me, we arrived in Singapore at about 8.00 a.m. on Christmas Day. Naturally, there were no porters but Basil O'Connell, Chief Police Officer, Singapore, with whom we were to stay, had kindly sent a police car to meet us. A few days later I met a friend who journeyed down the night after we had left and she told me that just before the train was due to leave there

was a raid on K.L. and the engine driver and fireman disappeared into the ulu. Volunteers were asked for from amongst the passengers. The schoolboys' dream come true!

The O'Connell's house was full to overflowing and we three slept on mattresses on the floor. Nevertheless I am deeply indebted to the O'Connells for their kindness.

For two to three days I seemed to do little else than stand in queues, application to be evacuated (priority given to women with two or more children), customs – red tape! – bank etc. but once the formalities were completed I found it hard to wait with patience. The first softening-up raids had started on the island and the Japanese march southward was progressing. K.L. was in their hands before we left Singapore.

On December 31st I received instructions to go next morning not later than 10.00 a.m. to Quay No. 6 and board Ship No. 54, this I discovered later to be a Dutch ship "Marnix Van Sint Aldegonde", hastily commandeered for evacuees after she had disgorged her troops. Our cabin number was 81 and it seemed to me that I had been allotted all my lucky numbers. I scrounged a lift to the entrance to the docks but from the gate we had to make our own way to the ship which fortunately was not many minutes walk. We still had the same four cases, but I had discarded a few garments in favour of sweets, biscuits, Sunmaid Raisins and a large bottle of Horlicks. These proved more worthy of the space they occupied than the garments would have been and helped our morale greatly.

----- JOURNEY FROM SINGAPORE

During the week we were in Singapore there had been day and night raids of a mild kind, mostly aimed at the Naval Dockyard, the R.A.F. base at Seletar, and petrol dumps. On the day we left, 11a.m. on New Years Day 1942, these raids were stepped up until the capitulation of the city six weeks later.

Our ship was manned by Dutch officers and Javanese crew. They were all so kind and helpful, nothing seemed too much trouble.

Under the circumstances the food was plain but good but the attitude of some of the women made me ashamed. They complained about the food and the service as if it were a normal journey in peace time.

At Batavia, our only port of call, we took on a few deckchairs (presumably for the VIPs for I never saw them again) and lavatory seats. A kindly concession on the part of the authorities, for the ship was really a troopship and our presence was quite unexpected.

Most of the passengers were Singapore service wives and children being officially evacuated. Also on board were Air Chief Vice Marshal Sir Robert Brooke-Popham and his wife, Lady Layton from Penang and Brigadier Lyons, also of Penang. Sir Robert and his wife had quite a to-do with us, the un-official civilian evacuees from up-country. They criticized us for leaving when we had been asked to stay and set a good example to the Asiatics. The fact that we had no homes to stay in seemed beyond their comprehension. And anyway, what were the service wives doing?

We three kept very fit. Most of the other families were laid low with enteritis etc. and the two ginger-haired boys and their ginger-haired mother who shared our cabin developed whooping cough halfway through the voyage. I felt very sorry for them, but sorry for us too with the consequent disturbed nights. I just longed to stretch out on a proper bed or sit in a chair. There were chairs of the dining type in the smoke-room but that was an apt description of it so of course we never sat in there.

Our cabin was a normal two berth converted to hold five bunks, and we were six sharing it. Blankets and a pillow had been put on the floor under a bunk but I thought this a most unsuitable, and very dusty, place so Hugh and I slept head to toe. Occasionally, but very occasionally, the other occupants who had arrived first and "bagged" three bunks, would double up and give us room to sleep more comfortably. We spent as much time as possible in the fresh air as the cabin portholes below the promenade deck were permanently closed. (I suppose because of the danger of flooding if torpedoed.) A few days out of Durban we were allowed to open the porthole for an hour every day, Doctor's orders.

On some afternoons we slept in Mrs. Baker's cabin. It was above the promenade deck and therefore was allowed to have open portholes during daylight. Mrs. Baker was the wife of the Police Depot (Kuala Lumpur) Bandmaster and had five children. She made no effort to leave K.L. until I had put their names down, at the same time that I applied to leave Singapore, and had sent her a message that she and the children must appear in person to claim the berths offered, and therefore to get the first available transport.

We had orders to carry our lifebelts with us everywhere, even into the lavatory. Hugh was too small to carry his so I had to lug two around. He didn't like having to wear his belt every morning for life-boat drill but Captain's orders are not to be disobeyed. He shed a few tears but eventually got over the indignity when he saw that everyone else was undergoing the same hardship.

Many things were sent to try us but the children took them all in their stride and never complained unduly. Diana was a great help to me and was a most responsible little person.

The passengers included survivors from the "Prince of Wales" and "Repulse". I heard some first-hand accounts of the ignominious sinking of those two great battleships.

We had one burial at sea, a baby of four months who had died of pneumonia. The engines were stopped and not a soul spoke as the Captain read the service and the small flag-draped coffin slipped into the sea. I don't think I've ever done a voyage when there hasn't been a Sea Burial.

There were many speculations regarding our destination. Some folk hoped it would be Australia, others wanted South Africa and the Service wives said they knew they were bound for the U.K. Having relatives in both countries I didn't really mind so long as we three got there intact.

The ship followed a zig-zag course and three times we crossed the equator. The first time was between Singapore and Batavia, then we went northwards in the Indian Ocean to a position roughly opposite Bombay thereby crossing the Line for the second time. And finally we crossed it again on the southward journey to South Africa.

When this fact became apparent the speculation centred on whether the port of arrival would be Durban or Capetown. I hoped it would be the former so that I could more easily get in touch with my relatives. My uncle was a Marine Surveyor in Durban and in the course of his duties had to board nearly every ship that passed the Bluff.

Basil O'Connell had advised me not to go to the U.K. if at all possible to remain elsewhere, and now on arrival in Durban the authorities gave the same advice – so long as one could show that one was in receipt of enough money to live there. They did not want those who had lost contact with ready money, as in the case of wives whose husbands were employed in private firms and who literally did not know where their next penny was coming from.

THE F.M.S.V.F. AND S.S.V.F. CONNECTION
by Donald E. Ruffell

In late 1980, my late father-in-law, Forbes Wallace, C.P.M., who was in the Federated Malay States Police before and after the Second World War, published his book "Wartime Interlude of a Temporary Soldier, 1941-1945". (Published in September 1980, printed by Thorndike & Dawson Ltd., Norwich – a private publication, copies of which are lodged with the Imperial War Museum and the Royal Norfolk Museum in Norwich.) In it he explains that in the Autumn of 1977 he came across a diary which he had kept during the Malayan Campaign and the period when he was a POW of the Japanese in Singapore from 1942-1945. The diary was very much an abridged version of the original which he had destroyed for security reasons.

However, a number of references remained to members of the Federated Malay States Volunteer Force and the Straits Settlements Volunteer Force and I thought these might be of interest to fellow members. Writing of the retreat of the 5th Battalion The Royal Norfolk Regiment and the 2nd Battalion the Cambridgeshire Regiment from Senggarang, my father-in-law records that "The Malays climbed coconut trees to get us nuts and drew water from their wells to quench the thirst of our weary troops. I pressed on ahead, leaving Lieut. Bob Carey of the FMS Volunteers to lead our tired party and to await further instructions at Kampong Benut on the Benut River". In an appendix listing all the officers of the 5th Norfolks there is an indication that Lieutenant Carey, like my father-in-law, was attached to the Battalion after its arrival in Singapore.

In the section headed "Second Visit to Farrer Park" he says "For the next few weeks in April I volunteered to work in our gardens under some of our Malayan Agricultural Department officers who had been in the F.M.S. Volunteers – one of whom I remember by name, Dicky Frampton. These working parties were all composed of officer volunteers". Moving forward to 1944, he writes "From May to July I was fortunate to be in charge of a small party engaged in collecting coconuts for the main camp cookhouse. The party was made up of four members of the F.M.S.V.F and four of the A.I.F. The volunteers were all rubber planters – Jock Pearce from Tapah, Jim Kennedy from Kalumpang, Gerry Cameron from Kedah and Jack Harveson from Bidor. The great attraction of this fatigue was that we were able to use coconuts ourselves, grated and boiled up with our rice ration, as we were not required to go back to camp for our midday meal. It was shady in the coconut grove and we were a very happy party". Finally, in explaining the administration of P.O.W. Camps under Japanese control, he says "Lt.-Col. Galleghan of the A.I.F. assumed duties as the Allied officer". Col. Galleghan was in due course succeeded by Lt.Col. T.H.Newey of the S.S.V.F. He had been Director of Posts and Telegraphs in Singapore and it was not long before his camp H.Q. became known to us as Mount Pleasant. He was ably assisted by Capt. John Peel, another Malayan Volunteer but from the F.M.S.V.F. He was an M.C.S. officer and had great organizing ability. After the war he became Resident Commissioner for the Gilbert and Ellice Islands, retiring at a very early age to become a Conservative M.P.

Do any of the people and events mentioned above evoke any memories amongst fellow members?

RODERICK MACLEAN OBE MCS 11/6/1921 – 16/5/2008 – who oversaw the evacuation of the Cocos Islands.
by Audrey Holmes McCormick.

[MCS: Malayan Civil Service

NB* - *the spelling of surnames IS correct...*]

Roderick MacLean was born in Cardiff on 11th June, 1921, the youngest of three boys, to Freda Kilner and Robin McLean*, Professor of Botany at Cardiff University 1919-55. Roderick, a pupil at Oundle School – spelling his surname differently from his father – enjoyed a greatly happy childhood roaming the countryside of South Wales with his brothers: but he retired to Edinburgh.

The war interrupted his Cambridge studies for the Overseas Civil Service. He first served in the Cheshire Regiment 1940-41. He then joined the largest group of Volunteer soldiers in the UK influence: the 3 million Indian Army. He went to OTS in Bangalore, then was commissioned into the 7th Bn. 19th Baluch Regiment (*or 7/10th Baluch*) with which he went through the Burma Campaign, the Chin Hills and Imphal campaigns. At the Sittang River Retreat he had to swim across when his armoured vehicle was shot from under him at a road block: his fellow commander was killed. He was rank of Major when released to resume his education. His C.O. – Brigadier John Randle OBE MC – in his book *'Battle Tales from Burma'*, described Roderick as “unflappable; resolute; laconic – with a sardonic sense of humour”.

Roderick returned to St. Johns College, Cambridge, in 1948, completing a 3-year Honours Degree BA in 2 years: then attended the Colonial Devonshire Training Course at Cambridge and University of London and joined the Malayan Civil Service, going first to Singapore as a Colonial Officer in 1950, working in the old Colonial Secretariat in Empress Place until he went as Administrator to the coral islands of the Cocos-Keelings, then part of Singapore. These islands were shortly to be evacuated. Australia would take over. He was to oversee the islanders' departures which, however, would be *voluntary*. He was to carry it out 'by local custom'. It seems certain this place and its hard-working people, whom he came to so admire, were a particularly happy episode in his civil service career – carried out without the bitter aftermath of enforced British evacuations elsewhere, which had or would occur.

These once uninhabited islands were first recorded by a Capt. Keeling in 1609, but had been governed and developed only since 1829, under one family, the Clunies-Ross (a Shetland family, the origins showing in the Shetland-style small craft they developed for local fishing). The principle basic food – rice – had to be shipped in regularly however. And there was little truly fresh water. Outgoing trade was principally copra (coconut).

During the war it was kept secret that the undersea-cable facilities between the UK and Australia, maintained by Cable & Wireless on Direction Island, were still functioning despite having sent out false news they were closing down. However a skeleton staff remained at the station, left as if derelict, after a Japanese ship had beaten it up. In fact it was fully operative. Throughout the war a merchant ship – amazingly – always got through safely to deliver essential supplies from Sri Lanka, despite the Japanese-controlled waters. (The delivery of a very long-standing order for a “rather good” Scottish whisky – so Roderick described it – called 'Victoria Vat' {not now available} may not have been in abeyance either).

The Clunies Ross Estate had run an excellent apprenticeship scheme so that Cocos islanders had a high degree of manual skills. The family, the “rulers”, had first flown a Dutch flag when they settled there (the Dutch being close neighbours then), but in 1856 the Admiralty sent a ship to formally possess Cocos Island – however it was to the Cocos-Keelings – the wrong Cocos – it had sailed. So in 1856 the Cocos-Keelings were unwittingly annexed, and a notice was installed declaring the islands now part of the realm of Queen Victoria. The notice was still on its hut when Roderick got there.

The Colony was formally handed to Australia in 1956, along with Christmas Island. Australia wished to control the airstrip at Cocos, which to Singapore was of no economic or strategic importance. Thus, Roderick officiated. The islands no longer produced revenue: islanders' incomes were lessening: also the people were of a different stock to Singapore. They would be offered new homes in a choice of places in Sabah, or west coast Australia. “But this migration was absolutely voluntary”, Roderick said, “in marked contrast to the people from Chagos who, having lived on Chagos for up to a hundred years, we forcibly re-settled in Mauritius. They have made strenuous efforts to return, but in 2004 our Government passed an Order in Council forbidding it. I find this rather disgraceful. They *still* attempt to return home.

But when it was first mooted that Cocos should be transferred to Australia, there was still a Labour Government in Britain. Winston Churchill asked, ‘Have the locals been consulted?’ The answer was they hadn't, so the wires burned. So, right: we have to consult the locals. That was quite a problem because only a handful of them, three or four, had been abroad – Batavia perhaps. Most had never left Cocos. Their knowledge of the rest of the world was virtually nil. How do you explain to them a major Constitutional change?

I called a Grand Durbar and the entire population came to the garden of John Clunies Ross's house. I explained to them: you have seen the governor of Singapore, because he has been here. He is my boss. He gets his orders from King George VI, and he passes them on to me. I am the man on the spot. King George has decided that in future he will send his Orders to his Big Man in Canberra. And he will tell me what to do. It is just a change of

bosses. 'Are you happy?' I asked them. They said if the Tuan thinks it's OK, then we have no problem. So the locals had been consulted and didn't object. I don't think I could have done it any other way. I also had radio sets sent down from Singapore. I put them in the kampong for public hearing, and got some of the headmen into my house to listen on my more-powerful radio to Malay speakers from Singapore, and from Jakarta – because the Cocos Islander was a melange of different races, speaking what would now be called *Bahasa-Indonesi* – Malay with many Javanese words. Some were probably descended from Papua New Guinea: others were Cape Malay origin, maybe intermarried with Hottentots. Most were light skinned, with a minority of darker people, but all good looking. They had kept their religion, but lost their language."

He administered the migration between 1948-52, mainly to North Borneo, now Sabah. When he left in late 1951, the island population had reduced from 3,100 to about 500 Cocos Malays. "If you wanted to go, OK. If not, OK. The main problem was keeping the list of the people who wanted to go, ready for the next group. A husband might come and say he wanted on the next ship please. Right, list them down: but next night his wife would come and say 'I hear my husband has put his name down – cross it off!' (And it was usually the women who got their way). But my list was ever changing – we're going – we're not going. It was not that the wife wanted to follow her husband necessarily – they tended to follow their parents. If the parents were going, she wanted to go. If the husband didn't want to go, that was just too bad.

So several parties asked to be divorced. So they were officially divorced – I was the Registrar of Muslim Births, Deaths and Marriages, one of my many hats. So they had to come to the Court on Saturday and be recorded and that was it. But the Headman reported to me that two couples were continuing to co-habit, so wearing my "King's Proctor" habit, I annulled their divorce because they clearly were not divorced! So only two families actually broke up over the question to go, or not to go.....but the older generation commanded great respect, and it was true the younger ones tended to follow the parents: the wife's parents, or the husband's parents. But for the 500 who wanted to stay, whenever a ship left there would be heart-rending scenes on the jetty as they said goodbye. Great wailing and weeping – then after an hour, it was as if nothing had happened at all! They had got it out of their system."

Roderick worried for those going to two new settlements offered on the Australian west coast. Their experience of Aborigines was totally different. A mixed Australian reconnaissance party was sent him. He hammered home the message that these new Australians were a hard working, law abiding people, well disciplined and behaving well, brought up under the Ross's fairly authoritarian regime, fed on good fish, but probably with little resistance to diseases, having been isolated so long. The problem of a ship arrival bringing down a whole kampong with common colds, had been resolved by providing vitamins and a special diet. "But time has passed now. The islanders have caught up with the world. And they have progressed well, and industriously, and prosper. In fact they are doing very well indeed.

In the MCS we were taught to believe we were Trustees running the place for the benefit of locals. By and large I think we did. I make no apologies for the Colonial Era in the Far East. But Raffles played a considerable part in laying down acceptable conduct in the way we should behave and on the whole we did a good job, and we left the place considerably better than we found it."

Roderick went to Malaya in 1954 as District Officer in Ulu Kelantan state, with the Malayan Ministry of Education for 5 years. But in 1963 he was invited to join the North Borneo Civil Service, now Sabah – first as State Development Officer in Tenom District (again in touch with Cocos-Keeling islanders). The next year he became responsible for the first Five-Year Malaysian Development Plan in Sabah and received the OBE in 1968. He took plans back to Kuala Lumpur, to Deputy P.M. Tun Razak whom he already knew well, who was masterminding the development of new Malaysia – although Roderick soon saw that Sabah Malays, with different ancestry, were not the same Malays as those of Peninsula Malaysia. In 1967 he transferred to the Colonial Secretariat in Hong Kong, and ten years later was back in the greatly changing Singapore. He became the second full-time executive of the Singapore International Chamber of Commerce, setting up the Federation of Chambers; acting as the Chamber's first Secretary-General through the independence period, to complete 43 years in the Far East. He wrote a history of the International Chamber of Commerce: *A Pattern of Change*.

Never a dull moment, he said. He retired to Edinburgh in 1988 intending to write the Cocos-Keeling history, and vent his criticism of the other British compulsory evacuations he believed brutally carried out. But health did not permit.

Roderick had adopted a son in Singapore, Paul Chia, whom he had helped to educate. He also regarded a Cocos-islander as an adopted son (now Hj. Hautman, who migrated to Sabah: but a practising Muslim cannot be formally adopted by a non-Muslim.) Hautman with his wife often accompanied Roderick, but also helped Roderick's parents at home in their old age. Roderick later helped him and his family build a modern house in Sabah. Roderick MacLean died in Edinburgh after a long illness, with Paul Chia beside him. He and Hj. Hautman and Roderick's own nieces and nephews survive him.

TWO MORE EVACUATION SHIPS

The RUYS – arrived in Sydney 20th January 1942 from Batavia with 75 passengers. (No known MVG members' families):

The VAN HOUTZ – arrived in Sydney 26th January 1942 from Batavia/Soerabaia with 68 passengers. Stephanie Hess's grandmother and children were aboard this ship. [ARE THERE ANY MORE EVACUEES MVG MEMBERS KNOW OF?]

INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Enid Innes-Ker writes:-

Thank you for the latest number of 'Apa Khabar', which is full of interest. I found the list of members with the details very interesting, and it leaves me feeling I can't have given you much information about my husband and myself. So, I am writing with some further information which you may like to use at some future date, when issuing another list of members. My husband was a Sergeant 1/SSVF (Scottish Company) and taken prisoner at Changi. Then in April 1943 he went in "F" Force to the Burma-Siam railway in Songkurai camp. About 4 months later, with the less than 400 survivors of the 1600 who went into the camp, he was sent to Thanbayuzayat in Burma, and then back to Changi prison in December 1943. I left Singapore on 1st February 1942 on the KPM cattle boat "ROCHUISSEN" with a party from the Malaya Broadcasting Corporation to run a ghost station in Batavia on Singapore's wavelength if Singapore should come off the air. This shut down when Singapore fell and on 16th February 1942 I left Tjilatjap in Java on the "JAGERSTONTEIN" bound for Australia. After 3 months in Sydney I left for Britain on the "MONAWAI" landing in Stranraer. I spent the rest of the war working in the BBC in London. We returned to Singapore after the war, where my husband worked in Harper, Gilfillan & Co. Ltd. and we retired in 1958. (Editor: These details will be added to the Members' List next year.)

Katherine Muirhead writes:-

I have just read, for the first time, in the April newsletter, your mother's wonderful story about surviving the sinking of the Ulysses and her (and your!) rescue. Isn't it amazing what our parents went through and how they coped in those times? Presumably you were blissfully unaware of it all, but how wonderful to still have the teddy bear. My first (and only) teddy was a rather rotund, black, hand-knitted chap, promptly named Pooh, which/who was made for me by the community at the Kuala Reman (Pahang) Rubber Estate where my father was a planter. After he went missing in the 1948 Emergency, and it was discovered my mother was pregnant with me, she was sent a box of soft toys "for the baby". Pooh was specially made for me, as was a little black straw-filled Scottie dog. Sadly, I no longer have either of them.....there is so little else one has. I have a couple of interesting stories about my father's life in Pahang which I heard from friends of his rather than from family. My mother also died when I was young, my father was an only child and his father retired to South Africa before WW2 and I never met him, so you see, there was really nobody who knew my father other than my mother! – and one did not talk about those times (well, one's Granny and stepfather would not allow it – in case it was too hurtful for my mother!). Little did we know that she would have relished the chance to talk about my father if it were not for fear of upsetting my stepfather. Oh dear, the intricacies of family life.... I did not even know what my father looked like until I was 14. My best friend from boarding school was having a weekend at our farm. My mother adored her, and when my friend – completely innocently and out of the blue – asked my mother if she had any photos of my father, my mother's face lit up and she dredged some photos out of a trunk to show us all. My sister and I thought a bolt of lightning would hit the moment my friend, Robyn Callow (cousin of Simon Callow) raised the erstwhile forbidden subject, but quite the reverse happened.although I could not have had a kinder stepfather or a more idyllic upbringing, I was convinced, until I was 14, that my father was alive, and was going to sweep in one day and "rescue" me and take me to my "proper" home. Katherine also writes that her e-mail address has been changed to:-

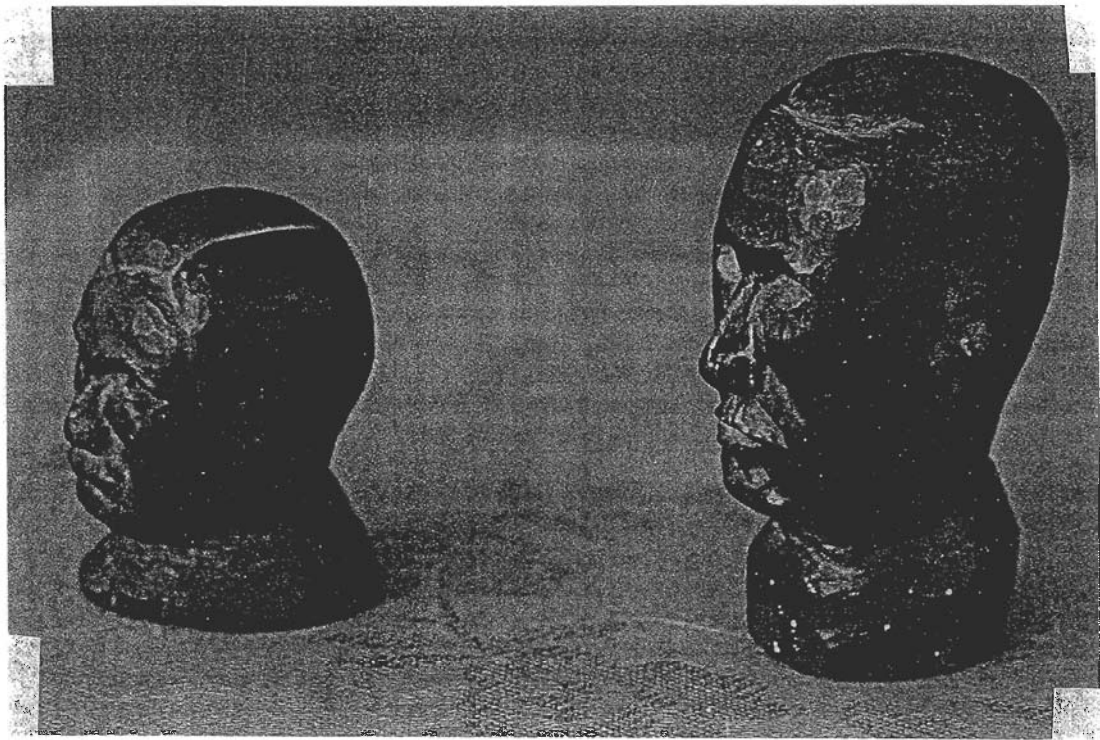
landkmuirhead@westnet.com.au

Audrey Holmes McCormick writes:-

The Battle of Kampar, it is now officially announced, will be commemorated in a Memorial Park on Green Ridge – one of the hillside spurs where British and Indian troops were dug in, and where these defences can still be seen on the ground. A documentary called "Remembrance" has been made by one Harchand Singh Bedi, who took six months in London and Canberra to research the battle. It was shown to Ipoh State Government officials. Mr. Singh calls it "one of the toughest battles during WW 2", and included possibly the last bayonet charge from the trenches, to be made in WW2. He intends to liaise with Museum and Cultural and Heritage museums in building the park. There is no mention of Chye Kooi Loong, the Chinese retired teacher and resident of Kampar from childhood, who has continued over many years to promote the idea of making the battle site into a Park. He personally showed me the remains of the foxholes, unders still open on the hillsides, where – perhaps – the last open bayonet charge took place, and a VC was under consideration. **Note:-** See previous mentions of the Battle of Kampar in 'Apa Khabar' Editions 6 and 14.

June Wingate writes:-

I enclose 2 photos, profile and full face of 2 little carvings David Rintoul (June's first husband) did in POW Camps in Thailand, between 1942-45, though I do not know the exact year. I do not know who they represent, but they are probably amateur portraits, carved with a penknife. I doubt if anyone would recognize them at this distance.



OBITUARIES

PROFESSOR MARY TURNBULL (widow of Leonard Rayner).

It was on the eve of the Presentation of the Memorial Board to the Changi Museum, in Singapore, that the MVG learned of the unexpected and tragic death of Mary Turnbull. One of the MVG's founder members, Mary would have been delighted that the Volunteers have, at last, been honoured in the island which she loved and lived in for many years. We send our very sincere sympathies to her daughter Penny and to all her family.

Entitled "Expert on Singapore history dies at 81", a detailed account of her association with Singapore and Malaya was recorded in The Straits Times on Thursday 11th September. In 1952, Mary took up a post in the Malayan Civil Service, and remained there until 1955. She then switched careers and began teaching history at the University of Malaya and then the University of Singapore. In 1971, she went on to teach at the University of Hong Kong, where she rose to become head of the history department. Her authoritative work on Singapore's past, entitled "A History of Singapore", was published in 1977. It has often been cited as a 'must-read' for anyone wanting to learn about Singapore's past. But it was another of her works, "The Straits Settlements" which was cited by the Government of Singapore in claiming sovereignty over Pedra Branca in the International Court of Justice last year.

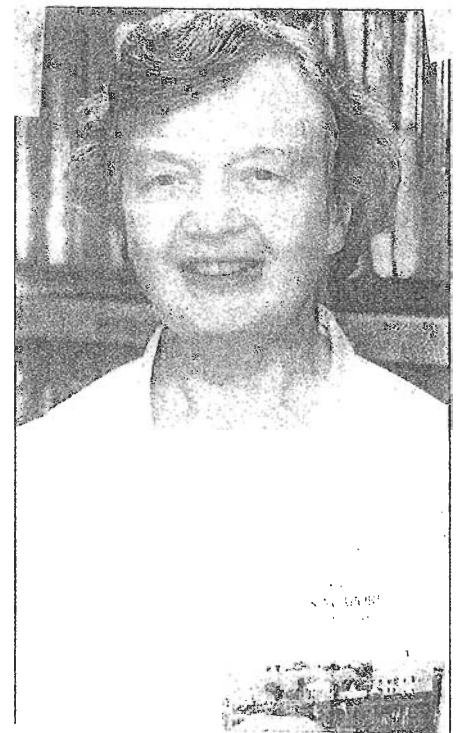
Among the books she wrote after retirement was a history of The Straits Times to mark the paper's 150th anniversary in 1995. She was asked to write it because of her intimate knowledge of Singapore's past. Called "Dateline Singapore: 150 Years of the Straits Times", the book took her a few years to complete.

Mr. Cheong Yip Seng who worked with her on the book, said that he was very sorry to hear of her death and said of her book, "I think she did a wonderful piece of work".

Professor Turnbull had been working on the third edition of her book, "A History of Singapore", when she died. Following a routine check-up, doctors discovered a tear in her aorta, but sadly they were not able to operate in time to save her. Her daughter said that she had been in good health in the days before her death.

PHYLLIS THOM

As reported in the Daily Telegraph on 24th September, Phyllis Thom has died aged 100. The harrowing account of her ordeal at the hands of the Japanese in prison camp on the island of Sumatra, is in the Imperial War Museum, in the form of an abbreviated diary.



Noted historian Mary Turnbull with her seminal work on Singapore's past, A History Of Singapore. ST FILE PHOTO

In December 1941, Phyllis Briggs (her maiden name) was one of 4 nurses at the General Hospital in Alor Star. Very soon after the Japanese invaded northern Malaya and fighting broke out, all European women were evacuated, followed 4 days later by the Nurses. In January 1942, she found herself in Singapore, nursing air raid victims in a maternity hospital. Finally on Friday 13th February 1942, she escaped from the beleaguered Singapore aboard the *Mata Hari*, a cargo ship carrying 320 passengers instead of the 9 she usually accommodated. Two other vessels which left at the same time – the *Kuala* and the *Vyner Brooke* were sunk – but in the face of hopeless odds, the ship surrendered, and the passengers were put ashore on Banka Island. The men and women were separated and systematically robbed of all their valuables by the Japanese. Phyllis managed to hide her jewellery in a headscarf and in later years this proved invaluable as a means of bartering for food. Their first 'camp' was at Muntok, where they were joined by the survivors of other sinkings, including Vivian Bullwinkel from the *Vyner Brooke* – sole survivor from the massacre of 22 Australian nurses by the Japanese. Other camps followed in the 3½ years of imprisonment. Despite becoming seriously ill herself at one stage, she did all she could for the sick and dying. She joined the camp choir, which sang music scored for them from memory by Margaret Dryburgh, a missionary teacher. It included 'The Captives Hymn' written for the choir by Margaret Dryburgh, who sadly died on 21st April 1945, before the war ended. The film "Paradise Road" tells the story of the choir, and how it helped to give the women internees the will to keep going. Amongst all the deaths in the camps, which became a daily occurrence, one was to affect her greatly. This was the death of her friend Mary Jenkin on 16th August 1945, the day after the war had ended. Mary's husband, Charlie, had died in the men's camp, but Mary was determined to live for the sake of her son, Robert, who was in England. Phyllis promised to visit Robert when she got home.

Phyllis was evacuated to hospital in Singapore, weighing 6 stones. Later she helped with the sad task of telling returning survivors of the POW camps what had happened to their wives interned in Sumatra. She discovered that her own fiancé was missing, presumed dead.

After the war, she returned to Malaya to nurse and in 1947 married Robbie Thom, who became head of the Malayan Police Special Branch before moving to Guyana. He died in 1967, and Phyllis moved to Bournemouth. She is survived by 2 daughters and we extend them our very sincere sympathies.

Note: "The Captives Hymn" was read at the MVG V-J Day Service in the Memorial Garden at Alrewas in August.

Late news:- We are sad to report the death of Betty Kenneison, relative of MVG member George Hess'e. In 1942, as a 15 year old girl, captured by the Japs, she was 'adopted' in the Sumatra prison camps by Nursing Sister Vivian Bullwinkel.

Lieutenant-Commander Ian Fraser, VC

The death of Lt. Commander Fraser was reported in the Telegraph on 3rd September. He won the Victoria Cross for his part in "Operation Struggle" involving the mining and holing of the Japanese 10,000-ton heavy cruiser *Takao* in the Johore Straits just before the end of the war. As captain of the midget submarine XE3, he sailed from Labuan, towed by the submarine *Stygian*, with his crew of 3, to the eastern end of the Singapore Channel. From there, they made their way between Singapore Island and the Johore mainland until they reached their target, navigating in the process some of the highly dangerous wrecks, shoals and mine fields. At one point the submarine had to dive hurriedly to avoid a tanker, hitting the bottom and damaging the logs which measured speed and distance. 19 hours after leaving their tow, without sleep, they began their attack. The *Takao* was lying in very shallow water but across a depression in the seabed. Lt. Commander Fraser had to manoeuvre the submarine carefully under the cruiser so that the limpet mines could be attached to the hull, and 2 side-charges could be released, one of which became stuck and had to be manually placed in position.

XE3 returned to the *Stygian* without further incident, and was towed back to Labuan. The charges detonated successfully, blowing a great hole in *Takao*'s bottom, but after the war, it was revealed that the Japanese Navy had already written her off, and there was only a skeleton crew on board.

Fraser's memoirs "Frogman VC" were published in 1957 and he died on 1st September 2008, aged 87.

John Burrows.

John Burrows worked in the wartime code-breaking office at Bletchley Park in the Japanese Section. He started his wartime work in Singapore as a sergeant on the intelligence staff, and witnessed the shambles of the British defence of Malaya during the Japanese invasion. He was on duty the night of the invasion and reported, "I remember sitting there and seeing Japanese aircraft flying overhead and dropping bombs on parts of Singapore, which were still brilliantly lit up". He was told by a superior officer that there was only one telephone line from Kota Bahru to Singapore at that time.

Burrows was very outspoken and scathing in what he said about the attitude and ability of the military to defend Malaya. He said, "The planter society was very comfortable and had always been able to depend on the British to defend them. They totally underestimated Japanese military power. All able generals were collected in the Middle East, and it was the duds who were shipped out to the Far East, some of them with no understanding of reality at all. It was cloud-cuckoo land and to someone like myself who had come from wartime Britain it was unbelievable."

He was evacuated to Java and back to Britain to brief the War Office. Later he was sent to Bletchley Park where he became a captain in charge of a section which analysed decrypted material from the Far East and Pacific theatre.

John Burrows died on 28th August 2008 aged 96.

A DEBT OF HONOUR FOR THE GURKHAS – Quote from the Editorial page in the Daily Telegraph on 17/9/08

"Lance Corporal Gyanendra Rai served more than 13 years with the 7th Gurkha Rifles and was seriously wounded in the Falklands conflict."

Other Gurkhas have been refused permission to settle in this country; refused entry; and face deportation.

These decisions have been made by a Government which allows foreign criminals and terrorists to stay here – because of their 'human rights'. The Gurkhas **ARE** British – or should be looked on as British. They have fought for and been loyal to this country and the Crown for nearly 200 years. What an absolute disgrace that they should be treated as dispensable when they are no longer of any use to the army – and what about their **HUMAN RIGHTS?**

On 16th September, the Gurkhas took their fight to the High Court for their **RIGHT** to settle in Britain if they wish to do so, arguing that the country owed them a "special debt" of gratitude. Supported by the actress Joanna Lumley, whose father served with the 6th Gurkha Rifles, the Gurkhas marched to the High Court to make their case. Among those lining the streets to support the marchers were Lachhiman Gurung VC and Bahadur Pun VC.

An outline of their grievances can be re-read in the April 2008 edition of "Apa Khabar".

STOP PRESS: High Court decides in favour of Gurkhas for right to settle in U.K. 30/9/08
Martin Howe, Solicitor, said it was a "wonderful day"a victory for common sense, fairness and for what's right.

SALE OF POWs WARTIME DIARIES, MEDALS and PHOTOGRAPHS.

These valuable items were sold at auction in August this year for the sum of £320 to a private collector. Private Arthur Haines, of the Royal Norfolk Regiment, witnessed the massacre of over 200 people in a hospital in Singapore, where he was recovering from malaria. (Probably the Alexandra Hospital). He managed to jot down details of the episode in a four-page letter. Later, after he was taken prisoner, he was sent to the Burma-Siam Railway. He died in 1996, and his documents were handed down to his daughter who put them up for sale this year.

JAPAN'S PM REFUSES TO VISIT YASUKUNI SHRINE.

Amid criticisms from prominent extreme right wing politicians and members of the public, Japan's Prime Minister, Yasuo Fukuda, broke with tradition and refused to attend the ceremony at the Yasukuni Shrine on the anniversary of Japan's surrender in WW2. Instead, he attended a separate ceremony honouring the 2.5 million Japanese who died during the war, and expressed his country's remorse for the pain it inflicted in the war, and offered his humble condolences for all the people who fell victim. He was joined at the ceremony by Emperor Akihito, whose father Hirohito surrendered 63 years ago.

Japanese researchers are also trying to trace British POWs from photographs which have come to light recently. Taken in 1944 in Yoshima Camp, near the coalmine in Fukushima Prefecture 150 miles north of Tokyo, the photos show prisoners celebrating Christmas, and others sitting for group photos.

Does anyone know who they are?



otographs of prisoners of war taken at Yoshima Camp, 150 miles north of Tokyo, have emerged after being hidden since the end of the Second World War

BOOKS

Reviewed by Jonathan Moffatt.

'**Stranger in the House** – Women's stories of men returning from the Second World War' by Julie Summers. [Simon & Schuster 2008] 363 pages. ISBN 978-0-74329-552-9. Cover price BPS 18.99

Julie Summers is best known to us as the author of 'The Colonel of Tamarkan,' a biography of her grandfather Brigadier Philip Toosey. In this, her fourth book, she explores the theme of servicemen returning home in 1945 from the perspective of wives,

children and even grandchildren.

The stories are many and varied with a good balance between returning servicemen from the Far East and those returning from Europe. There are wives who had to deal with emotionally damaged husbands; children who had never seen their fathers before; those who assumed their fiancés had died only to find them reappearing after they had married another; and women who had illegitimate children following wartime affairs. There are also those who had happier, less complicated reunions.

The book also draws on two interesting 1940s sources: the thoughts and observations of Barbara Cartland who lost two brothers in May 1940 and the Women's Own 'agony aunt' column of Leonora Eyles to whom many women turned for advice. The lack of adequate provision for returning servicemen and their families in the 1940s strikes a chord with the reader who observes contemporary events as soldiers return from Iraq and Afghanistan.

Two Malayan Volunteers Group members, Stephanie Hess and Jen Howe contributed their stories and engaging photos to the book. Jen Howe recalls 'For the first five years of my life it was mum and me.' She has no memory of her father's return but did remember a tall, dark man who turned out to be grandfather, also returned from Japanese captivity.

There was Meg Parkes' mother, a talented and highly regarded doctor who gave up her career to devote her life to her FEPOW husband – this was expected by him, his parents and to some extent by society.

Stephen Rockcliffe describes his turbulent childhood and how for years he believed he was different from anyone else. Jean Roberts, whose father was beaten, tortured and sentenced to death by the Japanese for stealing biscuits, recalls her father's later rages and her feeling of being excluded. Australian Di Elliott always wondered why 'I had to be the only one with a miserable father' and only discovered the answer long after his death. This quest to find out more led Di and others like Stephanie Hess, who was left her grandfather's captivity diary, into extensive research.

This well researched book is altogether an interesting and original read. **J.M.**

"To Japan To Lay A Ghost". By Peter S. Rhodes. Published by Changi University Press, Singapore. ISBN 978-981-08-1459-5 Presented to all those attending the Official Launch of the book on 12th September 2008, in the presence of the Guest of Honour His Excellency Mr. S.R. Nathan, President of the Republic of Singapore.

These are a gunner's humorous anecdotes from notes made on any scrap of paper available at the time, from six years of WW2, through India and the whole of the Malayan Campaign, and followed by 3½ years as a prisoner of the Japanese. The story covers life in Changi, stevedoring in Singapore docks, and coal mining in Kyushu, Japan. After 25 years of intense hatred of the Japanese, the author went back to Japan to find his personal enemy, and thereby to lay the ghost of the war.

"Sold for Silver". By Janet Lim. Published by Monsoon Books, Singapore. ISBN 978-981-05-1728-1

An autobiography of a girl sold into slavery in Southeast Asia. Born in China, Janet Lim was sold as a *mui tsai*, or slave girl, in 1930s Singapore. Freed from child bondage, she was educated by missionaries and trained as a nurse. Evacuated on the ill-fated 'Kuala' she was rescued by Indonesian fishermen, but captured and imprisoned by the Japanese on Sumatra. She escaped to avoid becoming a 'Comfort Woman', but was caught and tortured. Post war she found happiness in Australia.

"The Boat – Singapore Escape and Cannibalism at Sea". By Walter Gibson. Published by Monsoon Books, Singapore. ISBN 978-981-05-8301-9. A true account of an horrific event – 4 lived out of 135 survivors in a lifeboat built to carry 28 people.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

LONDON LUNCH – Saturday, 4th October

A report on the Lunch is included with the newsletter. It was well supported and enjoyed by all who attended.

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY – 9TH November 2008

There are a few tickets left if anyone wishes to take part in the Service at the Cenotaph, and March Past. Please contact Rosemary Fell for details – tickets will be issued later, but have not yet arrived. Those who have taken part in previous years know that the MVG takes great pride in attending, and members enjoy a leisurely lunch at "The All Bar One" afterwards.

NEW PASSWORD FOR THE WEBSITE.

Please note:- The password for entry into reading "Apa Khabar" has been changed **FROM** "taiping" **TO** "selangor".

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

Once again the MVG is indebted to SJA Accountants Ltd. for preparing the annual accounts from 6/4/07 – 5/4/08, **AT NO COST TO THE MVG**. If you would like a copy of the accounts, please send a SAE to Rosemary Fell. A copy of the Income and Expenditure Sheet is enclosed with the newsletter. The MVG thanks the Accountants for their kindness.

CONTACTS

JONATHAN MOFFATT. For research on British Malaysians/Volunteer Forces/Argyll & Royal Marines.

49, Coombe Drive, Binley Woods, Coventry CV3 2QU. E-mail: JonathanMoffatt@aol.com Tel: 02476 545013

SANDY LINCOLN. For the MVG Lunch and contacts with other Volunteer Children.

19, Burke Street, Harrogate, Yorkshire HG1 4NR. E-mail: anlulinc@googlemail.com Tel: 01423 500351

ROSEMARY FELL. Editor of "Apa Khabar" /Membership/Subscriptions/Donations

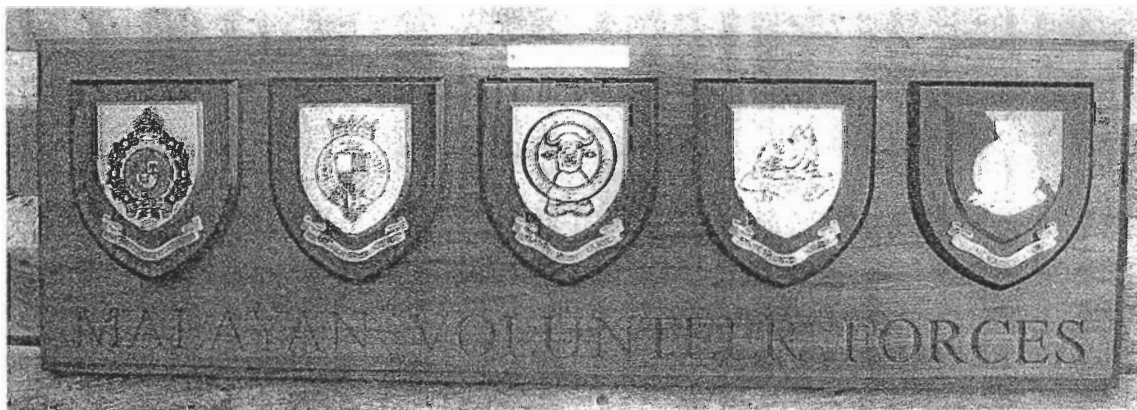
Millbrook House, Axminster, Devon EX13 5EE E-mail: dinraf-millbrook@tiscali.co.uk Tel: 01297 33045

UNVEILING CEREMONY OF THE MVG MEMORIAL BOARD AT CHANGI

September 12th, 2008 marked the 63rd anniversary of the formal surrender of the Japanese in Singapore. It was also the date of a very special occasion for the Malayan Volunteers Group – the Unveiling Ceremony of the MVG Memorial Board at the The Changi Museum in Singapore. This event, coupled with the launch of FEPOW Peter S. Rhodes' book "To Japan To Lay A Ghost" brought together people from all corners of the globe.

The idea of commemorating the Volunteer Forces at Changi originated in a conversation between Sandy Lincoln and Rosemary Fell a few years ago. The thought took on a momentum which culminated in a most moving and memorable occasion attended by the President of Singapore, His Excellency S.R. Nathan.

The teak wood plaque, beautifully crafted by Nicholas Shannon, displays five shields representing the various branches of the Volunteer Forces – Straits Settlements Volunteer Force, Federated Malay States Volunteer Force, Kelantan Volunteer Force, Johore Volunteer Engineers and Kedah Volunteer Force.



An informal dinner offered by the Changi Museum at the Singapore Cricket Club the evening before the Ceremony proved to be a wonderful ice-breaker. MVG members and friends, 16 in all, enjoyed the opportunity to meet author Peter S. Rhodes and his family, local Singaporeans and FEPOWS Jimmy Chew, George Prior, and our own George Hess'e who caused great delight with his pronouncement that he walked out of Changi three days after being captured because he "didn't like the food"!

The number of guests, which included the most efficient and charming staff members and associates of the Changi Museum, totaled roughly 40. A delicious buffet dinner, punctuated by much lively conversation, was rounded off by Mr. Jeyathurai (Jeya), Director of the Changi Museum, who warmly welcomed us all and introduced the FEPOWS to the room. He was followed by Mr. Razeen Chan, Assistant Curator of the Museum, who gave us an outline of the following day's events. FEPOW George Prior was asked to the podium and he led the room in a rousing series of inspirational songs that showed the spirit of hope and optimism which had carried him and his fellow FEPOWS through so many awful times.

It was a heart-warming finale to such a lovely evening.

The following day guests began arriving at Changi Museum from 2:00pm onwards. The number was doubled from the previous evening to include diplomatic representatives of Malaysia, Australia and New Zealand, members of St. John's Ambulance, the Singapore Tourism Board and others.

Refreshments were offered at the Bark Café, a pleasant open-air restaurant located beside the Museum and there was an air of anticipation as old friends and new gathered for the event.

Shortly before 3:00pm a bugle call announced the arrival of the Guest of Honour, Mr. S.R. Nathan, President of the Republic of Singapore. Rosemary Fell was amongst the group of five to receive him and his party at the entrance of the Museum. A second bugle call a few moments later was the signal for the 80 or so guests to take their seats in the event area by the Wartime Artist's Gallery and a final bugle call announced the entry of the President.

The Ceremony opened with warm words of welcome from Jeya. Razeen spoke next to introduce the book by Peter S. Rhodes, "To Japan To Lay A Ghost", which tells the story of his years as a soldier and prisoner of war, and describes his journey to Japan twenty-five years after Liberation to make peace with the man whose face haunted his dreams.

His daughter Janet spoke of her own experiences as a child of an ex-POW, and of the positive results and friendships that continue to this day from that healing journey made by her father nearly 40 years ago. The author then presented a signed copy of his book to the President.

Professor Brian Farrell, Deputy Head of the History Department at the National University of Singapore gave a clear and illuminating talk on the history of the Malayan Volunteer Forces.

Rosemary was introduced next. She spoke of the background of the Malayan Volunteer Forces and of the gradual development of the Malayan Volunteers Group, which began as an informal annual get-together over lunch by a handful of British Malaysians who had been in the Volunteer Forces. Rosemary described the special bond that the men in the Volunteer Forces shared, a bond which is still felt to this day by their descendants. Her moving account of her father Eric Reeve's time as a prisoner of war, his tragic death at the age of 36 at Chungkai, Thailand and her pride in his conduct as a member of the Malayan Volunteer Forces brought tears to the eyes of the guests.

Jeya invited Rosemary and the President to approach the long wall packed with shields, plaques, badges and medals. A pair of golden curtains hung above, waiting for this moment. President S.R. Nathan drew on the suspended cord, the curtains parted and the Malayan Volunteers Group Memorial Board was unveiled.

The Last Post sounded, followed by a minute's silence, with all standing and uniformed personnel saluting. The sounding of Reveille completed the Ceremony and the President was taken on a tour of the Museum as guests were invited to a reception at the Bark Café and were each the recipient of an autographed copy of Peter S. Rhodes' book.

The press, who had been clicking away throughout the event descended on Rosemary with a host of questions which she handled with great aplomb. The President joined the reception and before his departure posed for photos with the 4 FEPOWS attending, the author and his family, and the members and friends of MVG.

There was a great buzz as guests chatted with each other, and as the hours flew by the heat of the day gave way to the balmy evening air. A beautiful tropical moon shone down on the last remaining guests who reluctantly tore themselves away from what had been a day of reflection, emotion, remembrance and celebration.

Stephanie Hess – September 2008



MVG MEMBERS POSE WITH H.E. THE PRESIDENT AFTER THE UNVEILING



BUFFET DINNER AT THE SINGAPORE CRICKET CLUB – 11TH SEPTEMBER 2008

Back Row:- L to R. Sandy Lincoln, Rosemary Fell, Marilyn Hywel-Jones

Front Row:- L to R Stephanie Hess, Jennifer Jeyathurai.

UNVEILING OF MVG MEMORIAL BOARD BY H.E. THE PRESIDENT OF SINGAPORE – 12/9/08

The President pulls the string viewed left by Mr. Jeyathurai – Director of the Changi Museum – and right by Rosemary Fell – representing the MVG.

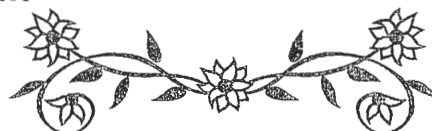


**Unveiling Ceremony of Second World War Memorial Plaque from the
Malayan Volunteers Group (MVG)
and Launch of *To Japan to Lay a Ghost* (Written by Peter S Rhodes)**

12 September 2008



- 2.30 pm** **Arrival and Registration of Guests**
Cocktail Reception at Bark Café
- 2.50 pm** **First Bugle Call: Five minutes before proceeding to Museum**
- 2.55 pm** **Second Bugle Call: Guests to proceed to Museum**
- 3.00 pm** **Arrival of Guest-of-Honour**
Mr S R Nathan, President, Republic of Singapore
- Third Bugle Call: Entry of the President**
- Ceremony Commences**
- **Welcome Address by Jeyathurai A., Director, The Changi Museum**
 - **Introduction to Book by Razeen Chan, Asst. Curator, The Changi Museum**
 - **Speech by Janet Rhodes, Author's daughter**
 - **Book presentation by Peter Rhodes to the President**
 - **Talk by Brian Farrell, Deputy Head, Dept of History, NUS**
 - **Speech by Rosemary Fell, Representative of the Malayan Volunteers Group**
 - **Unveiling of Plaque by the President**
 - ***The Last Post* (All to stand, Uniformed Personnel to salute)**
 - **One Minute Silence**
 - **Reveille**
- 3.40 pm** **Museum tour for the President**
Guests invited to Reception at Bark Café
- 4.30 pm** **The President Departs**
- 5.30 pm** **Official end of event**



**PRESENTATION OF THE MALAYAN VOLUNTEERS' MEMORIAL BOARD
to THE CHANGI MUSEUM
by Rosemary Fell.**

Your Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It gives me great pleasure to be here to-day on behalf of the Malayan Volunteers Group, to present this Memorial Board to the Changi Museum, in remembrance of the Malayan Volunteer Forces. The Malayan Volunteers Group was formed in 2005. It originated from a group of ex-Volunteer Veterans and their families who met annually in London for lunch. In October 2003, at the annual lunch, the idea of commemorating the Volunteers in some way was put forward. It was agreed that we should buy a Memorial Bench for the recently established National Memorial Arboretum in England. However, sufficient money was raised to buy 2 Benches and a Memorial Stone. It was from this group of people, who had contributed to these funds, together with the lunch group, that the Malayan Volunteers Group was established.

To date, the Malayan Volunteers Group has created its own Memorial Garden in the National Memorial Arboretum in England, where the benches and Memorial Stone can be found. It has sponsored a library and wall plaque with regimental badges, dedicated to the Volunteers, in the Thailand/Burma Railway Centre Museum in Kanchanaburi, and to-day some members of the Group are delighted and honoured to be present at the unveiling of this Memorial Board, here in Singapore at the Changi Museum, by His Excellency, The President of Singapore.

Historically, as you are well aware, the Volunteer Forces were inaugurated in 1854 at the time of the Crimean War. Re-organised in the 1930s, as war clouds gathered in Europe, along the lines of the British Territorial Army, men of all races, and from all walks of life enrolled with the Volunteers in Singapore and Malaya. Recent figures put the number of Volunteers in December 1941 at over 18,000 – the majority coming from the Straits Settlements, but there was also a sizeable force raised in the Federated Malay States. The Unfederated Malay States provided smaller forces, including the Kedah Volunteer Force, the Johore Volunteer Engineers and the Kelantan Volunteers, while the Volunteer Navy and Air Force made up the remaining numbers.

My father, Eric Reeve, a Headmaster, was a Malacca Volunteer. As part of the Crown Colony of the Straits Settlements, the Malacca Volunteer Force was the 4th Battalion SSVF, and numbered some 675 men – European, Chinese, Malay and Eurasian. At the outbreak of war, my father was Officer in charge of the Signals Section. The 4th Battalion was deployed to defend the south coast of Singapore island from Singlap Drain to Labrador. My father ended up with his men in the Signals Section in a camp in the Jalan Eunus area, in the Katong district.

After the Fall of Singapore, he was sent up to Thailand in October 1942 along with other POWs, to work on the Burma/Siam Railway. I know little of his time there, except for information sent to my mother in 2 letters. One letter was from Father Gerard Bourke, a New Zealander and Redemptorist Priest, who had been attached to the Malacca Volunteers just 3 weeks before capitulation. He and my father became great buddies in prison camp. The other letter was from Major Rowland Lyne, a Singapore Volunteer, who later became General Secretary of the YMCA in Singapore after the war. All three travelled to Thailand at about the same time, and were in the same camps in the Konyu area. One story, which they both mentioned about my father, relates to the "speedo" period on the Railway. A party of 100 men was hurriedly put together to be sent to another area where work had fallen behind schedule. My father was appointed one of the 2 officers in charge of this party. Sent off without adequate rations, cooking utensils and other equipment, their plight would have been very much worse but for my father, who, in the words of Father Bourke, "fought tooth and nail to get all he could for his men" from another camp under different Japanese administration. On their return to Konyu, a young FMS Officer called Fitzgerald was thought to have contracted cholera, and the whole party was isolated. By now, my father had developed a bad ulcer on his foot. Then, one day, quite suddenly, he was sent down to the base hospital at Chungkai by barge, where he later died from a variety of causes, including amputation of his lower leg, dysentery and other deficiency diseases.

His grave now lies in Chungkai Cemetery.

I am very proud of my father; proud of the Volunteers, and proud to be here to-day at the presentation of this Memorial Board, in their memory.

**MVG LONDON LUNCH
OCTOBER 4TH 2008
Report by Jonathan Moffatt**

Some 43 members of the MVG, including veterans Ron Mitchell [1/SSVF] and Sir Roger Moon [JVE], attended the lunch at a Soho Chinese restaurant. Members came from far and wide including two families from South Africa. There was also a good balance between familiar and new faces.

Following a substantial lunch and much chat, there were a number of short items. Jonathan Moffatt spoke about the deteriorating condition of the Malacca Volunteers Memorial on the wall of the Stadthuys, Malacca, and whether the MVG would like to take on the repair work as their next project. Stephanie Hess reported on behalf of those who attended the recent Volunteers Memorial Plaque unveiling at the Changi Museum in Singapore. Twelve year old Alicky Hess read a letter she had composed to her great grandfather who served in the Singapore Volunteers.

This year's main talk was by David Dobbs whose father, Bill, of Mansfield & Co., Penang, was a Sergeant in the Penang Volunteers. Drawing on tapes his father made and the family photo album, David described his father's service in the Volunteers pre-hostilities, with the pleasant, monthly weekend camps; during the mobilization period and through the Malayan Campaign until he entered captivity at Singapore. David and his mother were evacuated from Penang to Singapore and then to Australia. Bill's duties on arrival in Singapore included the training of Dalforce Chinese irregulars. A particular point that David emphasized was the lack of distinction between officers and other ranks in the Volunteers, which often created problems when they encountered regular army officers. It was not unusual in the Volunteers for men to be taking orders from those who were their juniors in civilian life or for an NCO in the Volunteers to be wearing a First World War Military Cross. David's father was a POW in Singapore and Thailand.

This was a most interesting, well-received talk.

Particular thanks go to Sandy Lincoln who has worked so hard to organize not only this highly successful lunch, but also the previous 5 lunches.

STOP PRESS:

I would also like to add my special thanks to Sandy, without whose flair and determination the London Lunches would not have become the success story they have. From tentative beginnings at the "Spaghetti House" just off Trafalgar Square, where in October 2003, 12 Volunteer friends gathered together, the numbers have grown to over 40 this year. The Lunches have outgrown 2 other venues in China Town, and it seems likely that a larger room will be needed in future if the numbers continue to grow.

The onerous task of organizing the Lunch each year has been left solely to Sandy, and she has done a superb job. We are all very grateful to her, and hope that in the future she can look forward to turning up on the day (as we all have done in the past) without the worry of balancing numbers! This task has been taken on by Hugh Chaplin, and we thank him for accepting the responsibility so that Sandy can have a well earned rest. R.F.

Thanks to Alicky Hess.

We are very grateful to Alicky for extorting money with such grace for the highly successful Raffle which was held at the lunch for the first time. She raised £104 for the MVG funds, and we hope to make this a feature of the Lunch in future years.

A LETTER TO GRANDPA
by Alicky Hess

Grandpa I have gotten to know you so well these past two years I feel as if I have in some way connected to you. The emotional journey that I have experienced with you and mummy has been phenomenal.

When I was ten I really got to know you. That was the year that mummy transcribed **your prisoner of war diary**. As each day came, the plot would thicken and mummy would find some more information on the camps or what happened to the letters that were sent to you from Eilish. As she discovered more, the TOP SECRET mission (the surprise for Uncle Simon & Uncle John) became even more hush hush. It was like living in a whole different world.

I loved to hear about “what happened next to grandpa and if his foot was ok after the accident”. I would settle down with mummy to read what she had transcribed that day. It became my bed time reading. It was a way for me to escape from reality, to go back in time to the **hidden years**.

Your time as a prisoner of the Japanese could not have been easy but you always made it seem so light hearted and less dramatic than the truth.

When ever I was put in a difficult situation I would ask myself ‘what would Grandpa do?’ It made my life so much easier. You were always so positive and could overcome any situation or challenge that came your way.

Not only did I get to know you through the diary, but also through your stories that mummy passed on to me. One of my favourites would be your description of an enraged Japanese Guard jumping up and down on your glasses and only afterwards realizing that you would need a new pair because you couldn’t work without them.

The journey really came alive when we went to the places that you mentioned. We went to **Singapore** and visited the **Yacht Club** where you spent so many happy times, to see **Holland Park** where you lived, to **Raffles Hotel** where many an occasion was spent, the **Singapore Volunteer Headquarters**, the **Dutch club**, **Swimming club**, the **Tanglin club**, **Changi**, **Kranji** and other important places in your life.

You were an extraordinary man and you never gave up no matter what happened to you. I find that truly amazing. I love your sense of humour and the way you always found the bright side of things. Your faith in the future was not wasted. I will tell your story to my children and to my grandchildren.

You are no longer just a name that I would hear once in a while or just another black and white photograph in the family tree. You are now a very real and much loved person in my life.

From your great granddaughter

ALICKY.

MALAYAN VOLUNTEERS GROUP 2008-2009
NEW MEMBERS JULY – OCTOBER 2008

BREWIS, Bob and Penny.

4, Manor Road, Paignton, Devon TQ3 2HS

Tel:- 01803 527580 e-mail:- brewis@dsl.pipex.com

Mother's first husband: Aircraftman (1st Class) Thomas Douglas **TURNER**, RAF. Departed Java 9/2/43 with 500 POWs on the Roko Maru. Arrived Singapore 12/2/43. Member of "H" Force, May 1943 under command of Lt. Col. H. Humphries and Pilot Officer R. Bainbridge (Officer Commanding). Sent to Thailand to work on the Thailand/Burma Railway. Died HINTOK RIVER CAMP on 19/8/1943 (Beriberi). Geoffrey MOWAT was at the same camp. Burial Grave No: 28 Hintok River Cemetery. Burial service taken by C. of E. Padre Capt. Headley. Later reinterred – Chungkai 7. J. 9.

CALDWELL, Jacqueline.

Evacuated on the "Empress of Japan"

5, Pantonville Road, Seamill, West Kilbride KA23 9NQ

Tel:- 01294 822310 e-mail:- DCldwll8@aol.com

Daughter of John **TURNBULL**. My father was imprisoned in the St. James Power Station until 1943, then transferred to Changi. After recuperation returned to Singapore 1946-1949. Died Kilmarnock 1958. Details of the St. James Power Station is recorded in the New Zealand Archives.

GOYDER, Jean.

Manor House, Old London Road, Capel St. Mary, Ipswich IP9 2JU, Suffolk.

E.mail:- jean.goyder1@btinternet.com

Daughter of Kenneth **DOHOO** and sister of MVG member Anne Hinam. Kenneth Dohoo was on leave in Australia from November 1942. He returned voluntarily to Singapore in Dec. 1941. Escaped on the "Mary Rose", commanded by Capt. George Mulock on 15/2/42 and was captured on Banka Island. Civilian internee on Sumatra and died at Muntok 25/10/44

GRAND, Reuben and Ria.

Evacuated on the "Nellore"

20, Sheredan Road, Highams Park, London E4 9RW.

Tel:- 0208 527 1886 e-mail:- bengrand@gmail.com and riaigrand@googlemail.com

Son of Meyer **GRAND**, a Penang business man [jeweller/goldsmith] who was in MAS at Singapore General Hospital and interned in Changi and Sime Road. I and my mother (who was pregnant at the time) were evacuated with my brother Sion and sister Ada on the Nellore from Batavia to Perth, WA, where we stayed for the duration of the war. I was 5 years old at the time.

HOPE, David.

c/o Lawson Software Asia Pacific Pte. Ltd., 3, Church Street #28-04/05 Singapore 049483.

Tel:- +65 6788 8769 e-mail:- david.hope@sg.lawson.com

Researcher into evacuations from Singapore.

MITCHELL, Hamish L.M. and May.

Evacuated on the "Aorangi"

16, Granville Place, Aberdeen AB10 6NZ, Scotland.

Tel:- 01224 318197 e-mail:- may16granville@btinternet.com

Born in Kuala Lumpur in 1940. Evacuated on the "Aorangi" in January 1942. Disembarked in Fremantle and stayed in Perth, West Australia until the end of the war in Europe. Returned to the U.K. by troopship in June 1945. Now retired after a legal career in Aberdeen. Son of Sergeant Lewis Mackay **MITCHELL 1/SSVF** – an Accountant with Asiatic Petroleum Co. (later Shell Petroleum). POW in Changi, and spent 9 months in a working party under the command of L.V. Taylor. Then sent with "F" Force to the Burma/Siam Railway, sharing experiences with Capt. Lance Walford. Worked at one of the Sonkurai camps, where he died, and is buried at Thanbyuzayat in Burma.

Hamish would appreciate any information about his father's time in Changi and in Thailand with "F" Force.

POLLOCK, John.

5, Aitken Street, Kangaroo Flat, Victoria 3555, Australia.

E-mail:- rosspoll@iimetro.com.au

Son of Lt. Walter **POLLOCK FMSVF** – Intelligence Corps (225800). Rubber planter at Allagar Estate, Trong, Perak – joined FMSVF 1/12/41 until 16/3/46. Kept a hand written diary headed "Independent Coy" starting from Chaughin? On 6/12/41 finishing in Singapore 21/1/42. Sent to POW Camp No: 4 Thailand, survived and returned to Malaya, eventually retiring to Scotland on Oct:1960.

Mentioned in Despatches as:-

Corporal; Pollock Federated Malay States Volunteer Force was published in the London Gazette on 1 August 1946 as mentioned in a Despatch for distinguished service. J.J. Lawson Secretary of State for War.

John would appreciate any information about his father.

RUTHERFORD, Susan and David.

Evacuated on the "Narkunda"

12, Malua Street, Ormond, Victoria 3204, AUSTRALIA.

Tel:- 03 9578 3917 e-mail:- dmrutherford@bigpond.com

Daughter of James Thomas **EVERY Lt. FMSVF**. Assistant Controller of Telecommunications, Perak. POW in Singapore and sent to Thailand. Died in captivity 30/6/43 aged 42 at Kanyu. Grave at Kanchanaburi, Thailand. Evacuated in Jan 1942 from Singapore on the "Narkunda", disembarked Fremantle and joined the "Aorangi" to Adelaide. Billeted with the Matthews family in Balaclava, South Australia until approx Nov. '42. Then to Melbourne, Victoria at various addresses until repatriated with mother (Phyllis) and brother (Gordon) arriving England 29/10/45 on the "Umtata".

AMENDMENTS to the 2008-2009 LIST of MEMBERS.

Please note and add/change the following information to the current list of members:-

ANSON, Graham and Marsha.

Daughter of Patrick Francis **KAVANAGH, 3/FMSVF (Negri Sembilan)**. Escaped from Blakan Mati on 16/2/42. Arrived in Padang 1/3/42. Captured Korintje, Sumatra in June 1942. Received a MID. POW in Sumatra in Padang, Gloegoer Belawan and Pakan Baroe. Liberated in 1945 from Pakan Baroe.

Mother: Margaret Kavanagh, evacuated in 1942 on the "Duchess of Bedford".

Post war returned to Goodyear Tyre and Rubber Co. in Penang and Singapore.

Self: Born in Penang.

DONCASTER, Michael.

New address:- 7, Coniston St. Hawker, ACT,2614, Australia.

New Tel:- +61 2 62783174 Mobile/cell:- +61 418 836 747

HINAM, Anne.

New e-mail:- a.hinam@tiscali.co.uk

INNES-KER, Enid.

Widow of Sgt.W.H. "Tam" **INNES-KER, 1/SSVF** (Scottish Company). Taken prisoner at Changi, and in April 1943 was sent up to Thailand with "F" Force to work on the Burma/Siam Railway. He ended up at Songkurai, and about 4 months later, with less than 400 survivors of the 1600 who started at the camp, he was sent to Thanbyuzayat in Burma, then back to Changi in December 1943.

MUIRHEAD, Katherine.

New e-mail:- landkmuirhead@westnet.com.au

READ, Dr. Malcolm T.F.

Son of Frederick **READ SSVF**. Chemist FIC. BSc.BPharm. with the Chemistry Department in Singapore and Government analyst. A post-war memorial medal was struck by the Royal Institute for Chemistry (Malaya Section) to commemorate the loss of 25% of their members. The medal commemorates my father, Diana Mirkin's father, Donald Purdie, and George Boizot, Charles Owen and John Tetley, all of whom died in Japanese POW camps. The medal is presented to the best undergraduate chemist in every Malayan University.

The Malayan Volunteers Group
Barclays Bank account 20051144 - reconciliation
For the year ended 5th April, 2008

	<u>DR</u> £	<u>CR</u> £
Balance brought forward on 6th April, 2007	2,866.90	
Bankings	4,365.03	
Payments		5,510.57
Balance carried forward on 5th April, 2008		1,721.36
	<u>7,231.93</u>	<u>7,231.93</u>
Balance per bank at 5th April, 2008 (statement 54)		<u>1,721.36</u>

The Malayan Volunteers Group
Income and expenditure account
For the year ended 5th April, 2008

	<u>£</u>
Donations	4,329.24
Bank interest (paid net of tax)	1.01
	<hr/>
Total income in the period	4,330.25
Wreath, badges, donations, garden plot	4,751.88
Website costs	51.57
Printing, postage and stationery	<u>707.12</u>
	<hr/> (5,510.57)
Deficit of income over expenditure	(1,180.32)
Brought forward funds in hand on 6th April, 2007	2,901.68
Balance of funds in hand on 5th April, 2008	<hr/> <u>£1,721.36</u>
 Financed by:	
Cash in hand on 5th April, 2008	0.00
Balance at bank on 5th April, 2008	1,721.36
	<hr/> <u>£1,721.36</u>
 <u>Creditor on 5th April, 2008</u>	
National Memorial Arboretum	
Three instalments of £500 for garden plot	<hr/> <u>£1,500.00</u>