

I am writing to you, primarily as the daughter of a Malayan Volunteer, but also as a fellow member of COFEPOW. This is how I know you have Volunteer connections. The reason for getting in touch with you is to inform you that there is a group of former Malayan Volunteers and their Children, who keep in touch with each other. We wondered whether you would like to know more about us, and what we do. We find we have a lot in common with each other, and in some cases knew each other out in Malaya before and after the war, or our parents did.

We are not intending to start a new group – just keep in touch with each other, and meet up occasionally for lunch, or at the National Memorial Arboretum on commemorative occasions. Some of us are members of COFEPOW, others are not. There seems no reason why those of us who are members cannot continue to support COFEPOW as well as enjoy meeting other “Malayans” from time to time. I am sure the main reason why it is so difficult to keep in touch is because we are all scattered far and wide across the length and breadth of the country.

You may be wondering what we can do under these circumstances. Our aim is to ensure that our fathers, and other relations of ours, who joined the Malayan Volunteer Forces, receive the recognition they deserve, and are not forgotten under the general banner of being a “FEPOW”. Secondly, our aim is to keep in touch with each other.

Our achievements during 2004 are as follows:-

A. Malayan Volunteers’ Bench Project.

The Malayan Volunteers’ Bench Project was launched in October 2003, following a visit to the National Memorial Arboretum in Alrewas, Staffordshire on V.J Day 2003. At that time, the FEPOW Plot in the Arboretum contained no mention of, or memorial to, the Malayan Volunteer Forces, and at a lunchtime meeting in London, of a group of “Volunteer Children,” it was agreed to try to raise some money to buy a bench, dedicate it to the Volunteers, and ask for it to be placed in the FEPOW Plot in the Arboretum. An article about the bench project, was included in the December 2003 Edition of the Shropshire FEPOW Association’s Newsletter, by kind permission of their Chairman. A shortened version of this article also appeared in the 23rd Edition of the COFEPOW Newsletter in January 2004.

As a result of these two articles, and by word of mouth, a total of £1234.36p has been raised to date. £1000 of this money has been spent on purchasing 2 teak benches (at a cost of £500 each) for the Arboretum. Each bench bears a brass plaque with the following inscription:-

“Dedicated to the memory of
The Malayan Volunteer Forces”
1941 – 1945
SSVF UFMSVF FMSVF

The benches have been placed in the FEPOW Grove in the Arboretum. The first one was dedicated last February, following the dedication of the Changi Lychgate, by the Rev. Ray Rossiter, Chairman of the National Federation of FEPOW Clubs and Associations. The second bench was dedicated on V.J.Day last August, after the annual Memorial Service in the Arboretum’s Millennium Chapel.

It is planned to spend the rest of the money on a granite stone tablet dedicated to the Volunteers. Details of this memorial stone, and where it will be placed, have yet to be finalized.

B. London Meetings.

Every year, in October, there is a social lunchtime get-together of "Volunteer Children" and Veterans in London. It is an informal occasion, and it gives us all an opportunity to renew old acquaintances, exchange family news and meet other ex-Malayans, who have hitherto lost touch with one another, after such a long period of time.

C. COFEPOW Website.

There is an article about the Malayan Volunteer Forces on the COFEPOW Website, under the heading "Armed Forces." We hope that some of the people who have visited the website during the year, will have read these pages.

All COFEPOW members know that Jonathan Moffatt is the person to contact in connection with any research you may wish to do on the British Malaysians/Volunteer Forces/Argylls and Royal Marines. Address:- 49, Coombe Drive, Binley Woods, Coventry. CV3 2QU. e-mail:-JonathanMoffatt@aol.com

If you would like to meet up with other "Volunteer Children," please get in touch with me:-
Rosemary Fell:- Millbrook House, Axminster, Devon EX13 5EE Tel: No: 01297 33045 or e-mail me at:-
dinraf-millbrook@tiscali.co.uk

or

Sandy Lincoln:- 19, Burke Street, Harrogate, North Yorkshire. HG1 4NR Tel: No:01423 500351 or e-mail:-
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ALREWAS - 2004



Three "Volunteer Daughters" and a Malayan Veteran
try out the second bench.



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**3rd EDITION
JULY 2005**

Thank you very much to everyone who has contributed so generously to the Malayan Volunteers Group funds. We are in the fortunate position to have covered all our expenses to date, and we have some funds left over. These will be put towards other proposed projects in the future. Details of these will be circulated in due course.

Our 60th Anniversary plans are progressing well. The form of the Dedication Service for our Stone Tablet on 15th August has been finalized, and we hope it will be a memorable day for all of you who are able to come.

THE SINGAPORE VOLUNTEER CORPS STANDARD.

It has taken months of painstaking research into the exact details of the intricate design around the central badge. This needed to be accurate before the standard could be embroidered. Not only was this imperative, but the colours had to be carefully researched too. Several kind people have been involved in this research at the PRO in London, especially John Brown. Despite exhaustive efforts, we had failed to identify accurately, some of the elaborate leaf structures around the central badge, and all seemed to be lost. Then, out of the blue, Herman, the editor of the website on Military and Paramilitary Flags and Ranks of Singapore came to our rescue with a wonderfully detailed coloured image of the central badge, and the surrounding floral details. We are very grateful to all those involved in this research, and for the time they have freely given to this extraordinary piece of detective work. In particular, we would like to give a special vote of thanks to Audrey Holmes McCormick, who first suggested we should commission the Standard, and whose drive, determination and sheer stamina has seen the project through all its ups and downs. What appeared to be a simple matter when we started, became more and more difficult, because as we resolved each problem, we uncovered yet more. Thank you very much to everyone, especially Audrey.

There are some of you who have queried why we have chosen the SVC Standard, and not the FMSVF Standard. One reason for choosing the SVC Standard was from an historical aspect, in that the 1st SVC flag was for the 1st Volunteer Body, founded in Singapore in 1854, with their proud motto "In Oriente Primus." The present SVC colours, which we have chosen to commission as our Standard, were re-designed and cover the period 1911-1942. Following the Volunteer movement in the Crown Colonies of the Straits Settlements, volunteering started in the Federated Malay States in 1902.

In WW2 the FMSVF fought their way down the peninsula, with considerable distinction, particularly the Armoured Car Regiment. However, once the battle for the Malay peninsula was lost, and all military forces had retreated into Singapore Island, the FMSVF were disbanded and joined the SVC and regular forces in Singapore for the final stand against the Japanese. Therefore, it seems relevant to use the SVC Colours as a symbol to represent ALL the Volunteer Forces in Malaya and Singapore. Perhaps we can commission the FMSVF Colours at some stage in the future, so that both Colours can be paraded at other commemoration services at Alrewas and elsewhere.

DEDICATION OF THE MEMORIAL STONE TABLET --- ALREWAS, 15TH AUGUST.

The details for the dedication of the stone have already been sent to you, but you may wish to refresh your memories about the event. The timetable is as follows:-

- 10.30 – 10.45 Assemble at the Changi Lych gate, at the entrance to the FEPOW Plot.
- 10.50 a.m. Scottish Piper to lead the way to the NMBVA Plot, followed by the Standards, Rev. Geoffrey Mowat and congregation.
- 11.00 a.m. 2 minutes silence.
- 11.02 – 11.10 Dedication and unveiling of the Stone, followed by Prayers.
- 11.10 a.m. Piper to end the ceremony by playing a lament.

If you are attending the Service, it would be advisable to arrive in good time, because the VIPs who are attending the opening of the FEPOW MUSEUM on that day, are due to arrive at about 10.45 a.m. The entrance to the Visitor Centre is rather small, and can get very congested, especially if there are a lot of people milling around. Unless the layout is changed for the day, the only way to get to the Lych gate is to go through the Visitor Centre, and out towards the Chapel. Then follow the main avenue to the left of the Chapel down to the FEPOW Plot and the new Museum. I am sure it will be signposted, but it is easy to find, and there will be plenty of Arboretum Staff on hand to help you.

It has been suggested that all MVG members should wear a badge, with MVG and your name on it, so that we can identify each other more easily. It seems a very good idea, and I will send out the badges to all those of you who have written to say that you are attending the Dedication Service.