

APA KHABAR

Patron: The Duchess of Norfolk

www.malayanvolunteersgroup.org.uk

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GOOD PUBLICITY FOR THE VOLUNTEERS TO START 2010

A very happy New Year to you all.

As the noughties come to an end, and we start the next decade of the 21st century, we can look back to the MVG's inception in the early part of the century, and follow its steady progress through the latter 5 years.

Now a well established Group, the MVG has been given some very welcome publicity through **Jonathan** our Historian and Archivist, who has written 2 articles about the Malayan Volunteers. His first is a short piece in the Researching FEPOW History Group's 5th Newsletter explaining the history behind the MVG. The second is a substantial article in "Everyone's War", the Journal of the Second World War Experience Centre in Leeds, West Yorkshire, entitled "Malaya Volunteers", in which he explains the active role of the Volunteers in the Malayan Campaign and in captivity. Jonathan has also co-authored a book with MVG member **Paul Riches** called "In Oriente Primus – A History of the Volunteer Forces in Malaya and Singapore", which is soon to be published.

Other publicity for the Group is about to happen in January in Kuala Lumpur. **Rosemary** has been invited by **Liz Moggie** to give an informal talk to the Badan Warisan (Malaysia's Heritage Society) on the history of Volunteering, with a reference to the need for the restoration and repairs to some of the WW 1 and 2 War Memorials in Malaysia – in particular the WW 2 Memorial in Kuala Selangor and the WW 1 and 2 Memorials in Malacca. We hope the Heritage Society may be able to help us liaise with the Malaysian Government, and emphasize the historical links with the past that these Memorials represent.

Susan Rutherford – MVG Australia – has sent a copy of an article on "Child Evacuees" in the October 2009 edition of the News Bulletin of Ex-POW and Families Association in Australia. In it Susan's father, Lt. James Avery (FMSVF Light Battery) is mentioned as well as Susan's own story of her evacuation with her mother and brother, and their war-time experiences as refugees in Australia. We hope that stories such as Susan's will help to persuade the Australian Authorities to allow the MVG to commission a Memorial to the Volunteers in the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.

We thank **Marilyn Hywel-Jones** and her sister **Jane** very much for preparing the enclosed map of Kanchanaburi, showing the route of the Railway, together with the site of the original town, the POW camps, the Cemeteries and the confluence of the Rivers Kwae Yai and Noi (as they are now known). Those of us who have visited Kanchanaburi and found it confusing will be delighted to have the important sites so clearly identified. If anyone would like a coloured map, please ask Rosemary.

A little late, but better late than never – we send our congratulations to George and Hyacinth Hess'e on the occasion of their Diamond Wedding on 8th October 2009.

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY – 8TH NOVEMBER 2009 – Report by Rosemary Fell

After torrential rain in London on the Saturday before Remembrance Sunday, the forecast was not promising. The day dawned grey and cold with a hint of rain in the air. By 9 o'clock, Horse Guards Parade Ground was bustling with marchers assembling in their allotted places; marshals in reflective jackets checking tickets; and group leaders picking up their marker boards.

We made our way to Trafalgar Square, down Whitehall and through security arches. Our place in Column M was outside the old War Office, and we assembled in ever changing order as more groups appeared with their marker boards, and the crowds of marchers built up. MVG members started to arrive – new members Nikki Archer-Waring and her husband Graeme, joining us this year for the first time, were the first to arrive, followed by Sheila Alsop and her friend. Donald and I were also joined by regular marchers Karen Harney, Christine Cavender with a family friend, and Pat Wilson.

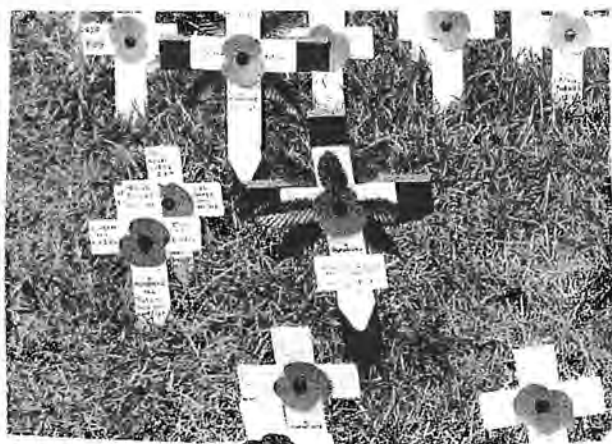
Soon after 10.15 a.m. the columns were moved into their final positions, watched by huge crowds lining each side of Whitehall back to Trafalgar Square, and down to Parliament Square. Each year since the MVG started marching, the crowds seem to get bigger, and this must be a reflection of the concern the British people have for the armed forces fighting in Afghanistan.

At 10.50 a.m. the crowds fell silent as the politicians and ambassadors took their places around the Cenotaph. Her Majesty, The Queen, together with other members of the Royal Family, including Princes William and Harry, emerged from the Foreign Office just before 11 o'clock. Silence descended on the whole of Whitehall and Parliament Square as Big Ben Struck 11 a.m. and the guns sounded before and after the 2 minutes silence, when the Last Post was played.

After the laying of wreaths, the short service, conducted as usual by The Lord Bishop of London, followed the time honoured traditional format, starting with prayers; the hymn, "O God, our help in ages past"; more prayers with the Lord's Prayer and finally The Blessing. After The Rouse, we sang "God Save The Queen". We had a long wait before it was our turn to march and hand in the MVG wreath. Despite yet another plea to the BBC to extend their coverage of the Remembrance Service, it is probable that the broadcast finished before the marching column (and the MVG) reached the Cenotaph. To help identify groups this year, the outside marchers in the front line were given armbands with the name of the group they represented printed on them. The march ended on Horse Guards where HRH The Duke of York took the salute.

In keeping with tradition over the last 5 years, after dispersal, we walked to the Embankment via Horse Guards Avenue, where the Gurkhas were holding their annual service beside the statue of a Gurkha soldier. We paused for a moment with them before crossing Westminster Bridge and making our way to the "All Bar One" restaurant, where we enjoyed a good lunch and conversation.

After lunch, Donald and I visited the Field of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey and planted a cross in the FEPOW Plot. We noticed that a black cross, commemorating the Malayan Volunteers, was already in place, and we thank Marilyn Hywel-Jones for kindly planting this cross on behalf of the MVG.



We also thank Marilyn for sending details of the Cross Planting Ceremony which takes place at The Field of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey on the Thursday before Remembrance Sunday. The event is organized by the Royal British Legion, and is attended by a member of the Royal Family. Marilyn has suggested that next year, the MVG order a large 8 inch cross, with our badge attached, for planting in the FEPOW Plot, or in another plot of members' choosing.

We feel that the Malayan Volunteers should be represented in some way in The Field of Remembrance, and that this would be a good way to do so. We could request a designated plot for the Malayan Volunteers, but we would need to ensure that sufficient members attended the ceremony and planted crosses, so that the plot was used. If anyone has any other suggestions, PLEASE let Jonathan or Rosemary know.

ARMISTICE DAY IN PENANG – Report by Leslie A.K. James.

The Remembrance Day ceremony took place as scheduled at 08.30 Wednesday 11th November at the Cenotaph on the esplanade in George Town, Penang. As arranged, I laid a wreath on behalf of the Malayan Volunteers Group. Although I requested that the message on the wreath read "Malayan Volunteers Group", instead it read "Straits Settlements & Malayan Volunteer Forces".

The British High Commissioner did not attend the ceremony and was represented by the Defence Adviser, Col. Jaques Lemay. In the absence of the Chief Minister who is travelling overseas, the Penang State Government was represented by Penang Executive Councillor Mr. Chow Kon Yeow.

The order of service began with a prayer (doa selamat) which was followed by an address by the President of the Penang Veterans Association, Lt. Cdr. G. Thyagarajah, RMN (Retired). The Canadian High Commissioner, His Excellency David B. Collins, also gave an address followed by Penang State Executive Councillor Chow. After a reading of Laurence Binyon's lines, "They shall not grow old...", next came the Last Post, two minutes silence and Reveille. The honour guard at the Cenotaph was provided by four soldiers and airmen from the RAAF base at Butterworth. Buglers and drummers were provided by 2 Royal Malay Regiment and a two-man colour party by the Resident Naval Officer Penang.

Wreaths were laid in the following order by State Executive Councillor Chow, the Canadian High Commissioner, representatives of the Nepal and Fiji diplomatic missions, the British Defence Adviser, the

Indian Defence Adviser, the Commanding Officer 324 Combat Support Squadron RAAF Butterworth, the Commander Naval Area 3 Royal Malaysian Navy, and the representative of the Commander Integrated Air Defence System.

Further wreaths were then laid by a representative of RNVR and RMNVR retired personnel, myself representing the MVG, the president of the Selangor Gurkha Association, the representative of the Association for Victims and Dependants of Forced Labour to Burma (1942-1946), the representative of United Plantations Berhad, and the president of the Penang Veterans Association.

The wreath-laying ceremony ended with a reading of Lt. Col. John McCrae's "In Flanders Fields" by the chaplain of RAAF Butterworth who also gave the blessing and prayer of dismissal before the playing of the Malaysian National and Penang State anthems. All present then retired for breakfast and tea in the nearby foyer of the Dewan Sri Pinang (the state cultural hall).

Veterans honour fallen heroes

PENANG

■ By Phuah Ken Lin
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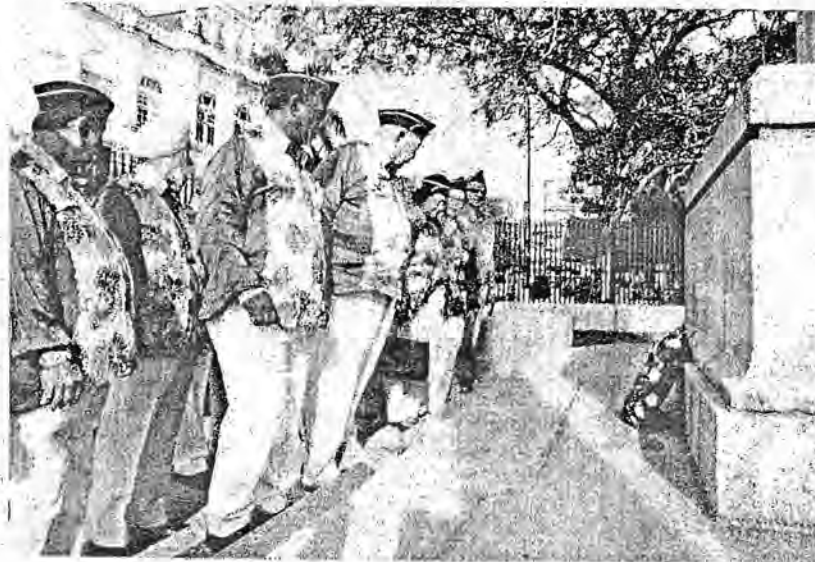
GEORGE TOWN: Some 30 members of the Penang Veterans Association (PVA) gathered at the Cenotaph at the Esplanade yesterday to commemorate fallen war heroes.

PVA president G. Thyagarajah and adviser H.V. Speldewine led members to lay a wreath in front of the Cenotaph in a simple and solemn ceremony.

They paid tribute to all military personnel who sacrificed their lives for Malaysia in various wars since 1914.

"We come here to reflect on the departed soldiers, sailors, airmen and women in uniform who served Malaysia to preserve the nation as a free country," Thyagarajah said.

"The fallen heroes fended off foreign invasions to secure a fu-



Members of the Penang Veterans Association paying tribute to the country's fallen war heroes at the Cenotaph at the Esplanade in Penang yesterday.

ture for their next generation."

He said the annual gathering was held in conjunction with the 75th anniversary of

the Malaysian Armed Forces.

Thyagarajah, 74, served during the confrontation with Indonesia in the 1960s while

Speldewine, 86, joined the Allies as a 17-year-old during the Japanese invasion in World War 2.

NEW STRAITS TIMES - 17/9/2009

THE PLANTER – the magazine of the Incorporated Society of Planters – ISP

Liz Moggie writes from Kuala Lumpur – "Whilst looking through back numbers of The Planter (courtesy of the Kuala Lumpur Library of the ISP) I came across the following:

The Planter March 1947 No: 3 Vol. XXIII p.55-56 "He was a Planter", by Zenena.

Zenena purported to be the wife of a planter who spent the war years in London and was often asked "What is a planter?" and "What did planters do in the face of the Japanese advance?" The writer drew up a list of 19 points in answer to these questions.

Of these numbers 15 and 16 may be of interest-

No. 15 – Older planters (mostly ex-Servicemen) were the backbone of the Local Defence Corps in their far-flung districts, undergoing intensive training while supervising estates, watching over the families of the younger planters, keeping up morale, finally doing demolition work.

No. 16 – Younger planters formed (the) main body of the Volunteer Battalions, did two months training in camp yearly, officered local Asiatic Volunteers, attended weekly parades and gave up most week-ends to the defence preparations. They were eventually used as front-line troops, and fought many rearguard actions.

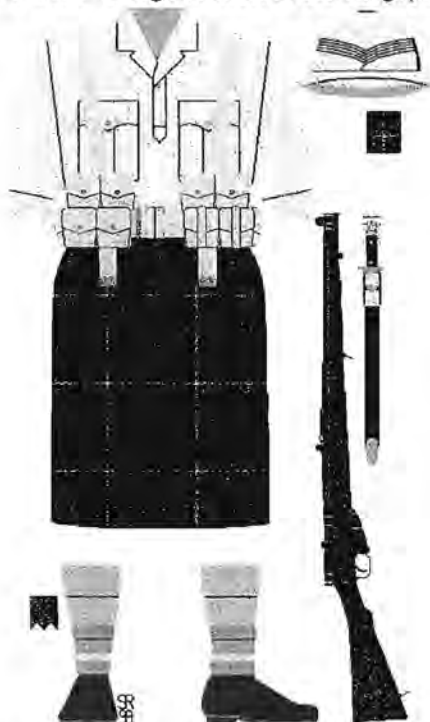
In the November 1947 edition, p. 281-282 is printed the Roll of Honour of "Members of the ISP and wives of members who lost their lives, were killed, or died in, or following enemy captivity during the Second World War".

Liz also says that the relevant volumes of The Planter are not yet online, but that she would be very willing to check names on the Roll of Honour if any MVG member would like her to do so. However, not all planters were members of the ISP, and therefore their names may not appear on the Roll of Honour.

[Editor: We thank Liz for this information – see Website addresses for the ISP.]

The Scottish Company, Singapore Volunteer Corps 1922-1945

The concept of a Scottish Company was discussed in Singapore before the First World War and in 1913 a list was circulated of those willing to enlist in such a company. Then came the War and it was not until the 1922 re-organisation of the Singapore Volunteer Corps that a Scottish Company came into existence.



In August 1922 HE the Governor approved a consisting of Hunting Stewart kilt & sporran [black leather, white horse hair, black tassels]; blue glengarry; hosetops with red and green dicing [the Corps colours], half-puttees and black boots.

The Hunting Stewart tartan was chosen by most Scottish Volunteer companies in Asia because it had no clan affiliations but they did have to get permission off the Laird to wear it.

Kilts arrived from Scotland in January 1923 and were issued at the Drill Hall in preparation for a first Church Parade in March 1923 when Captain Alport led the Scottish Company, headed by pipers, from the Drill Hall to the Presbyterian Church on Orchard Rd. A similar mid-week route march from the Drill Hall in June 1923 mustered 71 men including drummers & pipers led by veteran piper Frank Adam.

The subject of the uniform of the new Company was aired in the correspondence section of the 1920s Straits Times.: shorts v. kilts. Both tongue in cheek and genuine concerns were raised that the kilted uniform would attract non-Scots for the wrong reasons.

By 1923 the company was fielding a Rugby XV and a football team playing against the regular forces and local teams. Regular annual events: the Church Parade, the King's Birthday Parade on the Padang, annual dinner at the Goodwood Hall, the Wapinschaw [Weapons Show] annual shoot at Bukit Timah Rifle range - all contributed to Company esprit de corps and helped build up traditions. A Ladies night at the Adelphi Hotel later developed, by the late 1930s supported by the Gordon Highlanders piping and dancing.

On February 11th 1924 'C' Scottish Company provided a Guard of Honour at Government House on the occasion of the landing of the Vice Admiral Commanding the Royal Navy Special Service Squadron and in June 1924 it participated in a special SVC recruiting day.

The Company attracted returning Scottish war veterans including Charles Martine of the Borneo Company who served in the Royal Scots and was commissioned into the Scottish Company in 1925; Alexander Buchanan MM, an electrical engineer who had served as a sapper in the Royal Engineers Cavalry Section [In later years Buchanan, interned in Changi Gaol, was a victim of the Kempai Tai 'Double Tenth'] and Donald MacInnes MM, a former Cameron Highlander in the Traffic Department of Singapore Traction Company.



*S.V.C. and P. & P.W.V.C.
Scottish Bonnet*

Composition of the Company was largely Scots, a few Irish including the Dunne brothers of Gestetner [Eastern] Ltd, Singapore and even a few English. One man, Captain Donald Gordon MacLeod [1888-1950] of the pre-war London Scottish and wartime Indian Army, was more than any other, instrumental in the development of the Company. MacLeod, an exchange broker in civilian life and a fine piper, returned to Singapore after the war, and by 1924 was OC Scottish Company. He prioritised the efficiency and smartness of his company and part of that was creating a more flamboyant uniform.

Later OCs were Captains Robert Stewart [1896-1946] 1937-1938 then Sam Urquhart [1900-] 1938-1939.

In 1928 the sporran was changed as the patent leather was unsuitable for the tropical climate. The white hair & two long black tassels were replaced by white hair with six small black tassels with metal top & bells and the officers sporran 'top' of runic design with three silver knobs. No doubt influenced by the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders 'Princess Louise's favours' two green rosettes were added to the kilts of officers, warrant officers & sergeants. In 1929 the plain blue glengarry with red toorie was replaced by a knitted Balmoral with green and red diced band and large red toorie. In 1932 white spats [at Company expense] replaced khaki spats.

By 1934 the Company was well-established with experienced NCOs like RSM Rowland Lyne [1900-1990], the Director of the YMCA, and CSM Jimmy Nairn [1900-1941] of United Engineers. It consisted of 5 officers and 79 other ranks. The year began with an MG course for officers and bayonet fighting course for NCOs. As always, collective training had its difficulties because Company members were often absent on the duties of their professional lives. The outstanding event on 1934 was the presentation of the Battalion Colours with CSM Miller in the Colour Party and a Company Colour Party also parading. This was followed by the King's Birthday Parade and two company camps. One camp that year was held at Volunteer HQ which proved a considerably more comfortable affair than camps at Siglap or Changi. Street fighting was practised and in September, the Battalion Scheme [exercise] and the Wappinschaw in which the Company's best shots competed for prizes and trophies such as the Lewis Gun Cup & the St Andrew's Quaich donated by the St Andrew's Society and Scottish community in general. The year ended with the GOCs Inspection and 'the 2nd Battle of Mandai' [exercise].

At King's Birthday parades the Volunteers paraded with regular Army units and received some support with drill and music from the garrison Highland Regiment - by the late 1930s the Gordon Highlanders. On marching back to Volunteer HQ beer and curry puffs were available in the Mess which was open to all Volunteers irrespective of rank or unit.

Early in 1935 the decision was made that the Scottish Company should become an MG Company with MG training in February.

At the July 1938 camp the Company practised seaward firing together with A Company in anticipation of the February 1939 merger of the Scottish Company were combined with 'A' MG Company to form 'S' [Support] Company. This was intended as a temporary efficiency measure

SINGAPORE
VOLUNTEERS
EFFICIENCY
MEASURE

For the purpose of efficiency and to extend the scope of training of the Volunteers in connection with the complete equipment of the "S" (Support) Company and "A" (Artillery) Company (see a statement from Volunteer Headquarters, Singapore).

The new Companies will be known as "S" (Support) Company and will be organised as follows:-

Right Half Company consisting of members of the former "A" (MG) Coy.

Left Half Company consisting of members of the former "S" (Support) Coy.

The Left Half Company will retain the traditional dress and distinctive Infantry Headgear which may be "S" (Support) Coy.

Details on subject may also be seen in the Order of Left Half Company.

This re-organisation is designed to enable the identity and traditions of the Scottish Coy. to be retained and to leave the way open for it to be reformed if and when it becomes desirable to do so.



PRIVATE MACSMITH.
"S" (SUPPORT) COY.



which extended the scope for training. Although the new Company had its own badge the Scottish Company men retained their kilts and separate identity. On parade A company men formed the right half guard and the Scottish C Company the left hand guard. RSM Hardman of the Scots Guards remained as full time instructor.

The outbreak of war in Europe gave some urgency to training but also revealed tensions between military and civilian requirements. Regular Tuesday evening 5.00-7.00 p.m. 'drills' took place at Volunteer HQ with field days on Sundays. Some found the emphasis on 'tactical withdrawals' rather than military advances a little worrying.

In July & August 1940 S Company received a 2 months training callup. This met with consternation among Singapore employers but a compromise was reached whereby Volunteers would return to their offices at 2.00 p.m. returning for evening parade for 5.15 p.m. This proved to be something of a race as Telok Paku Camp, the hatted camp where training took place, was 16 miles out of town at the eastern entrance to the Straits of Johore.

Training consisted of dawn PT followed by showers and breakfast then morning field exercise. Evening parade was followed by lectures and indoor gun drills. Five Argylls taught barrack room order & discipline. Most training concentrated on the machine gun firing and maintenance with a particular emphasis on the MG Lock which translated the energy of the recoil into moving the ammunition belt. Two inventions by the now Colonel Chidson, in the late 1920s commander of the MG Company, were still used: the imaginative but impractical Chidson Wheel, a wheelbarrow contraption in which two men could transport MG, ammunition and equipment across rough, muddy ground, and the Chidson Stop, for firing through a fixed traverse from a pill box position at night.

1941-1945

The SVC was mobilised on December 1st 1941 and moved to semi-deployment HQ at Geylang English School. The school's headmaster, Penry Samuel, a Private in S Company had the upsetting experience of being denied access to his house which was taken over as Officers Mess. No leave passes were now granted and shallow trenches were dug on the school field. S Company manned concrete pill boxes along the beach and experienced the first bombing raid on December 7th.

In January 1942 two platoons of S Company accompanied the Gordon Highlanders in Johore and saw action on January 26th on the road between Ayer Hitam & Kulai. After mortaring the Japanese in pouring rain they had to fight their way out of encirclement. They returned to Singapore impressed at the professionalism of the Gordon Highlanders.

The Company spent the final days before the Fall of Singapore divided between manning pill boxes between the Swimming Club and the city and under shelling and mortaring in the Holland Road area. A late task was the destruction of liquor in the cellars of the Goodwood Park Hotel.

On February 17th 1942 the men of S Company marched to Changi. In the months that followed many found themselves in other Singapore camps: River Valley Rd, Havelock Rd, Race Course Rd, Bukit

Timah. The vast majority were sent to Thailand between June 1942 and May 1943, many with the notorious F & H Forces rushed to Thailand and up the line to complete the railway construction. Others were sent at about the same time direct to Borneo & Japan. Most of the survivors of F & H Force were returned from Thailand to Singapore in December 1943. Captain Sandy Hunter [1905-1969] in Changi POW camp recorded in his notebook the deaths, mostly in Thailand, of 22 members of S Company. Many other former members of the Company also died serving with other Volunteer units.



The Scottish Company

WEBSITES TO VISIT

www.isp.org.my – the website for The Planter – the magazine for the Incorporated Society of Planters – ISP. [See p.3]

www.badanwarisan.org.my – Badan Warisan Malaysia website – The Heritage Society of Malaysia.

www.ipohworld.org – a website set up by Commander Ian Anderson RN [Retired]. This has a weblink with the MVG website, and has a good database with MVG member John Mackie on it, amongst others.

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALegM5j316nVn441RRtJ8S5beKYWVK7FLQ?index=2> – An Associated Press article giving coverage of Cemetery Maintenance around the Asian Region. It also shows family members at Kamunting Cemetery, Taiping, Malaysia, laying poppies on the graves of some of the Australian soldiers killed in action in the State of Perak.

ENGLISH MUSIC - By Becca Kenneison.

There is a mother in a bedroom, sitting on the bed. She has with her in the room about ten girls: three of her own four daughters, and seven girls who are the daughters of two of her friends. She is reading the Bible to steady all their nerves, because she is utterly afraid. The girls are all aged between ten and twenty and the soldiers have come and they are searching the house, room by room, and they are getting closer.

The girls have been raised in prosperous, respectable, church-going families: if they don't say grace before meals in their own house, they all have friends and relatives who do, so they don't think it's at all strange that they are having the Bible read to them. What they do consider odd is that the reader is so agitated that she is holding it upside-down. She must be reciting from memory.

In comes a soldier: all their nightmares in human form, armed to the teeth, battle-hardened, filthy dirty. The city to their north fell a day or so previously, and they know that there are plenty more like him around, not just searching the house but out there in the countryside. He's the first they've seen, and they have no idea what he'll do to them.

He doesn't come at them with a sword, as the mother is dreading. Instead, he speaks to them, a few quick staccato words. 'Girls, hide!' he says. 'Soldiers bad!'

The girls move very fast, through a door which is promptly locked. When the rest of the troops look into the room, there's nobody there except a middle-aged woman, reading her Bible. Perhaps she even had it the right way up by then.

Medieval Europe? English Civil War? No. Castlefield Estate at Puchong, just south of Kuala Lumpur, January 1942. The woman who read her Bible upside-down was my father's aunt, Ethel Atwell. I have this story from her daughter, Beta, so I am sure that it is true: Beta was there, Beta heard the words of 'that one nice Japanese soldier'. If he hadn't warned them, she said, they would all have been sitting on the bed when the soldiers came in, hungry for women. After that, whenever the Japanese came, the girls were locked in a bathroom and one of the boys would decoy them away. Water? You want water? I'll show you...

Seven weeks previously, Beta and Ethel and the rest of the family had been living their ordinary lives: there was a war on, but it was a long way away. Within the month, Ethel's relatives had gone south to keep well clear of the fighting. As the Japanese came closer, she and two friends, Mrs. De Kretser and Stella Hess'e, decided with their husbands to take their daughters and wait out events on a rubber estate. And then the Japanese came.

A few days before, Stella Hess'e had been standing out in front of the house in the evening light, watching a column of retreating troops, too far away for her to be certain who they were, though she would probably have been able to tell, from their wide belts and their slouch hats, that they were Volunteers. What she hadn't known was that the lad on the Norton, riding up and down the column, urging it along, was George, her only son. He, on the other hand, had ridden past the woman standing back from the road, and then realized that she looked just like his mother; but it was over so quickly, in a moment, that he'd thought his eyes were playing tricks. He was, in any case, busy on his heavy and unloved motorbike: he was his unit's dispatch rider, and when they moved from place to place, it was his job to keep the column moving, round up the stragglers. Even had he been certain that it was his mother there, as the sun dipped towards the horizon in the swift tropical dusk, he wouldn't have been able to stop to find out. He'd gone to the family home in Kuala Lumpur to say goodbye to his family a week or so before, and found them gone: he'd been told they'd gone to Castlefield, but he didn't know, as he hurried his column southwards through the coming night, that this was it. He carried on towards Singapore, ahead of the inexorable advance of the Japanese, and his parents had no idea if or when they would see him again. His mother nearly passed out when, in the middle of March, he re-appeared behind the house as she was hanging out the washing: dirty, unshaven, his hair grown long, wearing an outsize shirt and a pair of black pyjama bottoms that were, inevitably - he was a lanky lad - too short in the leg.

There is ample information about the experiences of Europeans under the Japanese occupation. However, my particular interest lies with the Eurasians, specifically with the Burgher families of Kuala Lumpur: it was in this milieu that my father spent the first eleven years of his life. Those of you who read my previous article will know that the British authorities made precious little effort to evacuate the mixed race people, even those to whom they might have felt to owe some obligation. Some escaped by their own efforts, or because someone somewhere gave them a push. However, the rest - even the families of Volunteers, and British nationals - were just abandoned. Several of my father's close relations survived those years (and several others did not); in less than two months their world changed radically and terrifyingly. There wasn't much fighting in and around Kuala Lumpur, though the town was bombed and troops and civilians were machine-gunned from the air. Within twenty-four hours of the retreat south of the British troops, the Japanese were in charge.

In Singapore, things took longer, and were worse. The city was relentlessly pounded for days as the inevitable surrender approached. The noise of the battle was tremendous and the silence that came in its wake was total and terrifying. The victorious Japanese were ruthless and the atmosphere in the occupied city was and remained tense and mistrustful. From conversations with members of my extended family, it's clear that the experience of occupation was very different in Singapore compared to Kuala Lumpur: there were similarities, but people in the

two cities began living under occupation in different states of mind: in Singapore they were battered and traumatised; in KL they were utterly stunned. For this reason I have broken my recounting into two articles; the first will look at occupation life in peninsular Malaya, the other at how things were in Singapore, and in both instances I will concentrate almost entirely on the experiences of the Eurasian community.

Most of them, it should be said, survived. Not all (massacre and malnutrition are fairly frequent Outriders of the Apocalypse in times of war) but most. It should be said also that it was bad for everyone: the Chinese in particular had a terrible time, not only in the early weeks of the occupation of Singapore, but also later on, particularly when they were suspected of helping the guerrillas: whole villages were massacred. Tamils and Malays went to work on the Burma Railway, some more-or-less voluntarily, others effectively press-ganged by the Japanese, and died there in their thousands. What I write about the Eurasians, I write in the full awareness that it was a time of terror for all of Malaya's communities. I'm writing about the Eurasians, though, because I know the most about them, and because what happened to them seems very close to me: when it's your cousins who have been at the eye of such a story, it seems very immediate, as if it could happen to you.

I should observe that when I say 'Eurasian' I am simplifying a category of person down to one word, whereas amongst themselves they were aware of a number of different designations: to one another they were Portuguese Eurasians, Dutch Burghers, Anglo-Indians, Singapore Eurasians and blends of all these. Their surnames came predominantly from Portugal, but also from the Netherlands, Britain, Ireland, Russia, Sweden, and an assortment of other places, even Armenia. Some of them, with appropriate clothing and demeanour, could pass as Indians; others were physically indistinguishable from Europeans and some even passed as such. They were products of the Imperial Enterprise, and they were, understandably, enormously loyal to it. In a large measure, it was this loyalty that led men to join the Volunteers, though those of you who have read George Hess'e's article will know that other factors, such as the urge to look dashing in a uniform and thus resemble Errol Flynn, could play a part. After the capitulation, Malaya and Singapore were home to several thousand men, a significant number of them Eurasian, who had handed over their arms, been paid up to date if they were lucky, and quietly slipped away from their Volunteer units. For the men of the FMSVF 2nd Battalion, it was a long way home to Selangor, and a difficult journey. They were all terrified of being caught, because their capture meant not just imprisonment for them – if they were lucky. It also meant internment for their wives and children: the list of civilian internees in Changi tells its own story. There, amongst the Britons and Australians, are the families of Eurasian Volunteers, either those taken at the Fall of Singapore, or picked up later. For the Volunteers who headed back into peninsular Malaya on the evacuation trains the Japanese laid on, to decant the excess, refugee, population from Singapore, it was a more dangerous journey than they knew: at least two Eurasian members of the SSVF were betrayed to the Japanese and shot on Changi beach. On the other hand, an Anglo-Indian member of the Indian Army was approached by Eurasians at fall of Singapore. They said to him, "You look like one of us, we can help you, you don't need to be taken prisoner". They gave him another shirt, hoped that his army khaki trousers wouldn't give him away, and put him on a train north, though he spoke no Malay. He ended up in Kuala Lumpur, where he was sheltered and protected by the Eurasian community. It's an incredible story, and I only know it because he married Beta Atwell after the end of the war.

As the weeks and months went by, life in occupied Malaya settled into a new version of normal, though it wasn't a normal that most people enjoyed. They grew used to being afraid: constantly anxious, and sometimes terrified. They learned to live with perpetual shortages of everything, and they learned that anything they had could be taken away from them. Anything at all: their food, their bicycles, their lives.

Eleven year old Hyacinth La Faber, the youngest child in a family of seven, had her hair cut short and was dressed as a boy, even after her mother – her father was working away on a rubber estate in Pahang – moved her family out of Malacca. The school near their house had become a Japanese barracks, and the constant presence of Japanese troops was too much for her, so they went to live with another Eurasian family and a Chinese couple in a house out of town, backing on to *belukar* (secondary jungle) and farmland. Even there, they didn't feel safe: the house lay on the main road, and several times in a few months they were there, Japanese troops came calling. As soon as it became evident that they were on their way, Hyacinth's older sisters and the young Chinese wife would run out of the back of the house, out of the garden and off into the fields and the jungle. One day, one of the sisters tripped over, and by the time she was scrambling back to her feet, she realized that a Japanese soldier was almost upon her. Unseen by him, she slid under a fallen log and lay there, as still as she could be, terrified that a snake would come and oblige her to move. The soldier, meanwhile, stopped at the log, rested his foot upon it, looked off down the path, trying to see if he'd been chasing shadows or if there had been women in the house who had run off at his approach. He'd run a long way; he wasn't sure there had been any young women there in the first place; he gave up, and started off back towards the house. The girl beneath the log barely moved a muscle, until she was certain he had gone. He had returned to the house to make further enquiries: "Got girl? Got girl?" And the two middle-aged women left in the house shook their heads, as the young cross-dresser lurked in the background.

A few of these incidents convinced Hyacinth's mother that another move was in order, and the family decamped to Kuala Lumpur, where they felt a little safer. As the occupation progressed, life grew tougher: everything was rationed. Hyacinth had found herself a job, training to be a seamstress with a Sikh tailor. He had explained to

her that there was so little work that it wasn't possible for him to pay her, but she said that that was alright, she just wanted to learn, and each day she went to work on the crossbar of her brother's bike, with a tin of sweet potatoes and tapioca for her midday meal. Rice? There was hardly any rice. It wasn't even possible to replace the inner tubes of bicycle tyres, so the tyres were solid rubber, hard and unrelenting: Beta Atwell's father, Max, rode around the rubber estates on a bone-shaking bike, since he no longer had a car, and even had he had a car, he would have had no petrol.

Occupation life was characterized by hunger, anxiety and boredom. Aside from the shortages, there were the rules and regulations, some obvious, some comprehensible, and some downright petty. The Japanese probably thought that it was obvious that all guns should be handed over, but Hyacinth's father, who was used to shooting game to eat on the rubber estate, decided that the need for protein overrode the risk. When his rifle was found, the soldiers beat him up.

Equally, it was obvious to everyone that listening to British radio broadcasts from India was an extremely dangerous activity, but nonetheless families secreted radios that could pick up the signal; some people passed news on into networks by which it could be filtered through to anti-Japanese organizations, perhaps even into the jungles, to the MPAJA. Betrayal meant almost certain death: one Kuala Lumpur Burgher, who had taken in his young twin nephews after the death of their mother was, his family presumes, betrayed by one of the household's servants. He was taken away and, as one of the nephews recounted to me, "We never saw him again". They have no idea what became of him: a sixty-five year old mystery, sixty-five years of not knowing, of imagining the worst, of having no grave.

We do, at least, know what happened to my father's cousin, Douglas Frank, who lived in Johore Bahru. He was employed by the Public Works Department, and I assume continued to work there under the Japanese, for he picked up more than a smattering of the language. He wasn't listening to the BBC just for his own interest. He took greater risks, which he obviously felt he could afford: his near relations were safe in Ceylon. He passed news on to contacts, who passed it on in their turn, into the jungles. Somehow, the Japanese suspected him of this and he was arrested, though my assumption is that they didn't find his radio: if they had, it's unlikely he'd ever have been seen alive again.

For a week, they tortured him. Although he later told his relatives that this had happened, he didn't go into details. He didn't need to, because they had heard enough stories already: being hung up by the thumbs, being beaten, having lengths of bamboo pushed under the fingernails and lit. The Japanese wanted Douglas to tell them everything he knew, but he was well aware that if he told them anything they would kill him and arrest his contacts and torture them in their turn. He denied everything, day after day. On the seventh or eighth day, as he waited in his cell, he heard two Japanese talking in the corridor outside. 'Do you suppose', said one to the other, 'that this one here knows anything?' 'No', said the other, 'I don't think he does: if he knew anything, he'd have cracked by now'. Douglas, though, was not released, but kept imprisoned for the remainder of the war. One version of the story has it that he was sent to Bahau; if this is true, it is cinematically tidy, for another of the family tales is that his younger brother, who we know was a member of Force 136, was involved, at the war's end, in the relief of Bahau.

So guns and radios were obvious no-nos. Other rules were much more obscure.

Some visitors from Singapore came to stay with the La Fabers, and to liven things up they had a party. They played music and 'danced all night'. Afterwards some of the lads were arrested, including Hyacinth's brother Ronnie, along with a Sikh friend of his, a young man always known to the La Fabers as Johnson. Their crime? As Hyacinth put it, they had been playing 'English music': in January 1943 the Japanese had put together a list of about 1,000 British and American songs, including tunes like 'Colonel Bogey' which they considered had an 'anaesthetic effect on the Malayan mind'.

Hyacinth's mother was panic-stricken. Even if she hadn't seen the decapitated heads that the Japanese sometimes displayed at the road junctions or in market places, she would have heard of them. Equally, she would have heard stories of the Kempeitai. She wanted her son and his friend freed as soon as possible and approached a half-Japanese policeman she knew. Luckily for her, his Eurasian identity outweighed his Japanese one: a wire was cut and Johnson and Ronnie made their escape. They lay up on a rubber estate, and then somehow Ronnie got a job. Johnson knew that the only way he could go back to Kuala Lumpur would be in deep disguise, so he shaved off all his hair. He had four turbans and Hyacinth, by now fourteen and exasperated by the two-yard six-monthly fabric ration, went straight to the point: "Six yards to a turban! Who would miss it?" While she set to making the turbans into clothes, Johnson obtained a trishaw, and a new career that lasted him to the end of the war.

The war's end came messily to Kuala Lumpur: it just fizzled to a close. It was nearly a month before Allied troops appeared in any number, but in the middle of September, the local surrender was signed in the hall of the Victoria Institute and the overwhelming feeling was one of relief. Shattered though they were, chaotic as the country still was, the people of Malaya could now listen to the BBC and 'English music' without fearing the sudden arrival of the Kempeitai.

With thanks to Hyacinth and George Hess'e, Peter Mayo, Beta O'Hearn and Errol Leembruggen.

**A POSTSCRIPT TO THE STORY OF "B" COY 4/SSVF ON CLUNY HILL – sent by Andrew Hwang
[See A.K. No. 13 for other information].**

Information about the final days of **Captain Cho Siow Lim** and **CQMS Tan Kim Tee** has been uncovered by new MVG member, and retired member of the Singapore military, **Daniel Kassim**. He sent this report to Andrew:-

The men were activated on the 1st December 1941. For the most part 4/SSVF was meant to be deployed as lines of communication troops which meant that they operated behind the front lines in supporting roles like guarding key installations, supply routes and at times (though rarely) were ordered to take over from front line troops in the defence. Most of the time, they were given specific predetermined tasks and areas of responsibility to carry out in case of war.

4/SSVF was unique in the sense that although the battalion was raised in Malacca it was under the command of the SSVF HQ in Singapore and its assigned battle position had been in Singapore since 1940. When activated on the 1st December 1941, 4/SSVF sent an advance party of approximately 120 men drawn from all the companies to Singapore followed by the main body a few days later. The Malayan men in 4/SSVF were not given the option to disband (as offered to the FMSVF battalions) even after Malacca had fallen to Japanese hands. Having said this, it did not make them any less brave. In any case, in the ensuing chaos, 4/SSVF was forgotten most probably because it was deployed not as a full unit but in penny packets spread all around the south of Singapore in machine posts in Katong (Geoffrey Scott Mowat) or guarding key installations like Fort Canning. 4/SSVF HQ was located in a camp in Jalan Eunos and it was from here that a party of 25 Chinese Volunteers and a number of Malays and Eurasians (all that was left at the camp) were ordered to take up positions on Cluny Hill about the 10th February 1942. This party included both Capt. Cho and CQMS Tan.

Capt Cho was killed in the mortar bombardment of 13th February 1942 and in all probability his remains were buried by CQMS Tan in the same vicinity. Orders to disband were issued only on 15th February – the day of the surrender. Most of the men of the 4/SSVF, especially "D" Company (the Eurasian Company) received the orders and some were given \$50 and told to get rid of their uniforms and whatever else that identified them as a Volunteer.

Unfortunately, the group at Cluny Hill did not get those orders and were told by their officers to stand fast until they were captured on 16th February 1942. They were first brought to the Raffles Institute grounds and then were marched to the Farrer Park Recreation Club (this may explain my grandfather's annual laying of a wreath at Farrer Park until his death in 1960) for internment.

There they were joined by a large group of Malay soldiers, some from other volunteer units but at least 300 were from the Malay Regiment. The Malay prisoners were held in the upper floor of the building while the Chinese were held below. Identified here were a Lt. Yong and a Pte. Chan Cheng Yean who later wrote about the post-surrender massacres. [ed: see A.K No. 13] They were interned for at least ten days. They were not fed anything by the Japanese but the Malay Regiment soldiers had some rice rations with them which they shared with everyone else.

The survivors of Cluny Hill were executed along with 65 others including 6 Malay officers (was Lt. Adnan among them?) and an unknown number of Eurasians (including one Pte. Lazaroo, who had successfully escaped earlier but 'had nowhere to go', and re-joined the group and was eventually executed with the rest). The escape attempt by Lazaroo is interesting as it may corroborate what my grandfather was told – that CQMS Tan had been killed trying to escape from internment with 2 others who succeeded. If Lazaroo was the 2nd man and was executed shortly after, then the 3rd man was the unnamed survivor who contacted my grandfather in secret.

The above account has been reconstructed from statements from Chan Cheng Yean and several other individuals.

It is curious that the 4/SSVF Memorial at the Stadthuys in Malacca lists 46 men from "B" Company killed in the campaign. We know of the 25 men who were butchered by the Japanese. Chan Cheng Yean made two statements in 1946 – in the first he listed those 25 men, but what of the rest – where did they die? It is now confirmed that Captain Cho died on Cluny Hill but Chan Cheng Yean mentioned that a number of his comrades disappeared in the 'Chinese Concentration Camp' (Sook Ching?). This means that a number of them had escaped and hidden themselves and possibly some may have made their way back to Malacca. Do you have any idea how Captain Todman came up with the 46 names?

RONALD WRIGHT'S DIARY – ESCAPE FROM SINGAPORE – Sent by his daughter Jill Smallshaw

Thursday, 12th February 1942

Left Collyer Quay at about 4p.m. and spent rather a hectic hour sitting in the 12 foot veterinary launch 'Babette' with a .303 at hand while **William Orr** and **George Rocker** (two veterinary colleagues – the latter was Jill's Godfather) were scrounging petrol; we had persuaded George to come with us although it was obvious that he would have preferred to stop. Hell those Nip bombers, they were coming across every ten minutes or so from the sea, probably from aircraft carriers. All is up with Singapore now for instead of coming over at 20,000 feet they are now only about 5,000 feet, these in sporadic ack ack but not much as most batteries must now be in Jap hands. The waterfront is full of the remains of the forces, mainly Australian looking for craft hence the .303, poor devils, no hope of getting off. The launch might take a couple but if we allowed on board the rest would rush in. As we left 30 bombers let loose at the docks and it was a devilish sight – the *sarang* (pilot) refused to go further that St. John Island so we landed him and picked up **Price** of the P.W.D. (Public Works Department) who was making the attempt in a sampan.

We towed it behind us and set out for Sumatra; thank goodness we are en route, Singapore is just a hell of smoke and din as the big stuff on Blakang Mati is making its last stand, perhaps by tomorrow they will be silenced for good – what an end. In the distance Pulau Sambau the island petrol store is on fire – there must be millions of gallons going up as the sea all around is on fire too.

6.30 p.m. – going over the minefield we all look pretty green and try not to look it. Old George never bats an eyelid as he opens up his 'mobile canteen' with a bottle of White Label – he would think of this – and a couple of doubles does us a lot of good. 7 p.m. engine trouble, so after Price fiddles around with the magneto, the sampan takes us in tow – thank goodness we brought it along. We see a destroyer in the distance it may be ours the 'it' is doubtful, better to give her a wide berth.

8 p.m. couple of Ryvita biscuits and we sail on in complete darkness only guided by blazing red behind us, thought we were lost, but **Mohammed Yatue** and **Mohammed Awang** of Pulau Rawa who were in the sampan knew the area and landed us at a Malay fishing village they knew. At 12.30 they got us a chicken curry – very tough but first meal for ages. Slept in 'Babette'.

Next morning Friday 13th February away at dawn, sound of gunfire still in distance. Price got engine going and with good wind did about 3 knots heading S.S.W. William mislaid 'Shell' map pinched from Malacca office so had no direction (map found later in food box). 8 a.m. divided box of George's raisins, which I had advised him to buy in Malacca to keep his car! Half a cup of water and felt better. Wish I had photographed burning Singapore. Making towards Moro Besar – a small fishing village. 9 a.m. about a mile from P. Moro heard ack ack fire and smoke – a formation of 9 Jap planes appeared and split up into threes as they peeled off dive-bombing low a) either Jap planes or ours b) ship was ours or Japs. Anyhow we would be sunk so dived into mangrove swamps – three planes saw us and flew low – mangrove swamps darned good cover – pretty sure Jap planes. (Ship was Dutch destroyer which we found out later was sunk). Mohammed Yatue knew of a hut belonging to a relative in swamp nearby, so we waded through swamp – George cutting his foot – where we were met by said relative rushing along saying "*Masok butan*" (quick into the jungle), and thinking Japs had landed at Moro, we crouched in swamp till 'planes sheered off. William thinks better to scuttle 'Babette' and continue in native craft – being less conspicuous. Pity to get rid of boat, but question is if 'Babette' is un-seaworthy and engine unreliable, may attract attention of bloody-minded Jap fighter – native craft has sails and is certain to go. Decided to abandon her and we contracted with friend of Mohammed Yatue to take us over to Sumatra; owner said boat was a king pin of Malay boats. True she was bigger than 'Babette' with 6 Malays in her; devils wanted \$300 (A\$ 45) – a bit steep but we had no choice; they put a few planks in bottom and we piled in. William wanted to do job properly and dressed up as a Malay – big stuff loves to be dramatic! We crept in and Malays covered us with grain mats. Malays think if they are seen in company of whites they are liable to be bumped off – probably true.

We push off for Sumatra, 30 hours sail away, and the old tub is leaking like a sieve requiring bailing with buckets; making good headway with following wind but in 5 hours we sight land which they say is Sumatra. Mohammed Yatue had said 30 hours, something fishy here especially as we are heading N.W. – these devils looking awkward and the way they were all openly showing knives was rather too much so George and I moved forward with my .303 and George with his .45. William went aft with his .45 across his knee – Price was shaking like a leaf – poor devil. We told them to land us at the nearest island where we might get information; they object but William suddenly gets clumsy and starts treading on their bare toes with his mountain boots and they jump to it – guns can be useful too. A Chinese man organizing the boat says there are no Japs or land ahead – sea choppy and the old tub is leaking faster than two buckets could bail.

We landed, and while William and Price went ashore to scout, George and I kept guard. It was Sanglan on Pulau Kundor. William returned in half an hour having contacted a friendly *Penghulu* (Headman) who said Sumatra was far away; the island is about 20 x 20 miles with a large village on the other side for which a bus was leaving shortly. We decided to cross by road and try our luck there.

The *Penghulu* said \$50 was fair price to our Malay rogues for their sampan and this we paid.

We commandeered the bus and pushed off on a bad road – the driver drove like hell scattering chickens and goats right and left – this was far more dangerous than crossing a minefield! We arrived at Tanjong Batu on the west side of the island and asked for the Dutch resident who normally was stationed there; he had however fled and it seemed as though we were stuck. We saw a steam tug – Chinese owned – who offered to take us to Sumatra – but we would have to wait 3 days for a pilot and even then he wanted \$400, but after an hour of bargaining with local sampan owner we saw three Europeans walking down the road; they were English planters who had escaped in two large motor boats.

One was **Pyne** from Pulau Samboe, **de Burgh Thomas** and **Jimmy Green** from South Africa; they offered to take us along

which was providential and they managed to secure a pilot (Malay) as the passage was dangerous (reef etc.). We were to sail at dawn. That night these 3 crazy fools started boozing and finally were quite incapable of reasonable action. They flashed lights about and as we saw other flashes in the distance as well as sounds of machine gun fire this was rather stupid. At dawn on **Saturday, 14th**, we started, but not without a scare, for we saw on the horizon what resembled a flight of planes in perfect formation but actually they were large birds flying low – in the distance the resemblance was remarkable. The larger motor launch (the 'Alapac') was a sumptuous affair and the smaller 'Kapala'. That night we kept 2 hour watches – at 2.30 a.m. (Price's watch) he raised hell as he heard a larger vessel approaching with no lights showing – he was frightened to death and I saw him clambering overboard ready to swim ashore! Nothing, however, materialized, as they probably didn't see us. It was a peculiar night with distant chatter of machine gun fire with occasional rumble of guns. Next morning we transferred to the 'Alapac' as the sea was choppy and we were being swamped in the 'Kapala'.

At 8.45 a.m. we saw a cruiser (Jap) in the distance and beat it for mangrove swamps. In this way we hugged the land until we reached Sunger Goentoeng on Kataman Island, which was a Dutch military outpost – fortunately the Japs had not yet taken it, we hoisted the old red flannel and chugged in.

There we found a few Dutch officers and more valuable a small Dutch Oil Co. steam tug in the possession of the Harbour Master of Djambe (H.A.W. de Goede). He was taking the tug 'Shen Kwang' down to Djambe an oil field town 80 miles up the Djambe River, which runs near Palembang the Aerodrome in South Sumatra. Pyne, Thomas and de Burgh decided to stick to their plan and go up the Indragiri River thence overland to Padang on the other side of Sumatra. William and George were inclined to go with them. Price decided to go with de Goede. I was undecided, as it seemed to me a better chance of getting to Perth from Java than from Padang. George and William, however, decided to go with de Goede as Pyne & co. seemed too keen on loitering about and boozing, which was dangerous as speed was imperative. We were glad that the old party did not break up. The tug – 'Shen Kwang' – had been shelld and the condensers were not in good order and the extent of progress was problematical.

At 2.30 p.m. there was great excitement as firstly a formation of 27 Jap planes flew right over us and after circling around made off, then, later, we saw a large motor launch crowded with people appearing around the point heading our way. Remembering the Cruiser of Nippon seen a little earlier we thought we were sunk. We were all ready to have at least a go at the Nips before the end, and the Dutch got an ante-tank gun and machine gun on the boat. However, through binoculars they were seen to be European, much to our relief. They were escapees from Singapore. **Hodson**, a master mariner, whose ship had been sunk, **Ansell** an engineer of Dunlop and Co., and nine R.A.S.C. (Royal Army Service Corps) men in the charge of a sergeant who had been cut off in Singapore, so they said.

We all boarded the tug and sailed that evening. Twice during that night we grounded on reefs and we opened up a few tins of food – the first for two days and some Nescafe, which warmed us considerably.

Sunday, 15th February. We slept on deck covered with a tarpaulin, which originally I had made for my lorries in Malacca. It was darn cold but the dawn saw us well on our way entering the mouth of the Djambe River. At 8.30 a.m. we saw ahead a small tug and were hailed in English. On board was a party sent out from Singapore a couple of weeks ago to dump food on islands for any who might escape. These iron rations were made up in large sealed kerosene type tins comprising balanced rations of rice, raisins, bitter chocolate, biscuits and 100 cigarettes enough to last for 15 meals. These had been put in likely spots all over the islands. **Col. Goodfellow** and **Commander Petrie R.N.** were in charge of the party and their crew had deserted and the party were stokers, able-bodied seamen and generally everything. They had picked up **Sim Boon Seng** and his family (wealthy Singapore Chinese) from a small sampan. The tug belonging to Goodfellow was cracking up and so we helped them along. They were anxious to make Batavia, and he became very useful later on, so the bread we cast on the waters stood us in good stead!

This is our 4th day and neither George, William nor I had shaved nor bathed for that matter and we are somewhat odorous, but oh boy are we fierce looking. The run up the Djambe River was lovely – these tropical rivers are lovely except in colour which is usually clay coloured. At 10.30 a.m. we met a Dutch scout half way to Djambe who reported absence of Japs at Djambe though he thought they had captured Palembang Aerodrome and were heading north to the oilfields at Djambe. Speed was necessary so we pushed up stream and reached within 3 miles of Djambe that night as we did not want to risk running into possible Jap Hands had they taken Djambe in the interim. We anchored in mid-stream.

Monday 16th February 1942. We started off at dawn having seen the Dutch tricolour flying as we steamed in. Goodfellow and William went ashore to scout around. While we were preparing to disembark by launch the local Resident came along waving his arms and demanded the launch. Apparently the Japs were expected anytime and orders were to blow up the oil; installations and evacuate the town. In a matter of minutes the whole town was ablaze and the oil wells went up into smoke. We went on to the pier and dumped ourselves there. William and Col. Goodfellow came along reporting that they had secured two lorries for our use. These, however, never materialized as the whole town was evacuating and after a while the whole place was deserted. We considered the next move and decided to push on up the river as far as we could go then take to motorboats and try to make Padang then the jungle. But as we started to get back to our tug a small petrol barge became adrift and fouled the old 'Shen Kwang' which being made of timber immediately caught fire and sank before our eyes. We then decided to foot slog the way, about 400 – 500 miles. Fortunately the Dutch Resident saw our plight and found two lorries, which were about to be smashed up: they had no tread on the tyres and the engines were very ancient but the old corks stood up to the journey magnificently.

We piled in and pushed off at about midday. We began to have slight misgivings about Goodfellow, as he certainly seemed reluctant to take over the R.A.M.C. nine men. They were completely helpless – no money, no food, no idea of the country, language or its people. We could not turn them loose and yet they were a great handicap to us. It was significant that Goodfellow and his mob piled into one lorry and left the R.A.M.C. fellows with us.

We made good time running S.W. towards Palembang, which we heard, had not been captured. The idea was to get to the railhead near Palembang (150 miles away) then go down to Oesthaven at the southern extremity of Sumatra from whence we might pick up a boat across the 40-mile straits to Java. At 4 p.m. we arrived at Merasabok on the banks of a large river across which ran a car ferry. There were over 40 cars and lorries ahead, and the ferry comprised a wooden raft attached to which was a small outboard motor. Each crossing took about ¼ hour and fortunately two cars could be accommodated at a time. We waited 9 hours and finally got across to the other side.

The road was wide enough for one lorry and was made of red earth, which is found all over the Insulinde. We drove all night right over a mountain range seated on 4 gallon petrol tins – it was bitterly cold, and a petrol tin makes a most uncomfortable seat. **Next morning, the 17th**, we reached another river over which ran a ferry similar to the one we crossed about 7 hours before. This ferry took us into Moeratero where we had a rotten breakfast at exorbitant cost at a Rest House. We learned here that our first information was correct and that the road south was cut off and that Palembang had fallen. There was only one road open and that was north to Sawahloento and Padang. On the advisability of this we had no information save that all shipping from Padang had stopped and that the Japs had not reached Padang. We were also told that Padang was 9 hours away by road, and it took us 2 days.

After filling up the tank and all spare drums with petrol we pushed off. The old truck was behaving quite well and for the first half of the day the going was good but the land was badly cultivated as compared to Malaya with a few areas hacked out of the jungle, badly kept banana plantations, scrubby tapioca and rice under dry cultivation. In the midst a rough shack provided the dwelling of these indigent people. We crossed two more rivers by the same type of outboard motor-driven rafts and then started to climb up into the hill country. After the intense heat of the lowlands this was pleasant, and the scenery changed to the colder jungle type tropical hill country with immense trees and ferns 20 feet or more. There were troops of monkeys crashing through the tops, and every conceivable colour of butterfly and moth and gorgeous coloured birds including the lovely sapphire blue kingfisher and scarlet and green parrots. The little neat villages bordered the road every few miles, above which the mountains rose beyond the clouds. The emerald green of the terraced wet rice fields up the hill sides were irrigated by crystal clear mountain streams that invited cool bathes to us but which only the brown bodied mature children enjoyed with the inevitable water buffalo lying submerged with just eyes and nose sticking out. Without question this is some of the grandest scenery I have ever seen, as it is over 6,000 feet high, and it had none of the steaminess of the Malayan uplands. For a holiday it would be grand seated in the comfort of a car instead of petrol tins!

We were making for Sawahloento that night which is a hill station with a good hotel. It was dark when we approached the town and we eventually found the hotel where we had a meal, and best of all a bath, and slept in a bed – we had almost forgotten what comfort was.

Next morning we set off to Padang and the hotel keeper refused to accept one cent in payment – our several parties numbered about 25 by this time! We started off for Padang during the morning and the road was full of hairpin bends. It was a blessing we did not realize what we were traversing the previous night, as the old truck had no brakes to speak of, and the road was a track cut out of the mountainside. Sawahloento is really a coal-mining town, owned more or less by the Dutch Government. With some of the profits from the mines they had laid out a very fine hill station. A short railway connects Sawahloento with the coal port of Padang.

The Dutch are experts at irrigation and they had harnessed all the small mountain streams into aqueducts which served the town with good cool water (a great benefit in the tropics) and the force of water gave good pressure and in addition it was used to provide lighting.

When we arrived at Padang we were taken to the Burgomeister who turned us over to the local reception committee who provided accommodation with Dutch residents. We were put up by a schoolmaster and his wife, who were extraordinarily kind to us, and were most annoyed at the idea of payment. At Padang, transport along the broad well-kept tree lined avenues was a dogcart drawn by the hard Sumatran ponies. At night these dogcarts are most attractive with twinkling lanterns and the tinkling of bells as the ponies trot along.

Next day, Wednesday, 18th February, the British Consul was of no assistance to us so we scouted around on our own.

What we had heard at Moeratero was correct, as there were no ships arriving or leaving the port. We went down to Emmahaven Port as, at a last resort, we thought we could manage to sail the 500 miles to Java hugging the coast in a sailing boat. We had Hodson with us who was a master mariner.

We looked up Col. Goodfellow who had radioed Batavia, as there were 250 odd British and Australians at Padang who had got out of Singapore. He told us that there was a chance of being picked up by a warship that was around that port. We went down to the docks at Emmahaven and sat around all day. William had a touch of fever and was feeling pretty rotten.

Commander Petrie said that we might be taken off depending on the size of the warship and that we had better split parties into two groups and toss up. George suggested that our party of 6 should split up into two groups: George, William and me or Ansell, Hodson and Price. Ansell spoke, as I never expected anyone to do under the circumstances, and said he would not agree to that and thought that it should be decided upon who had the greatest responsibility – we asked him whom he thought was the most responsible and he said he thought that he himself was because he had two grandchildren. Finally we made him feel pretty small and he agreed to our suggestion – we got George to call the toss as he is lucky and never loses the toss and he won!

As it happened it didn't matter as a large destroyer H.M.S. Encounter turned up and took us all aboard. We boarded at 4 p.m. and she left immediately zig-zagging hard with escapees all over the decks. We sat down on the top of the engine room housing. It was a most unpleasant journey as the destroyer was keeling over as she zig-zagged, and at night the pouring rain froze us, and the heat of the engine room nearly roasted us. However, the ratings were kindness itself and produced vast quantities of hot tea, tinned herrings and vast chunks of bread. We were lucky as one of my prize possessions which had

accompanied us on our journey was a large quart pewter beer mug given to me by Uncle Harry on my 21st birthday; this mug held large quantities of tea which kept us warm.

Thursday, 19th February, we spent all day on the destroyer and it was thoroughly uncomfortable with an occasional 'stations signal' as planes were sighted. It poured with rain most of the day.

Friday, 20th February, at about 8.30 we steamed into Tanjong Priok the port of Batavia. It was amazing the manner in which this destroyer was handled. She seemed to steam right up into the harbour at a fast speed, headed over to port, straightened out and slid into her berth.

As we were waiting disembarkation, William saw an old K.P.M. Dutch friend of his, **Marsden**, whom he knew in Singapore. Marsden rallied round and fixed up a room at Hotel den Nedelanden and saw to exchanging our Straits currency with Guilders. We had made George 'Treasury Chief' having handed over all our cash to him. This we pooled and divided into three. We did this to all our belongings. When we wanted money – George doled it out as he thought fit. We then went to our hotel and had the most glorious cool beer I had ever had. Then a bath, food and sleep.

Saturday 21st February, we went to see the British Consul who was of no use and who handed us over to the Malayan Government Agent who was still more useless. He kept us waiting 3 ½ hours to see him, after having made an appointment. He told us to make our own arrangements and so we went down to Tanjong Priok – no luck, but we fortunately got back our passports. We then went to the Cable Office and I cabled Margaret (who was in Perth having got away on the Orion with 2 ½ year old Jill) '**SAFE JAVA – WRIGHT**'. **

George, bless him, had a hunch and suggested that we return to the British Consul. When we arrived, George let out a yell as he recognized an old Malayan friend **Juill**, a Dane, who had left Singapore in the old prize freighter "Thapsatri Nawa of Siam". This old tub had a direct hit aft in Singapore – 183 holes in her and lifeboats smashed, no wireless transmitter and a list to port. She was taken out of Singapore by **Capt. Morgensen**, a Dane, famous as a sea captain up the China Coast whose exploits of luck and devilment are legendary.

Morgensen offered us a lift and we were down at the docks in 2 hours. We were asked to bring crockery etc. and as we did not know how to get them, George pinched enough from the hotel for our needs in a most amazing manner. Afterwards in our room he removed the loot from his shirt – plates, spoons, knives, glasses etc. without batting an eyelid.

We sailed in the old tub next morning – **Sunday, 22nd February**, and went down the Sunda Straits (Dive Bomb Alley) at a serene 4 knots (she could do no more) with Morgy on the bridge blowing the steam whistle yelling "To hell with the Japs!" In this spot 80% of shipping was sunk by the Japs. Morgensen's luck held again. We took about 2 weeks to reach Perth and struck no more trouble until reaching my wife!!!

** **N.B.** Another cable was sent by Ronald to Margaret, although this may well have been some time later since it had a Sydney 'stamp' on it, but it read 'Margaret Acushla, the boys are returning, so beat up ten eggs and keep the fire burning, Ronald wants treacle and Bill wants meringue, and all George requires is a bottle to bang!' Ronald was 29 when he escaped from Singapore.

Note from Jill: George Rocker's book "Escaped Singapore Heading Homeward" was finally published in 1990 by Graham Brash of Singapore, although the draft was sent to Ronald in Cambridge in 1962! Price was not mentioned in the book and the names of Pyne, de Burgh Thomas and Jimmy Green were altered. The name of the book was taken from the telegram George sent his wife Kathleen on arrival in Java to tell her he was safe. She had escaped at the end of January on the 'Empress of Japan' to Ceylon and onward to Ireland. This ship was later called 'Empress of Scotland'.

The occupants of 162 Mount Pleasant were George Rocker in the 1930s, William Orr in the 1940s and we lived there from 1949 – 1956! It was obviously designated for the Chief Veterinary Officer, Singapore throughout that time.

Ronald died in 1966, William Orr in 1948 and George Rocker unknown, but certainly quite some time after Ronald. Margaret died in 1994 and Jill now lives near Cambridge, having spent 26 years of her married life in Hong Kong. She is married to Richard Smallshaw and they have three children.

Jill typed these notes in 2002 from Ronald's hand written notes written during his escape. Although most of the places are, hopefully, spelt correctly, it was sometimes difficult to read the writing. The signatures of Ronald, George and William are engraved on the side of the beer mug with 'Singapore, "Babette", Sumatra, Java, Australia, Feb, March, 1942'. Needless to say Ronald drank his beer from this mug until the day he died!

A MISSING CHAPTER – by Ian Johnston

After my father died of leukaemia in 1973 my mother revealed that my father had had a previous marriage but that he had "lost" his first wife during the war. My mother chose not to reveal anything more; indeed, she never spoke a word about it to me but only to my older brother, and out of respect I felt unable to question her myself. Thus the subject was closed, but as time went by I became increasingly curious as to this missing chapter in my father's life. Who had he married? What happened to her when Singapore fell? Did I have any half-brothers or sisters? I was resigned to never knowing.

My father, Thomas Johnston, left London for Bombay in 1934 as an accountant for Kodak Ltd. He joined the Bombay Light Infantry Patrol and won trophies for rifle shooting. In 1937 he transferred to Singapore. By February 1940 he was a Sapper in the Singapore Fortress Royal Engineers (Volunteers) and by 1st December 1941 was a Bombardier in the First Battalion of the Straits Settlements Volunteer Force.

My father was a man of few words and certainly did not speak much about his war-time experiences. Once only, with bitterness and much regret in his voice, I heard him tell that in the last days before the surrender he was on searchlight duty at the harbour, under orders not to let any vessel leave, and that he was involved in the sinking

of an allied ship.

As a child I often asked my father how he obtained a large, nasty looking scar on his lower leg, just above his right foot, and he told that it was the result of an injury on a night march. He was in the camp hospital for treatment to this leg wound when the Japanese were taking prisoners to work on the Burma railway and he reckoned that this saved his life.

Their ration was rice, augmented by leaves or grass or anything else that could be scavenged. Once my father ate dog but could never bring himself to eat rat. He noted how the Australians were particularly inventive and determined in their efforts to survive. One Australian had a yellow stone that he tried to pass off as a gold ingot. When prisoners were moved to a camp that was supervised by Koreans some of the friendlier Japanese guards gave out warnings, for Koreans were known to be notoriously cruel to their captives. On 16th April 1945 my father was with a group of prisoners taken to the Singapore Swimming Club and made to pose in propaganda photos, sat at tables laden with drinks and cakes, which were subsequently removed.

My father joked how, after his release, his rank of Bombardier was mistaken for brigadier and temporarily he enjoyed the privileges of that rank. Hospitalized in Madras, he returned to England and by 1946 had resumed his duties for Kodak in Singapore.

My mother had served in the A.T.S. and after the war was recruited into the newly formed Joint Intelligence Bureau, taking a post in Singapore where she met and married my father. My brother and I were both born in Kuala Lumpur.

By chance, in March 2009, I came across the M.V.G. website and corresponded with Jonathan Moffatt. The following day Jonathan e-mailed me with a most astonishing piece of news. M.V. G. member Stephanie Hess had looked in the captivity diary kept by her grandfather Joseph Dunne, who was also a 1/SSVF P.O.W., and found this entry for Christmas Day 1942: "I shared a tin of bully-beef with Johnston of Kodak and so had another good meal". Stephanie kindly wrote to me: "When I transcribed my grandfather's diary and became interested in the lives and fates of all his friends and others mentioned by him I could hardly have imagined how that period of their lives would cast such far reaching ripples into the future and would bring together their descendents so many years down the line. It is one of the most exciting things about researching the Hidden Years of Gran'pa's life". Stephanie had another big surprise: "I have attached a scan of a small scrap of paper that has nestled safely in the pages of one of Gran'pa's diary notebooks for nearly 70 years - I don't know if my grandfather ever did get in touch with your dad after the war. They must have exchanged addresses when my grandfather was shipped off to Japan in May 1943. I gather your father remained in Singapore for the duration".

13411 Bdr. T. J. JOHNSTON, S.S.V.F.
KODAK LTD., KINGSWAY, LONDON, W.C.2.
PARENTS
866 NORTH CIRCULAR ROAD, LONDON, N.W.2.
WIFE
(I.F. JOHNSTON (AUXILIARY NURSING SERVICE,
INDIA)
% E.F. MASEYK,
9 NORTH ROAD, FRASER TOWN, P.O.,
BANGALORE, INDIA.

Stephanie's description of ripples reaching far into the future couldn't have been truer. Not only did I feel incredibly moved to see my father's handwriting, written during the harrowing experience of prison life, but what I found even more remarkable was the content of the note, in which he had written his wife's name and an address. It was evident that my father's wife had been evacuated and in all probability this address was of relatives of hers in India. At long last I had opened the first page in the missing chapter of my father's life history.

I have been a member of the genealogy website Genes Reunited for several years. Searching on this site for anyone who has ancestors with the name Maseyk, I was very fortunate to make contact with a granddaughter of Frederick Ernest Maseyk, whose address was given on the note. His daughter, Ida Faith Johnston, had gone to live with him after being evacuated from Singapore. Ida's niece was able to tell me the full story.

Ida was born in Gorakpur, India, the descendent of Dutch merchants who had arrived in India in the 18th century. She studied nursing in Bombay which is where she met my father. An excellent athlete, Ida qualified for India's

1936 Olympic team but was unable to make the trip to Berlin. My father was a first rate photographer and Ida a talented artist. She used to tint my father's photos, there being no colour photography at the time. She followed my father out to Singapore and they were married in St. Andrew's Cathedral, Singapore, on 3rd July 1937. More than I could have hoped for, Ida's niece was able to find a number of photos of her aunt and my father in her mother's album. There were no children.

Ida was evacuated to Colombo on an American troopship, and from there on to India. Two American troopships are listed as being involved in the evacuation of civilians from Singapore. Both had been passenger liners drafted into service by the U.S. government and re-named. The largest American ocean liner of the time S.S. America, became the U.S.S. West Point, and the S.S. Manhattan became the U.S.S. Wakefield. These were loaned to Britain. They sailed from Bombay with troop reinforcements for Singapore and after their disembarkment immediately took on board civilian evacuees. 400 were taken on board the Wakefield and 2,000 on the West Point. They left Keppel harbour, Singapore, on Friday 30th January 1942 and both made for Colombo.

In India, Ida was reunited with her family and took up the duty of nursing. She heard nothing from my father and after a while it was presumed that he was dead. While working at the army hospital in Jallunder she met a British army officer and a child was born to them. In 1946 my father filed for divorce.

This, then, was the story of a romance that ended in a way that must have been often repeated during the turbulent days of war, with couples separated for long periods of time and new relationships formed. My father would no doubt have felt very bitter about the whole thing and it is no surprise that this marriage was never discussed in my childhood home. These days the social climate has changed, divorce is much more common and perhaps family secrets such as this are a thing of the past.

I am grateful to all those involved in the unravelling of this story and it remains a source of wonder to me that I have finally come to learn of this missing episode in my father's life. It is indeed a marvel that through the technology of the internet events of the past such as this, which in previous times would have remained buried, can now be unearthed at the click of one or two buttons.



Sapper T.J. Johnston, S.S.R.E. (V) August 1940.



Thomas Johnston and Ida Maseyk, St Andrew's Cathedral, Singapore, 3rd July 1937.

OBITUARIES

It is with deep regret that we record the deaths of four of our senior members, and in Australia, two well-known Malayan Volunteer Veterans. Our sincere condolences go to their families.

JOHN HEDLEY 1916 – 2009

As announced in the October 2009 edition of 'Apa Khabar', John Hedley died on 25th September 2009. John was a very active veteran member of MVG and will be greatly missed. He was a true friend and supporter and always attended MVG events at the NMA, including the presentation last May. Our condolences go to John's sister, and his two sons, Richard and John, and their families.

John's funeral service was held in the village church at Bickenhill where he lived, and was attended by some 130 local friends and MVG members.

John was born in 1916 at Riding Mill, Northumberland, the family later moving to Leyburn, Yorkshire. John was educated at Repton School and went to Malaya in 1937. He was Assistant Planter, Gedong Estate, Bagan Serai, Perak, and the Paloh Plantations Ltd., Johore. He enlisted in the JVE in May 1937 as Sapper 974. In December 1941 he was commissioned 2nd Lt. [General List] 221757 and attached to the 1st Mysore. With others he escaped from Penggarang, Johore on 17th February 1942 and worked on the Sumatra escape route. He was a POW at Padang, Glogor-Medan, Roadworks in Aceh then on the Sumatra Railway. Returning to planting in Johore 1946-1949 he managed Bukit Paloh Estate. In 1949 in Singapore he married former Sumatra internee & QA Naomi Davies, then left Malaya to enter the world of industrial relations in Coventry [Standard Motors/British Leyland]. He retired to Rose Cottage, Bickenhill, Solihull.

A more substantial account of John's wartime experiences by **Audrey McCormick** follows these obituaries.

KATHLEEN EMILY BEATRICE REEVE 11TH May 1907 – 9th November 2009

Kathleen Jolliffe was born in West Ham in 1907 and brought up in East London where her father worked at The London Hospital. She was educated at Sir John Cass School in the City of London. On leaving school she wanted to look after children, and joined a large house in Buckinghamshire as a Nursery Nurse.

At the age of 23, she decided that she wanted to train as a hospital nurse and enrolled at Brighton Hospital. She was not happy there and moved to Ipswich in Suffolk to complete her training.

In 1934 she met Eric Reeve at a Supper Dance, while out with friends. He was at home on leave from Malaya, where he had a teaching post at the Victoria Institute in KL. Kathleen fell in love with him saying that he was, "the most handsome man that she had ever met".

Eric returned to Malaya and they lost contact. Kathleen completed her nursing training and went on to do a midwifery course; training in children's nursing; and courses in Public Health Nursing. One day she saw an advert in a Nursing Journal for Nurses in Malaya and Singapore, and applied. She was accepted provided she completed her Public Health Training. Before the results were announced, she sailed for Singapore in 1937 and was given a posting in Singapore at the General Hospital in the Children's Ward. Several weeks later she discovered that Eric Reeve was also in Singapore teaching now at the Raffles Institute.

A year later, in July 1938, they were married in St. Andrew's Cathedral and came home on leave. Returning to Malaya in January 1939, Eric was promoted to Headmaster of the Bandar Hilir English School in Malacca. He also joined the Malacca Volunteer Corps and became Officer i/c the Signals Section. Daughter Rosemary was born in January 1940. It was a time of great happiness, but Kathleen sensed something dreadful was going to happen. In December 1941, Eric was mobilized and sent down to Singapore with the Malacca Volunteer Corps. Kathleen remained in Malacca but shortly after Christmas, she was advised to move down to Johore Bahru where she stayed with their best man James Bain MC, also of the Education Department. Two weeks after the New Year, Eric booked passages for Kathleen and Rosemary on the "Aorangi" bond for Australia. They disembarked at Fremantle without luggage which was sent on to Adelaide. After 6 weeks billeted at Perth WA, they flew to Sydney and boarded S.S. Ulysses, a cargo boat bound for England via the Panama Canal.

With German U-boats operating in the Caribbean, the Ulysses collided with "Gold Heels" a Panamanian Tanker, and was holed in the bows. Sailing under reduced speed, the ship was torpedoed on 11th April 1942. Landed at Charleston, South Carolina by an American destroyer, the passengers were finally sent to Nova Scotia via New York to join a convoy of 100 ships bound for Greenock in Scotland.

After the war – and receiving news of Eric's death on the Burma-Thailand Railway – Kathleen returned to Malaya in January 1947 to continue her nursing career. Her job as Health Visitor took her all over Malaya from Singapore, to Johore Bahru, Kuala Kangsar and Alor Star. She set up the Infant Welfare Centre in Kuala Kangsar and became the personal Nurse to the Raja Perempuan, first wife to the Sultan of Perak in the early 1950s. Her final appointment, until 1958, was as Health Matron, Johore.

On retiring from Malaya in 1958, Kathleen joined the nursing staff in the Sanatorium at Uppingham Boys School before taking the post as Sister in charge of the San at Roedean School for Girls, where she stayed for 8 years before retiring to her bungalow in Ipswich.

For the last 20 years of her life, she moved to Devon to be near her daughter Rosemary, and lived happily in her own house until the age of 98. Following a short, but severe illness she moved into a Residential Home where she lived until her death on 9th November.

GEORGE GRAHAM EUGENE WISEMAN 1910 – 17TH November 2009

The son of George Wiseman, the General Manager of Boustead & Co. Ltd., he was born in 1910. He became an Assistant at Bousteads, Singapore then Port Swettenham. On holiday in Kashmir with his wife Margaret in December 1941, he returned with other Volunteers on the S.S. Tai Sang, and survived its sinking off Malaya. He rejoined his unit FMSVF 45 Reserve MT Company and became a POW at Singapore. Sent to Thailand from River Valley Road with D Battalion on October 12th 1942. Returned to Bousteads, Singapore as head of their Lloyd's Agency then retired to Jersey. George died 17.11.2009 [aged 99] in Perth WA. George's captivity diary can be read online at <http://www.pows-of-japan.net/books.htm>

In Australia, George and his wife Bobby [WRAC dec.] were among the original members of the NMBVA WA State Branch. They were also members of the Thai Burma Railway Association.

IAN DENYS PEEK 1921 – November 2009

Best known to us as the author of "One 14th of an Elephant" [2003] Ian was the son of Sidney Peek, Manager of an Insurance firm in Shanghai then Singapore. Born in 1921, Denys and his brother Ron spent much of their childhood in 1920s Shanghai before being sent to Framlingham College, Suffolk to complete their education. They joined their family in Singapore in March 1939 and Denys worked for the Wharf Dept. Singapore Harbour Board. A L/Cpl. In the 1/SSVF Armoured Cars Company he and Ron became POWs at Singapore then were sent to Thailand with "D" Battalion in October 1942. His highly acclaimed memoirs describing his experiences as a POW in Thailand were published in 2003. He and Ron returned to Singapore post war and set up Singapore Transport and Storage Company, later retiring to Western Australia.

FRANK A. H. CHAMPKIN 1921 – 19TH November 2009

A member of the British Army Military Police, Frank was sent to the Burma Railway after capture in Singapore and time spent in Changi. He ended up in Kami Songkurai near the Three Pagodas Pass on the borders with Burma. After the war, Frank returned to his home in Suffolk, and following a Pilgrimage to Thailand and Burma in the 1990s, he was a founder member of the Three Pagodas Group, which became the Kwai Railway Memorial Group. He became Chairman of the Group in 1997, a position he held until the Group was formally closed, having achieved its goal of providing books for the Library at the Australian Hell Fire Pass Museum. Frank later became a very supportive member of the MVG and took a great interest in the achievements and activities of the Group. He died at home in the early hours of 19th November aged 88. The MVG sends its sincere condolences to his daughter Gillian and her family.

EDITH INNES-KER 1916 – December 2009

MVG member Enid Innes-Ker died on 12th December, 2009 aged 93. Edith was the widow of William MacDonald 'Tam' Innes-Ker of Harper Gilfillan, Singapore and Penang. They married at the Presbyterian Church, Singapore in January 1938. Tam was a Sgt. in the Scottish/S Company 1/SSVF and was a POW in Singapore and Thailand. A survivor of 'F' Force and Songkurai, his diary is in the IWM. Edith, working for the Malayan Broadcasting Corporation, was evacuated from Singapore in February 1942 on the Rochuissen. They returned to Singapore and Penang post war. Our condolences to sons Robert and Peter and their families.

We also note the obituaries of **David Paton**, a signaller serving with 155th (Lanarkshire Yeomanry) Field Regiment, who was sent to the Burma Railway in October 1942, and **Ron Bowey**, who, as a photographer recorded the Japanese surrender to Lord Mountbatten in Singapore.

The obituary of **Major Jimmy McWilliam**, a post war lawyer/judge in Singapore, can be read online – see <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/military-obituaries/army-obituaries/6339259/Major-Jimmy-McWilliam.html>

JOHN HEDLEY'S WARTIME EXPERIENCES – by Audrey Holmes McCormick

John Hedley was born at Riding Mill, Northumberland, in 1916 of a farming family, and was educated at the lovely old Repton School, Derbyshire – once an abbey. In 1937 he left for Malaya as an Assistant Manager on Gedong Estate Rubber Plantation, Province Wellesley, followed by 2 years on Bukit Paloh Estate in Johore, where he joined the Johore Volunteer Engineers as a Sapper. He arrived back from leave in Australia in time for Mobilization on 1st December 1941, and was commissioned as 2nd Lt. in HM Forces General Service. He was posted to 1st Mysore Infantry as a Special Services Officer, stationed first at Jurong, Singapore, then transferred to Penggarang Garrison in Johore, until the Fall of Singapore in February 1942, when, with others of his group, he escaped to Sumatra in the junk of a Chinese friend, to the Riouw (or Rhio) Archipelago. There they transferred to a coastal steamer to Sumatra, and in fact unwittingly sailed up the (already officially planned) escape route of the Indragiri River in Sumatra, arriving at Rengat township. At Rengat, John spotted two planter friends, Tex Poole and John Parsons (and also met his future wife, a Queen Alexandra Military Nursing sister, QAIMNS Naomi Davies). The three men decided to find a small boat and take it out to some islands to look for others shipwrecked there, following the horrendous sinkings of civilian and other escape ships from Singapore by Japanese bombing and machine-gunning. These survivors they would ferry over to the Indragiri Escape Route.

They soon found a Singapore Harbour Board Red Cross launch at Rengat, complete with awning in the best Hollywood tradition. It was 30' x 8', with a draught of only 18 inches: (this they considered would save them from the reefs around the islands...). The launch previously ferried stretcher cases from the islands around Singapore into the General Hospital there – not for open seas; nonetheless it had arrived in Sumatra. It had a small Thorneycroft engine, petrol driven. This encouragingly started “almost first time”. They collected fuel from abandoned vessels at Rengat, filled extra drums to tie on deck, and when the Dutch Police asked them to ferry some policemen 40 miles downriver, they set off numbering 20 on board. Once the police disembarked, the trio decided to continue to the islands nearby to look for survivors – sailing all night by the stars for that first night, until they salvaged a small and elderly binnacle compass from the sunken gunboat, *HMS Grasshopper*, at Singkep Island.

They continued to Dabo, the capital of Singkep. There the Dutch Controller arrived on the jetty: he took one look and announced that he would allow men to go in the boat, but no women. “We certainly hadn’t thought it looked *that* unsafe”, John said. After a storm had blown over, they took on 14 male passengers plus an acquired chart of the local seas, and some candles to see the compass at night. (When these were finished, they resorted to striking matches instead....). One passenger was Oswald Gilmour, who describes their passage in his book “Singapore to Freedom”, and praised the unselfish efforts of the men in saving shipwrecked people, when they “might have made an early bid for safety through Sumatra with every chance of success” for themselves.

Japanese planes fortunately ignored them, but they decided to anchor until night to make the crossing from Singkep back over to Sumatra. “We set a course for Sumatra on our old-fashioned 45 degree binnacle, in the hope we would hit the right place at the other side,” John said. “Some of our passengers were certainly very nervous....”

By dawn they were opposite the Sumatran mangrove swamps, looking for the river inlet – difficult to find amongst the mangrove trees. In due course they found it and by midday reached Tembilahan on the left bank of the Indragiri River, and disembarked the passengers. They decided to return to the islands, but this time towing a “very small dinghy” ex (it seems) the Sultan of Johore’s yacht, with the idea if they sank en route they could get into it. However in what were now rough seas this dinghy no longer followed meekly behind, but “chose to dance around us”. The launch turned twice through 180 degrees, and the unfortunate John Parsons was hideously hit with seasickness. Faced with a reef, they decided to try crossing rather than steering around it. And thanks to that shallow draught, they were indeed hoisted over it on a wave.... In due course – finding no further survivors – they got back to Tembilahan, against the current of a swollen river, with the candles and matches for the binnacle having given out. The launch then was left and the men were asked instead to oversee a large “pigi bus” party (these being a form of charabanc, with forward-facing bench seats with a door at each end for entry). How long this journey took is uncertain – an earlier party had stopped overnight at a rubber estate, taking 24 hours at least, through wonderfully scenic but very wild territory, and contained seriously-delaying hazards like overflowing rivers.... and above them, mountainous roads and z-bends. John thought their journey was shorter... On this, believed to be the last party across, these three men were the only fit service people present. They all transferred to train once across the mountains and safely reached the west coast at Padang where an official escape organization had been long set up.

John Parsons recorded in his diary:

“6th March. We left in three buses...but got delayed by a flood. Spent the night at a Rest House. Very crowded and acrimonious”. But the river went down and on the 8th (March) two buses got across, driving through “lovely mountainous country”, but John’s got stuck, finally arriving late at Sawahloento at 23 hours after a disagreeable journey “his busload were v. quarrelsome. Left midday by train, and got through to Padang in daylight”.

During the night of 9th/10th at Padang, they experienced an earth tremor when they were sleeping at “the Black Diamond – an old refrigerating works now converted to a barracks”.

By the 14th March they were feeling “very hungry” as they were running out of cash. Unfortunately, no more escape ships would arrive. They were all captured on 17th March 1942 when “the Japanese came in early”. On 28th March everyone was posted to POW camp, but spent some time on parade as a Dutchman had escaped. The Japanese warned them that if anyone else escaped, “three would be shot, including the platoon officer”. By 6th April “remaining civilians were being transferred to the gaol”.

John’s future wife, Naomi, during that time had survived being torpedoed off Sumatra: injured, she was rescued from the sea by an RAF aircraftsman with whom she thereafter kept in touch for the rest of her life. She and other nurses, originally had remained behind to help the doctors set up makeshift “hospitals” on the larger islands, for the wounded, which they did again in Padang. But now all were captured. Naomi was interned in Bakinang women’s camp, while John spent three and a half years working as forced labour on road projects in Aceh area, and latterly on the impossible, marsh-ridden Sumatra Railway Project to the north-east of Sumatra, where he was also a camp administrator, until the Japanese surrender. What his CV does not project, is that he ran a radio in camp in the early part of his POW period in Padang (now of the latest earthquake disaster). It was eventually found – accidentally – by a Japanese sanitary inspection team, inspecting the one unlikely place into which it had been put, and John was fortunate to keep his life by a well spun yarn – this was a private radio clearly, he said, (and it was a civilian model, certainly) and officers were *allowed* to retain an item or so of private equipment: ergo, this was his.... But there was a rather more likely suspicion prevailing, that the Japanese camp administration in its turn, was equally keen to keep dealings with the Kempeitai to a minimum. So the radio vanished: the Kempeitai did not arrive, and John survived.

Post war, it was five months before he was fit enough to be repatriated to the UK. It made little difference however, in that others repatriated earlier, would nearly all suffer visits of various periods to tropical disease hospital in the UK, as John, along with most others, also had to do.

In 1946, John returned to Malaya as Acting Manager again on the 3,482 acre Bukit Paloh Estate, to re-establish rubber production. Some of those brought out from the UK at that time were men retired prior to 1942, but now returned to fill the ranks.



Estate labour, in poor health condition, was at 22% of postwar strength and the British Military Administration arranged for quantities of Vitamin Pills to be brought into the country. On Bukit Puloh as elsewhere, *lallang* (jungle scrub) was flourishing and there was much damage to machinery and buildings, with no heavy machinery left: damage to such vital things as waterwheels had to be repaired. Everywhere, the *lallang* had to be dug out by hand. John however, devised his own method of attack, spraying it in carefully pegged blocks, alongside organized washing facilities for the workers. Flush yields of latex from long-rested trees, helped pay the bills. Most managers got around, simply using bikes. Some estates received Japanese POW workers to do clean-up work: or vegetable planting between the tree rows. Replanting was started with material from the Rubber Research Institute, achieving the optimum stand per acre by planting in rows wide apart, but with trees close in each row, thus also partly reducing upkeep costs. By then in 1948 – when rubber estates were again returning to order – the first planters were shot. The Emergency period had arrived, and there were regular brushes with Communist insurgents. It would also be followed in due course, by the realization that natural rubber was being replaced by synthetic, and the time for palm oil was arriving. John married Naomi in Singapore in 1949. But with the Communist terrorist period now arrived, he decided to return to the UK for his wife's sake, much as his life as a rubber planter had been hugely satisfying to him..... It was a tribute him from his successor both at Bukit Puloh – then in the senior direction of the Rubber Industry – that had John remained, he believed he himself would not have risen to the heights he duly did – such, he said, was John's own "brilliance" in the rubber industry.

John meantime, soon established a useful fruit-tree and vegetable garden at their new home in England and became known, not only for his sporting interests, but his hobby of growing and making his own preserves and libations – the latter of particularly sound strength, so his guests testified....

He joined the Standard Motor Company, and remained in the Motor Industry for nearly 29 years in Personnel Management. He retired from S.M. & Co. – by then British Leyland – having experienced all aspects of Personnel functions from Industrial Staff Relation negotiations, Medical and Welfare Training, and so on in a workforce varying from 6,000 to 13,000. For his wartime work, John received a Commendation at a King's Parade in Kuala Lumpur, for "The good services you rendered during the war, in the cause of the Allies and the liberation of Malaya... In conditions of danger and hardship you worked steadfastly for your country and it gives me great pleasure to express to you the thanks and commendation of the Government". In his UK work, John became a Companion of the Chartered Institute of Personnel Development: a member of the Japanese Labour Camp Survivors Association, and of the Malayan Volunteers Group, where he was seen each year, no matter how frail, at the Alrewas National Memorial Arboretum. A replica section of the POW Sumatra Railway lies there, as does an original section of the Burma POW Railway. Into everything he did, John put his heart. This included his Anglican faith, and his ever-ready welcome to friends.

When in old age John became incapacitated, he remained undaunted. He got around using a golf cart. And was still able to drive a car – a well-known figure at Bickenhill, Solihull, and at his old school. John died on 25th September 2009, and is survived by a sister, and his two sons, Richard and John and their families.

INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Jill Smallshaw writes:-

"In the "Websites to visit" section of the October edition of Apa Khabar, there is one on the Straits Times News on the death of Maria Hertogh. Her name just jumped out of the page at me, because my father (Ronald Wright) was the volunteer escort involved in her escape! For several years I tried to find information on her, and it was only fairly recently I found her story on the web. This is of particular interest to me, as again I found a rough typed page about my father's involvement, written down briefly just after he arrived home after seeing Maria onto the plane for Holland with her mother. There was no mention of my father's name in my mother's transcript. I guess it was all very 'hush hush' in case of reprisals. My father was a police volunteer at the time. I was at school in Edinburgh, but I do remember hearing of the dreadful riots throughout Singapore".

N.B. Ronald Wright's account of his involvement in Maria Hertogh's escape will be recorded in the April 2010 edition of A.K.

Patricia Guidice writes:-

"Thank you for putting a great lot of stories and information together. I still can't believe that none of our reader's families were given passages to Fremantle from Padang, Sumatra on the Dutch Red Cross/Troopship "Zaandaan". Before WW 2, she was a luxury cruise ship, travelling from Amsterdam to New York. Very soon I will be meeting Jill & Richard Smallshaw and their family in Fremantle. Jill's father (Ronald Wright) was one of those fortunate people who found the Indrigiri River, after going up the wrong river to begin with as we did.

I would also like to send the following message in friendship to Apa Khabar Readers:-

I am amazed at the collective tenacity and bravery of children all over the world who have suffered throughout history during periods of war, including those who were children during the lead up to and the Fall of Singapore. I pray that all you 'who are children no more' are fine.

David Wingate writes:-

Does anyone know of the whereabouts of **George Reed** in New Zealand? He was the son of Dr. John Grescot (Jack) & Penny Reed. They lived at Sungkei, Perak pre 1942. Jack was MRNVR Surgeon Lt. on H.M.S. Laburnum then Mata Hari. Penny was evacuated, with children George and Susan, to Australia.

Jack was a frequent visitor to Jim and Pen Landon at the Cluny Estate, Slim River. Also he visited them at the Corner House, 30, Cluny Road, Singapore in January 1942.

Michael Pether in NZ replies to this e-mail:-

On the internet I can pick up Jack Reed graduating as a doctor here in NZ in 1938, and there are a couple of "George Reed" references when I google the name in NZ, but it would help if there was a second initial or an approximate area (which island?) in NZ to cut down the number of G. Reed names in our telephone book.

[Ed: to date I have not heard whether George Reed has been located in NZ]

George Hess'e writes:-

Please would you thank the following donors to the Memorial Plaque which has been placed beside one of the bamboo shrubs in the MVG Memorial Garden at the NMA in Alrewas, Staffordshire, in memory of the members of the FMSVF Light Battery:-

Robin and Peter Wilshaw; David and Susan Rutherford, Hamish Patterson, George and Hyacinth Hess'e for cash donations and Ian Stitt for his help with the Light Battery Badge and artwork for the plaque.

The plaque will be dedicated at the Memorial Service which is being held on V-J Day, 15th August 2010, at the NMA.

3"x 1"

George has also suggested that MVG members in Australia – and elsewhere – may wish to order a lapel badge which they could wear at meetings and other get-togethers. An example of the artwork is shown. The badges would be 3" x 1" in size with the relevant country shown under the wording Malayan Volunteers Group, and the MVG logo at one side. The cost of such a badge would depend on the numbers ordered. If anyone is interested in further details about ordering a badge, please contact George on:- geohesse@bigpond.net.au



Malayan Volunteers Group
Australia

GEORGE HESSE

BOOKS

"THE REAL TENKO. Extraordinary True Stories of Women Prisoners of the Japanese". By Mark Felton. Pen & Sword, 2009. ISBN 18488 4048-9 Price £19.99, 168pp

Reviewed by Becca Kenneison.

The cover of this book shows civilian internees with their children and the blurb claims that the book will examine the fate of 'Allied service-women, female civilians and local women in Japanese hands'.

However, there isn't all that much here about civilian women of whatever colour: the emphasis is constantly on service nurses, who dominate eight or nine of the eleven chapters. That wouldn't be a problem had the blurb made that clear, but it gave me, at least, a different impression.

On the plus side, the author has a fully justified go at the British government for the parsimony of its payouts to survivors, and the new material includes a chapter about white comfort women, which is as shocking as you would expect. However, a lot of the rest is drawn directly from other books or from websites such as COFEPOW's, and the whole thing is marred by a lot of mistakes: not only typographical ones, but a couple of errors of fact (how could he claim that May 1942, when the Philippines fell, was 'fully six months' after the Fall of Singapore?) As a consequence of things like this, it comes across as a book written in a hurry.

The internment of women by the Japanese is a huge and painful topic, and it deserves far better coverage than it is given here.

"THE COOLIE GENERALS. Britain's Far Eastern Military Leaders in Japanese Captivity". By Mark Felton. Pen & Sword, 2008. ISBN 18441 5767-9 Price £19.99, 198pp

The disgraceful treatment of Allied POWs by their Japanese captors has quite rightly been revealed in numerous moving and shocking accounts over the last 60 years. However, the plight of the dozens of British and Commonwealth officers of the rank of colonel and above has never been covered in detail. Separated from their men, shipped around the Japanese Empire, kept alive and ritually humiliated, the Japanese inflicted on them the same appalling regime of starvation, beatings and hard labour. This book provides an important new angle to this disgraceful chapter in the history of WW 2.

"JUNGLE SOLDIER. The true story of Freddy Spencer Chapman". By Brian Moynahan. Published by Quercus History, 2009. ISBN 978-1-84916-076-6 Price £18.99, 338pp.

One man – hunted by 4,000 Japanese troops. The true story of Freddy Spencer Chapman. Drawing on extensive field research, and in particular on Chapman's detailed diary of his jungle ordeal, Brian Moynahan recreates thrillingly and unforgettably the life and adventures of a very English hero. He links him to the great explorer-naturalists of the past – even half dead, Spencer Chapman still collected seeds for Kew and made notes on birds – and shows how this proud tradition gave him strength. Part biography, part tale of endurance, part special-forces narrative, *Jungle Soldier* will appeal to anyone who enjoys true stories of combat and resourcefulness in adversity.

"MALAYA VOLUNTEERS". Article by Jonathan Moffatt in "Everyone's War" – The Journal of the Second World War Experience Centre. ISSN 1743-6532 No.20 Winter 09

In this article Jonathan charts the role of the Malayan Volunteers in the Malayan Campaign, and in subsequent captivity following the Fall of Singapore. Some 18,000 British Malaysians of all races and creeds served in the Malayan Volunteer Forces, and Jonathan shows how they were able to draw on their experiences in their civilian lives to bring much needed resourcefulness to their time in captivity.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Sunday – 9th May 2010.

Annual Service of Remembrance at the FEPOW Memorial Church of Our Lady and St. Thomas of Canterbury.

If anyone is able to attend this Service, you will need to book a seat as the Church is quite small. Write to:-

The FEPOW Secretary, 1, Norwich Road, Wymondham, Norfolk NR18 0QE

Books containing the names of all FEPOWs and civilian internees, of all nationalities, are housed in a cabinet in the small FEPOW Chapel within the Church itself.

Sunday – 15th August 2010. V-J DAY – 65TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE END OF THE WAR IN THE FAR EAST - NMA

WE STILL NEED MORE MEMBERS AND FRIENDS TO ATTEND THE SERVICE PLANNED FOR THE CHAPEL AT THE ARBORETUM. TO DATE WE DO NOT HAVE ENOUGH PEOPLE TO MAKE A DEFINITE BOOKING. PLEASE LOOK AT YOUR DIARIES AND LET JONATHAN OR ROSEMARY KNOW IF YOU CAN COME. I'M SURE WE ALL WISH TO MARK THIS VERY IMPORTANT DATE AND REMEMBER THOSE WHO WERE CAUGHT UP IN THIS TERRIBLE TRAGEDY.

Saturday – 2nd October 2010. Annual Lunch and Reunion in London at the RAF Club, Piccadilly.

The Ballroom has already been booked for October. Judging by the number of positive e-mails which Hugh received following the Lunch last October, the event can only be described as a great success. **Please put this date in your diaries and let Hugh know if you plan to attend, together with the numbers of guests (they do NOT need to be members!) as soon as possible.** Further details will be sent out in due course. There will inevitably be a small increase in price for a two course lunch followed by coffee and petit fours, but the food was very good, and there is always provision for a vegetarian dish as an alternative to the chosen menu. The suggested menu for this year is steak, kidney and mushroom pie with seasonal vegetables, followed by sherry trifle.

Saturday and Sunday – 9th & 10th October 2010. 3rd Researching FEPOW History Conference at the NMA.

Entitled "Internees, Evacuees and FEPOW: Far East Captivity Explored".

International Speakers: Rod Beattie of the TBRC on "The 'V' Scheme".

Tony Banham of Hong Kong War Diary website on "Hong Kong FEPOWs"

Guest Lecturers: Dr. Geoff Gill Prof. of International Medicine, Liverpool, on "Medical aspects of camp life on the Thailand-Burma Railway".

Dr. Bernice Archer on "Men, women and child internees".

Dr. Rob Havers on "Changi POW Camp, Singapore 1942-1945".

Julie Summers on "The effect of returning men on family life after 1945" and "Evacuees".

Special Guests: Roger Mansell – US Centre for Research on Allied POWs under the Japanese.

Mr Jeyathurai A. – Director of Changi Museum, Singapore

Roderick Suddaby – Keeper of Dept. of Documents, IWM.

A Speaker from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission – tba.

Cost: £100 per delegate

Registration: Log on to: www.researchingfepowhistory.org.uk

Sunday – 14th November 2010. Remembrance Sunday Service at the Cenotaph in Whitehall, London.

Details of this event will be given later in the year. We hope some new faces will volunteer to join the regular marchers this year.

****VERY IMPORTANT NOTICE TO ALL MVG MEMBERS****

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE ACCOUNT NAME HAS BEEN CHANGED TO:-

Mrs. R. Fell – Malayan Volunteers Group

For all subscriptions and donations sent from 1st January 2010, please make your cheques payable to the above name.

In order to keep costs to a minimum, the account is held in my name, and the Group is not charged for the account. The disadvantage of holding the account in this way is that the bank will not authorize payments by Direct Debit – money can only be paid in by cash or by cheque. Please let me know if anyone has any strong objections to continuing to hold the account in this way.

MVG SUBSCRIPTIONS APRIL 2010 – APRIL 2011

The annual subscription will remain at **£15 PER HOUSEHOLD** for this year. Subscriptions become due in April 2010, and I would be very grateful if you would, please, let me have them in good time. If you do not wish to continue with your membership, please let me know – to save time in sending out reminders.

The arrangements made last year for all Australian members to send their subscriptions to John Pollock (Group Secretary for MVG Australia) in Australian dollars will continue. Australian subscriptions are due at the same time – in April 2010 – and John will let you know how much they will be in 2010.

Members in other countries may pay in their own currency, as long as it amounts to £15 sterling. If you are able to find someone in the UK to pay in sterling, this is the best way. Please let me know if you are having difficulty in paying your subscription because of high bank charges.

Receipts for the subscriptions will not be sent, unless requested. Donations will be acknowledged to the best of my ability! Please let me know if I have overlooked an acknowledgement – and many apologies for doing so.

N.B. Newsletters are posted on the MVG website, and can be accessed using the password “**kampar**”

Newsletters will be e-mailed to all overseas members, unless a printed copy is requested.



Australian War Memorial Canberra A.C.T.

CONTACTS

JONATHAN MOFFATT. For research on British Malayan/Volunteer Forces/Argyll & Royal Marines
49, Coombe Drive, Binley Woods, Coventry CV3 2QU Tel: 02476 545013 e-mail: JonathanMoffatt@aol.com

SANDY LINCOLN. For contacts with other Volunteers and Volunteer Children
19, Burke Street, Harrogate, Yorkshire HG1 4NR Tel: 01423 500351 e-mail: anlulincoln@googlemail.com

HUGH CHAPLIN. For the MVG London Lunch and Reunion. Tel: 01865 881664 Mobile Tel: 07740 797124
The Stone House, Main Road, Witney, Stanton Harcourt, Oxfordshire OX29 5RJ e-mail: hugh.chaplin@gmail.com

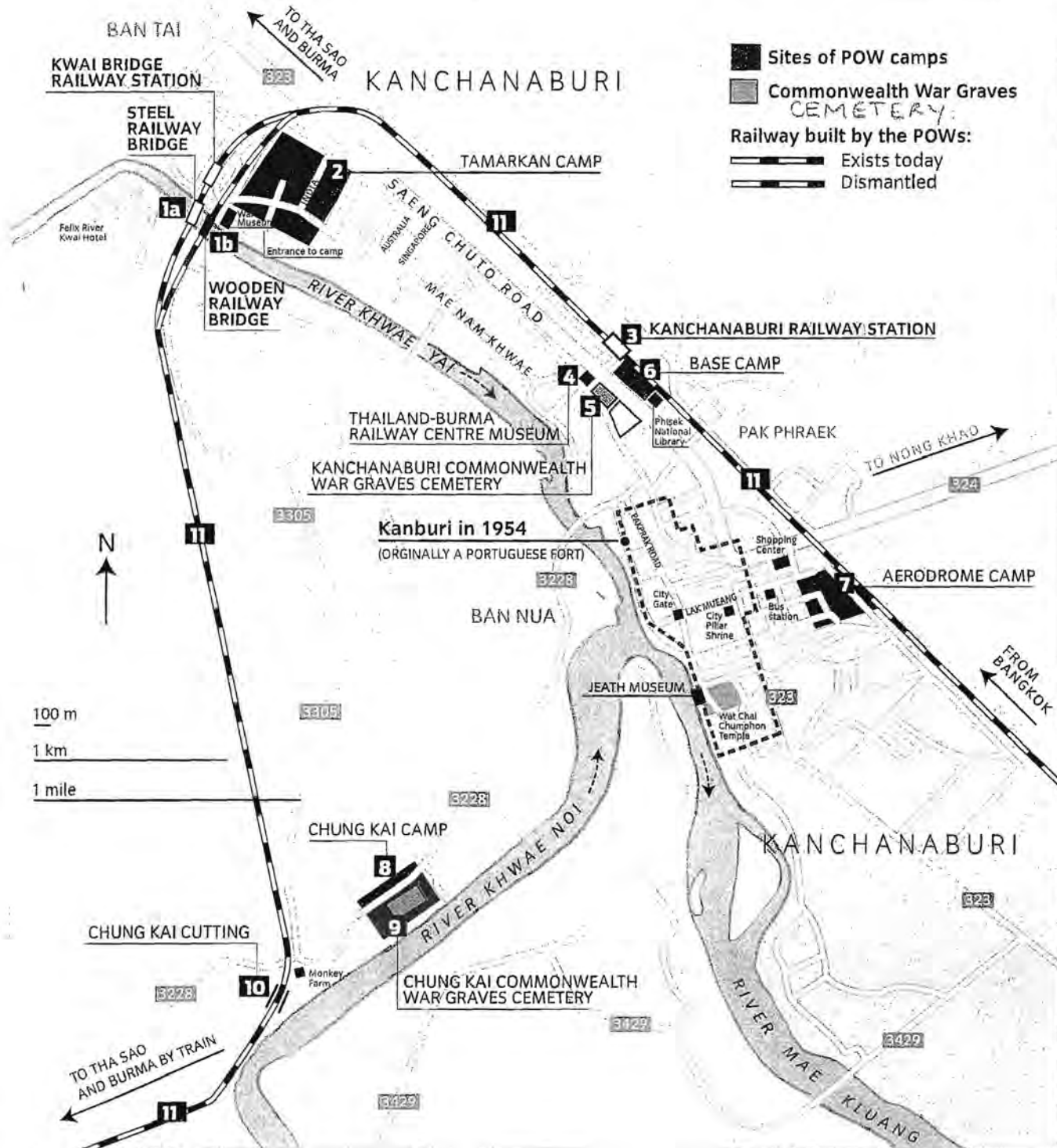
ROSEMARY FELL. Editor of “Apa Khabar”/Membership Secretary/Subscriptions/Donations.
Millbrook House, Axminster, Devon EX13 5EE Tel: 01297 33045 e-mail: dinraf-millbrook@tiscali.co.uk

KANCHANABURI

World War II information

It was in Kanchanaburi (known to POWs as Kanburi) that the two bridges were built by the POWs over the River Mae Klong in the 1940's. The river was renamed the River Khwae Yai in 1960:

- 1a. The steel railway bridge, which exists today, is known as The Bridge over the River Kwai. (Area of annual Light & Sound Show each November.)
- 1b. The temporary wooden bridge and area of cutting. Dismantled.
- 2. Area of Tamarkan Camp. Also known as: Tha Makham and Tamarkham.
- 3. Kanchanaburi Railway Station, today.
- 4. Thailand-Burma Railway Centre Museum.
- 5. Kanchanaburi Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery.
- 6. Area of Kanburi Base Camp. Also known as: The Reception Camp or Transit Camp.
- 7. Area of Aerodrome Camp. Also known as: The Common and Aerodrome No's 1 & 2.
- 8. Area of Chung Kai Camp. Also known as: Chung Kai Hospital Camp.
- 9. Chung Kai Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery.
- 10. Chung Kai Cutting also known as "Officers Cutting".
- 11. The railway built by the POWs, which exists today.



Sites of POW camps
 Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery
Railway built by the POWs:
 Exists today
 Dismantled

N
 100 m
 1 km
 1 mile

MALAYAN VOLUNTEERS GROUP

NEW MEMBERS – October 2009 to January 2010

ALSOP, Sheila.

72, Pembroke Road, London W8 6NX.
Tel: e-mail: sheilaalsop@yahoo.co.uk
Daughter of **George Philip BEAN, FMSVF.** POW in Changi.

DAVIS, Mary Elizabeth. (nee Kennaway)

Flat 4, Dawtrey Court, Grosvenor Road, Southampton SO17 1RQ
Tel: 02380 559269 e-mail: mary-elizabeth1@btinternet.com
Daughter of **Mark John KENNAWAY**

Evacuated on the “Duchess of Bedford”

FLETCHER, David.

31, Stanford Bay, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3P 0T5
e-mail: fletcherfamily@mts.net
Son of **Norman Barry FLETCHER 2/FMSVF Signals Battalion.**

FLETCHER, Gordon.

7574, Seneca Place, La Mesa, CA 91941 USA.
e-mail: gordonpfletcher@gmail.com
Grandson of **Norman Barry FLETCHER 2/FMSVF Signals Battalion.**

FLETCHER, Julia.

22, Clos-Belmont, Geneva 1208, Switzerland
e-mail: juliafletch@hotmail.com
Granddaughter of **Norman Barry FLETCHER 2/FMSVF Signals Battalion**

GRIFFITH, Dafydd.

1, Domen Fawr, Dolgellau, Gwynedd LL40 1LT, Wales
e-mail: dafyddap@hotmail.com
Son of **Bombadier 13549 Goronwy GRIFFITH FMSVF Light Battery.** b.1905 Abergelle, Wales. Assistant Agricultural Chemist, Uganda. To Malaya 1939 as Chemist [Soils], Malaya. Wife Minnie and son evacuated on the 'Narkunda', arriving Fremantle WA 24.1.42. POW Singapore [Changi, Havelock Road] to Thailand [Wampo etc] with "D" Battalion 12.10.42.

Evacuated on the “Narkunda”

KASSIM, Daniel.

12A, Jalan Sungei Ramal 32/53A, Bukit Rimau, Shah Alam 40460, Selangor, Malaysia.

AMENDMENTS/CHANGE OF ADDRESS

EVANS, Joanna.

Has moved address – but do not have new address.
Mobile Tel: 0411 500 621 e-mail: jevans@accsoft.com.au

GRAY, Peter & Valerie.

New e-mail address: AXBA54@dsl.pipex.com

HARNEY, Karen.

e-mail address: akakharney@aol.com

HAY, John.

New address: 4, Place du Rampeau, 46700, Puy L'Eveque, FRANCE.

HOLLYOAK, Barry.

New address: Efeler Mahallesi. 1500, Sokak, No.8/1 Didim Aydin, TURKEY. No tel./e-mail address yet.

MITCHELL, Ron & Bea.

e-mail address: Put in 'FAO' www.seiftonbatch@googlemail.com