

APA KHABAR
Patron: The Duchess of Norfolk
www.malayanvolunteersgroup.org.uk

25TH EDITION
JANUARY 2011



INVITATION TO ARUNDEL CASTLE
BY OUR PATRON

EXCITING NEW PROJECTS FOR 2011

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL MVG MEMBERS

The MVG is delighted and honoured to accept the **Duchess of Norfolk's kind invitation** for lunch and a conducted tour of Arundel Castle on 16th March. All members should have received an e-mailed or postal invitation to attend, and everyone who has replied to date is able to come. See under "Dates for your Diary" for more information. Those who have applied will receive confirmation and last minute details nearer the time.

Two new projects, which have been in the pipeline for some time, are now being formulated, and we very much hope that they will come to fruition in 2011 or 2012. The first of these is the restoration of the Kuala Selangor War Memorial. We have **Andrew Hwang** to thank for doing so much of the background work for this project – and indeed for finding the whereabouts of the memorial in the first place. Help has also been given by MVG members **Anthony Cooper** and **Michael Thompson**, and through them and Andrew, assistance in getting the restoration started has been sought through the new British High Commissioner in Kuala Lumpur, **H.E. Mr. Simon Featherstone**, and the **Chief Minister** of Selangor. It is proposed to restore the Memorial by replacing the stolen bronze plaques bearing the names of the fallen, with marble or granite plaques with the names engraved on them. This type of material has little commercial value and, hopefully, will escape the attention of scrap metal dealers. We are now seeking funds to cover the cost of this project.

The second project is more dramatic in that the MVG has approached the **Australian War Memorial Director, Major General Steve Gower**, in Canberra, for permission to create and present to the **Australian people**, a Memorial to the 160+ Australian members of the Malayan Volunteer Forces. The design for this memorial and accompanying letter are detailed later in the newsletter. The approach to the AWM was made through **Jonathan and Rosemary** in consultation with **John Pollock**, and **Rod Beattie** of the Thailand Burma Railway Centre Museum. To date no reply has been received to acknowledge our letter or plans. As with some of our earlier projects, which were not accepted initially, we plan not to take "no" for an answer! Full reports about Armistice and Remembrance Sunday ceremonies are included further on, but it is encouraging to note that the Malayan Volunteers were specifically remembered in Services in London, Kuala Lumpur and Penang with the laying of wreaths. We also thank **George Hess'e** and **Elizabeth Bunney** in Perth, **Western Australia**, for their encouragement to MVG members to get to know one another, by organizing a lunch – see Elizabeth's report. Following this good example, we are planning to hold a Spring get-together, with lunch, at the NMA in June, if there is sufficient support for the idea.

On 15th November, Jonathan received an e-mail from **Patrick Toosey**, following the news of **Roger Mansell's** death on 25th October 2010. He suggested that in the spirit of **Roger's** theme of sharing information, the 4 major FEPOW research groups (the RFH Group, Java Group, COFEPOW and the MVG) should come together under one banner. The proposal was that there should be common membership, with a combined newsletter, but that each group should retain its individual aims. He mentioned the various benefits which he felt would occur if this happened – such as an improved schools programme to raise awareness of the FEPOW story; more regional representatives and get-togethers; increased membership following further media coverage such as the Radio Merseyside broadcast on 9th November to launch the Liverpool Pier Head Memorial, which created enormous interest. He further proposed a meeting of representatives from each of the 4 groups at the NMA at Alrewas in March 2011. A reply was sent from the MVG explaining that the MVG had different perceptions and aspirations from the other FEPOW groups, and that we were not prepared to give up our ongoing individual projects and newsletter. However, the MVG agreed to participate in the proposed meeting, and Jonathan offered to represent the Group. The outcome of this meeting will be reported in April.

Patrick Toosey's letter made the MVG aware that since October 2003, when the idea of a Memorial to the Volunteers was first mooted, a great deal of hitherto unpublished important information has been collected in the form of personal accounts of wartime escapes and evacuations; diaries, artefacts; and other archival material. At present this material has no natural home where people wanting to research the Volunteers can look at and read these documents. For example, the MVG has received the "Festschrift" from **Alison Finnegan** of Otago University NZ, a wonderful compilation of stories and tributes to "**Captain Jack**" Mackie, to celebrate his 100th birthday – as reported in October 2010. Therefore, an approach was made to **Charles Bagot Jewitt**, Chief Executive of the NMA, requesting an area within the new building extension where our material, which is unique to the Malayan Volunteer Forces and their families, can be stored and viewed by researchers and other interested parties. We received a very favourable response, resulting in our letter being put "on file" and into "the pot" along with other similar requests. We feel confident that, if at all possible, we will get a "home" for our material in the new plans for the NMA Visitor Centre, which are scheduled to be started in the first 6 months of 2011.

CHRISTMAS 1943 - By Sir Roger Moon
With a small group (100 approx) to a camp built by A.L.F. Troops.
Camp abandoned after cholera outbreak.
Slept in tent - tent provided some 30% shade from the elements.
Did no work. Another severe malaria attack.
No medical officer.
Christmas Day - extra rice ration. P.M. a concert.
Before leaving this camp, from a rubbish pile
I found a mess can better than the one I had.
In the New Year, back to Kinsaiyok and thence to Timonta.

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY - 14TH NOVEMBER 2010. Report by Rosemary Fell

The crowds seemed bigger than ever, as MVG members and friends assembled in Whitehall before 10 a.m. on Remembrance Sunday morning. Security was very strict as marchers and members of the public alike were led through a series of gates and electronic arches before being allowed into Whitehall. Lining up in Column 'M' outside the old War Office, regular marchers Karen Harney, Pat Wilson and Christine Cavender with her sister and friend, joined Donald and Rosemary Fell. Merilyn Hywel-Jones joined the Group this year for the first time, and it was good to have Sandy Lincoln and Mike Sargeant returning to march after an absence of a couple of years. Sadly, Nikki Archer-Waring and her husband Graeme were unable to come due to illness.

Despite the gloomy forecast, the rain held off during the Service and for most of the march past, apart from a little light drizzle. After moving forward into our marching positions at about 10.30 a.m. we stood and watched on the giant outdoor TV screens as the massed bands played, and finally the ambassadors and politicians took their places around the Cenotaph, followed by the choirboys from the Chapel Royal and the clergy with the Bishop of London. The huge crowd fell silent as Her Majesty The Queen and other members of the Royal Family took their places just before 11 a.m. The guns boomed out as Big Ben struck 11 o'clock. Marchers and the public stood still and silent, deep in their own thoughts of remembrance until the final gun salute, the playing of the Last Post and the start of the Service. Following the same format since the beginning of her reign nearly 6 decades ago, the Queen stepped forward to lay her wreath, and then came the other members of the Royal Family, politicians and ambassadors. The short service concluded with prayers, the hymn "O God, our help in ages past", the Lord's Prayer, Blessing, The Rouse and National Anthem.

As the last of the dignitaries left, the bands struck up and the long column of marchers began to weave their way down Whitehall and past the Cenotaph - each group with its own poppy wreath to hand over, in remembrance of loved ones from a past conflict or fellow comrades in arms. It seemed that more than ever had joined the column of marchers, and we in column 'M' had a long wait until it was our turn to march. Yet, the enthusiasm of the crowds waiting to greet each contingent remained as great as ever. They clapped us down Whitehall, into Parliament Square, along Great George Street and into Horse Guards without flagging. It's a great inspiration to us all every year, and makes the long wait well worth while. The salute this year was taken by HRH The Princess Royal - who looked completely fresh as we arrived at the dais nearly an hour after the march began. It's a real feat of endurance saluting for well over an hour.

After the march, eight marchers enjoyed a convivial lunch together at the "All Bar One". This has now become a tradition, and it gives us all a chance to unwind and have a good conversation.

Merilyn Hywel-Jones attended the Cross Planting Ceremony in the Field of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey on the Thursday before Remembrance Sunday, and planted a Cross on behalf of the MVG. The short Service was attended by HRH The Duke of Edinburgh who planted his own personal Cross of Remembrance. Next year the MVG plans to order an 8 inch cross bearing the MVG logo, which Merilyn will plant for us. This has to be ordered in advance.

If any MVG member watched the highlights of the ceremony on the BBC evening news on TV that Sunday, they would have seen the MVG marchers, as the cameras panned over our heads to show the Trucial Scouts with their red Arabic head dresses. Karen's husband, Alan, was seen with the Scouts.

REMEMBRANCE DAY IN PENANG. Report by Leslie James.

A short and informal wreath-laying ceremony was organized this year at the Cenotaph on the George Town Esplanade on Remembrance Day, 11th November. The ceremony took place at 7.45 a.m. with some fifteen people in attendance, including a dozen members of the Penang Veterans Association (PVA) in their wedge-caps and colourful batik shirts. There were no formal prayers and no service personnel in attendance. Among those present was Dutch-born Pauline Berkhout, who was interned as a child with her mother and sister in a Japanese prison camp at Batavia (Jakarta).

Wreaths were placed at the Cenotaph by Mr. Harold V. Speldewinde on behalf of the Penang Veterans Association; by Lt. Cdr. Thyagarajah RMN (Ret'd), former Malaysian Resident Naval Officer Penang, on behalf of the Malaysian ex-Armed Forces and the Malaysian Naval Reserve Unit in Penang; and by MVG member Mr. Leslie A.K. James on behalf of the Malayan Volunteers Group. Before the laying of the three wreaths, Harold Speldewinde recited the words of the First World War poet Laurence Binyon:

*"They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old.
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them".*

REPORT ON REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY 2010 IN KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA - by Andrew Hwang.

The multi-faith Remembrance Sunday service at the Kuala Lumpur Cenotaph started at 8.00 a.m. ~~sharp~~ on 14th November 2010 with the singing of "Abide with Me", led by the Alice Smith School Choir. ~~The~~ turn-out was beyond expectations and much more compared to previous years. ~~MVG was represented~~ by Andrew Hwang and Ian Richardson (evacuated on the Orion and son of Louis A.L. Richardson of 2/FMSVF). Ivan Ho (son of Albert Ho Pan Thong, 1/FMSVF), Claudine de Witt (granddaughter of John A. Sequerah, 4/SSVF) and Keith Peris (grandson of Godfrey B. Haslam of the FMSVF) were invited guests of the MVG.

The new British High Commissioner to Malaysia, His Excellency Mr. Simon Featherstone read an ~~excerpt~~ from the Pericles Eulogy, followed by prayers by Christian, Muslim and Sikh clerics, respecting the religious backgrounds of the fallen soldiers who served in Malaya/Malaysia. The recital of "In Flanders Fields" and "To The Fallen" was interspersed by the sounding of the Last Post, observance of 2-minutes' silence and the playing of Reveille.

All present then sang, "I Vow to Thee My Country" lustily before the laying of wreaths. Forty-six ~~wreaths~~ were laid in all, representing the various Commonwealth High Commissions and Embassies, the Malaysian Armed Forces and Police, NMBVA, MVG, the Perak Veterans, the various British loyal societies, British schools and St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, wartime spiritual headquarters of 2/FMSVF. The assembled participants were then invited to the British High Commissioner's residence for breakfast. Mr. Featherstone enquired about MVG and showed an interest in "In Oriente Primus", the new book by MVG members Jonathan Moffatt and Paul Riches.

ANDREW LAYING THE MVG WREATH.



AFTER THE CEREMONY

ANDREW & LISA HWANG with IAN RICHARDSON



MVG CHRISTMAS LUNCH IN PERTH, WA ON 6TH DECEMBER 2010. Report by Elizabeth Bunney.

Thirteen people assembled in a function room in a pub (an Irish Tavern called "The Mighty Quinn") here in suburban Perth, seven of whom are already members of the MVG and six soon will be members.

Those present were – Bill Adamson, Elizabeth Bunney, George and Hyacinth Hess'e, Richard and Marcia Talalla, Bob Paterson, Sheena Wheeler, Rosemary Schulstad, Lorna Raeburn, Sandra Clough, Peter Jager and George Fearby.

It was a happy occasion. George H spoke to welcome all present and to encourage the visitors to join the MVG, and gave them the required printed material to do so.

We found much in common and the conversation flowed freely. We intend to meet again next April, which we keenly anticipate, as Becca Kenneison will be here from the MVG of the UK.

We send greetings to all MVG members everywhere.

[Note from the Editor: This gathering was the brain child of our wonderful Veteran 'down-under' George Hess'e, who has done so much to promote the MVG in WA. George typed out the invitations to all local members (14+ 6 wives) asking them to bring along their friends. Many thanks, George and Elizabeth].

PROPOSED MEMORIAL FOR THE AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL IN CANBERRA.

The second major project which the Malayan Volunteers Group is planning for 2011 – 2012, is to present the Australian War Memorial with a Plaque to commemorate the Australian members of the Malayan Volunteer Forces who served in WW 2 and became FEPOWs. Not only is this designed to remember the Australian men who fought in the Malayan Campaign and were captured at the fall of Singapore, but it is also meant as a thank you to the Australian Nation for so generously taking in hundreds of women and children evacuees from the war-torn, beleaguered island of Singapore. The Memorial is also offered to mark the 65th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. The MVG very much hopes that the Director of the AWM, **Major General Steve Gower**, will accept the offer of this Memorial in principle.

In our letter to General Gower, details were given of the MVG, its foundation and aims, together with itemized accounts of our achievements to date. The Memorial will be fully funded by the MVG, but as yet the cost of the proposed memorial has not been assessed. We are waiting for a reply to our letter.

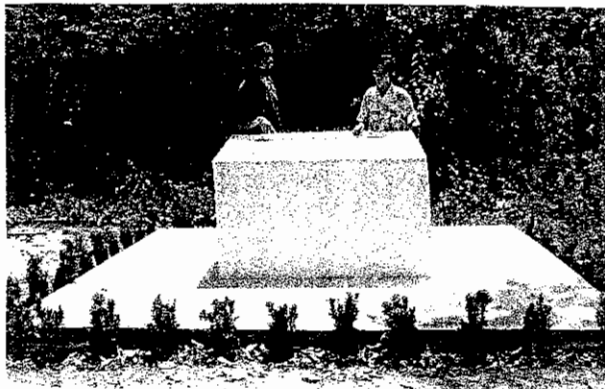
The design for the plaque and plinth is shown on the opposite page. If anyone has any comments or suggestions to make, please let Rosemary or Jonathan know.

THE BATTLE OF KAMPAR - A new development in the attempts to preserve the battlefield site.

In April 2006, John Mackie wrote a report in Apa Khabar No. 6 about the part played by 2 platoons of the Perak Battalion (1/FMSVF) in the Battle of Kampar. This was followed in April 2008 [Edition 14] by an article taken from the Straits Times, calling for the preservation of the battle site on Green Ridge as an historical site. The man responsible for telling the story of the battle and seeking to save the site for historical and heritage reasons was local Malaysian historian Mr. Chye Kooi Loong for which he received an MBE from Her Majesty The Queen.

Now, another group has claimed responsibility for preserving the site by building a memorial in honour of those killed in the battle, as reported in "The Star" newspaper on 2nd November 2010. This group, under the direction of local historian Harchand Singh Bedi with the help of the Ex-Servicemen's Association of Kuala Dipang, has cleared the site and built the stone memorial.

Harchand Singh Bedi & Peter Chai at the Memorial



Unfortunately, the report in "The Star" newspaper was not very accurate, and no mention was made of the British Battalion or the 2 platoons of the Perak Battalion (1/FMSVF). MVG Malaysian Secretary Andrew Hwang wrote to "The Star" to point out the lack of detail about the part played in the battle by the Volunteers. Sad to say, the information he gave was edited out of his letter.

This is part of what he said:-

"While the report mentioned the involvement of British, Indian and Japanese troops only, in actual fact the 1st (Perak) Battalion of the Federated Malay States Volunteer Force (1/FMSVF) was also involved. 1/FMSVF was made up of European, Malay, Chinese and Indian Volunteer or reservist troops, though the Malay Volunteers were disarmed and discharged before the Battle of Kampar.

The construction of the defences of Kampar was placed under the supervision of Lt. Col. Staley, commanding officer of 1/FMSVF.

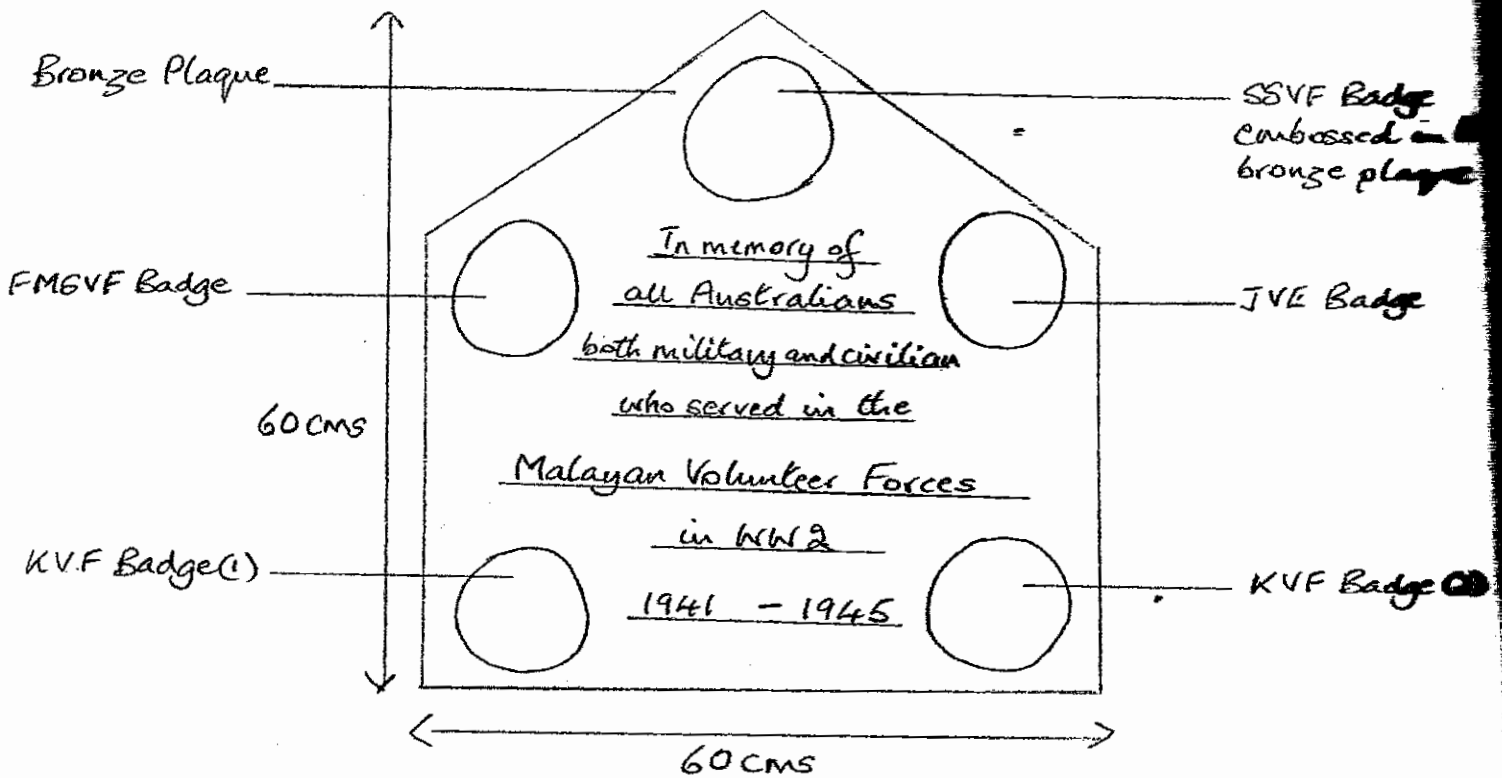
Some of the officers and men of 1/FMSVF conducted the evacuation of civilians before the battle began in order to save lives. Others supervised the labourers who were erecting the defences and even built the defences themselves when the supply of labourers dried up on Christmas Day 1941 onwards. Patrols of 1/FMSVF men were sent out to reconnoitre the eastern edge of Green Ridge, Chinese Cemetery Ridge and Thompson's Ridge and listening posts were set up 5 km north of the main defence positions. The 1/FMSVF men were all from Perak and very familiar with the terrain. The all-Chinese "B" Company of 1/FMSVF was sent to Bidor to assist the 12th Indian Brigade in their defences.

One of the mainstays of the Kampar defences was the "British Battalion", an ad hoc battalion created on 20th December 1941 by amalgamating the remnants of the 2nd Battalion of the East Surrey Regiment and the 1st Battalion of the Leicestershire Regiment which had been badly mauled in northern Malaya. As the British battalion was under strength, Lt. Col. Staley transferred two 1/FMSVF platoons to the British Battalion as reinforcements on 27th December 1941. Lt. John Bullamore Mackie volunteered to command the Rifle Platoon and 2nd Lt. Albert Edward (Bill) Greetham, the Machine Gun Platoon. John Mackie is still alive and well today, aged 100 and living in New Zealand. He is a Veteran member of the Malayan Volunteers Group. Sadly, Bill Greetham died of malaria in Changi POW camp on 21st June 1942.

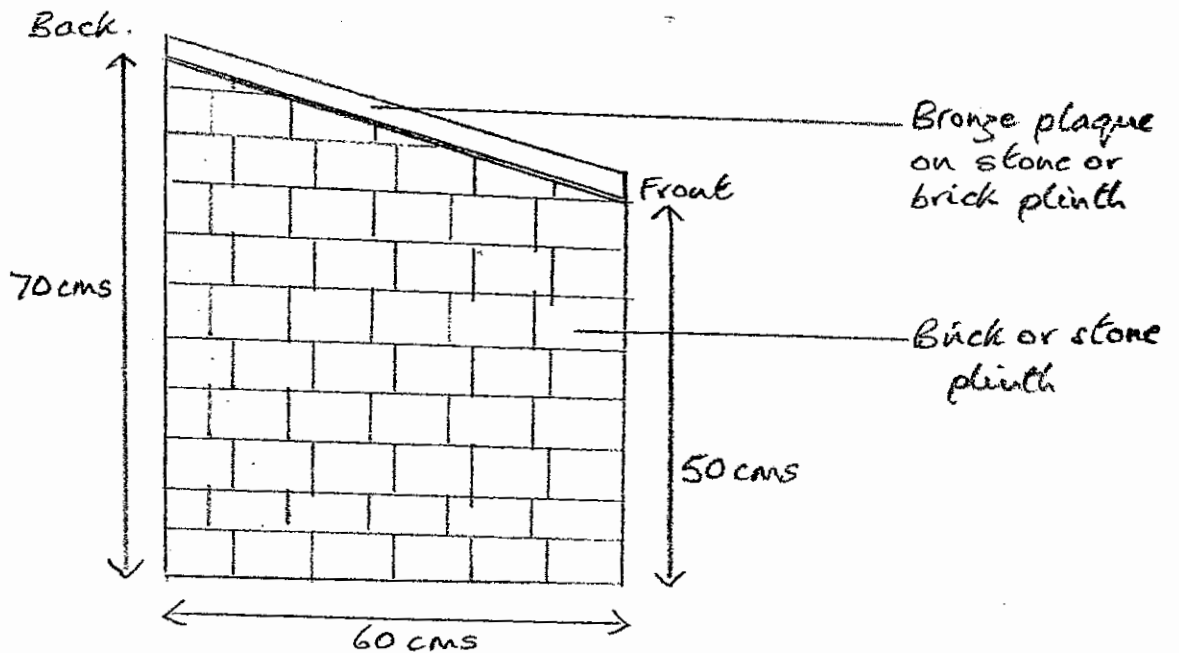
The two 1/FMSVF platoons continued to fight with the British Battalion until 21st January 1942 and by right Kampar is one of 1/FMSVF's battle honours.

PROPOSED DESIGN FOR VOLUNTEER PLAQUE + PLINTH.

Front view.



Side view



Legend

- SSVF - Straits Settlements Volunteer Force
- FMSVF - Federated Malay States Volunteer Force
- JVE - Johore Volunteer Engineers
- KVF (1) - Kelantan Volunteer Force
- KVF (2) - Kedah Volunteer Force.

"COVER MY DEFENCELESS HEAD" – Part 2 by Daphne Davidson. (By permission of Ian Richardson)

But I digress – in July I went into the Singapore Maternity Hospital which rejoiced in the Malay name of "**Kandang Kerbau**" (Buffalo Pen) to have my baby. I left the Prison in a car accompanied by my doctor (an Australian lady doctor who did a magnificent job looking after us and the children in the camp). In front, sat a Japanese sentry with a rifle and fixed bayonet – which often looked as though it would go off in my face. In my basket, I had six cotton vests, 40 yards of butter muslin which I had cut and made into napkins, one lawn petticoat, a white voile dress which I had carefully made and embroidered with forget-me-nots, cotton wool, safety pins and a tin of Johnson's baby powder. Some of my friends in the camp had knitted a few soft silk booties and I had also made a pair of white sharkskin shoes embroidered with forget-me-nots from a scrap of material I had been given.

With us went the young Japanese interpreter **Ishihara**. Malayan born and educated in English-speaking schools, he was a great help to us in those troublesome times because he often tried to help the internees when he translated our requests to his Japanese superiors. I can never hate the Japanese because of Ishihara. He came to see me in hospital after the baby was born and said, "You have a lovely daughter, Mrs. Davidson. In Japan, we would describe her as "**Kawai**" meaning "**Cute**" – like a rosebud. Can I do anything for you or take back a letter to the Camp to your friends?"

"Ishihara," I said, "You must be crazy – if your secret police find a letter of mine in your possession, you know what the punishment would be? Possibly death! No, tell them that you have seen me and the baby and that we are well."

This he did. Some time during internment he disappeared from our midst and we sadly wondered what had happened to him but did not dare ask.

In the hospital I was allowed to stay for fourteen days – I was on parole and had promised not to communicate with the world outside. However, the doctor in charge was one I knew and he arranged for me to have an amah (baby nurse) to look after the baby until I was well enough to return to Changi. I found an English-trained children's nurse called **Leong Kit Wan**, neat, efficient and with excellent references from previous European employers. She took one look at me and went down to the hospital's kitchens to have a word with the Chinese cook and I benefited by having delicious dishes smuggled up to me where I lay screened off from the rest of the ward. Solemnly, every afternoon, after **Jenny** was bathed, **Kit Wan** dressed her in her white embroidered dress and sharkskin shoes and took her for a walk along the corridors of the hospital and in the Nurses Garden at the back of the Hospital.

One day she said, "*All pretty ladies on loof think your baby velly beautiful – prettiest baby in the hospital.*" Startled, I made enquiries and found out that the "*Pretty ladies*" were the Japanese Comfort girls brought from Japan to keep the Military Commanders happy while they were in a strange land.

Fortunately, I was well enough to return to the prison shortly after this episode and took a sad farewell of **Kit Wan**. Dabbing at her eye with a lace handkerchief, she pointed up to the top storey roof-garden of the hospital and there were the "*Pretty ladies*" waving goodbye to me with such goodwill on their faces.

When I returned to Changi in the middle of August I was demoted to the cells and there the heat was terrific. Children cried, mothers lost their tempers and the long days crept by. **Jenny** grew and flourished. One day, to our joy, the Japanese consented to build a large, well ventilated hut for the mothers with small children in the centre of the exercise yard and here we were able to get some sleep during the hot, airless nights.

We were continually having raids on the prison by the "**kempeitai**", the secret police. When I went in I was allowed one small suitcase and I managed to conceal my husband's much loved camera. Also the book we had compiled about our Australian leave. As we described our adventures in Australia, Tasmania and New Zealand we pasted in the margin photographs of the people we met and places we visited. On one of these raids I had placed the camera in the baby's basket but had the book on the table by my camp bed.

Suddenly, the Japs arrived searching for something. They were convinced we had a hidden radio. We were told to stand to attention while a Japanese woman searcher went through our luggage. As she picked up my book the pages fell open and there, staring them in the face was a magnificent picture of Sydney Bridge. Great consternation and much jabbering between her and the sentries. Off they went with my beloved book BUT they did not discover the camera. I never saw "Australian Leave" again and I wonder if it is going the rounds of Japanese libraries! It is a pity it did not open at the page showing a platypus eating scrambled eggs in a Melbourne Game Park.

The first Christmas the Japanese promised to arrange a meeting on Christmas Day between us and our men in the Military Camp – only a few miles from us. I went out with **Jenny** in her pram. The pram had been a wooden Nestle condensed milk box and the godfathers had lovingly converted it into a comfortable pram, painted white with grey wheels. We were among the unlucky ones. No sign of my husband, and sad at heart **Jenny** and I went back to the Prison. I suddenly found the Japanese Commandant of the Camp, **Major-General Saito** walking beside me. "Never mind, lady", he said, "Something must have stopped your husband from getting here on time. I will arrange an Easter meeting". And this, bless him, he did.

On 10th March 1943, **James** and I met again and my husband told me he had been with a working party on an island looking after the Japanese officers' horses. Their Camp Commandant, a mean Japanese, refused to let them go. So they kicked up an awful fuss when they got back to their main camp and this helped to make the Easter meeting a possibility.

So, for the second time we marched round the walls of the prison and stood in a long line with our backs to the wall, our sentries standing in strategic positions. As if we could escape! The men from the Military Camp were then marched in and made to face our line. A whistle was blown and there were our men rushing across the twenty yards or so that separated us. Anxiously I peered up at thin faces under strange headgear and suddenly there was **James** - thin as a rake, smiling, and almost hidden under a huge Australian bush hat. We met his daughter for the first time. Grey eyes looked steadily into grey eyes, ginger eyebrows raised in query and to my great joy he bent and picked her up as though he were well trained in carrying small children. She was eight months old. He then looked at me and said, "Woman, don't you know you should never leave a baby facing the sun?" What a greeting! And this from a man who had always regarded small children as intolerantly as he regarded rattlesnakes!

He brought his daughter a present he had made her in the Changi workshops - a rattle made from some pebbles in an old can attached to a stout wooden handle. **Jenny** accepted it graciously and then dropped it over the side of her pram. A good place for it to be, I thought! Might come in useful if I have to hit a Japanese in self defence. When our short hour of being together was past - so precious and so full of fear for the future - my husband took one of the little sharkskin shoes off his baby's feet and placed it in his wallet. "Until we meet again", he said. Just before the whistle blew to collect the men, **Major-General Saito** our Commandant, came across and joined us. He said quietly to **James**, "I, too, have a baby daughter I have never seen. She is in Japan." For a moment the time, the place, the fact that we were on opposite sides of the fence, meant nothing. Two men met as men, and thought of home.

The long weeks, the months went by. We gave a party for all the children in the Camp and every mother dug into her small hoard of goodies and we had wonderful cakes of rice flour and banana fritters and peanut sweets. A friend, **Bill Charlton**, an artist, painted us an invitation scroll and all the children who came to the party signed it.

On 6th May 1944, we were taken out of the prison and its hateful walls and sent to an open air camp called Sime Road. Here we were in huts and were able to grow vegetables in our little gardens. There was a feeling it wouldn't be long now.

But it was not until the 18th August 1945 that the peace rumours could not be ignored. On the 28th, Liberator planes flew over the camp and dropped leaflets. AND on the 30th the British parachutists arrived. Strangely enough, my memories of those last days are clouded in a haze of happiness. I knew my husband was alive - so many wives were mourning for those who would never come back. The Siamese Death Railway took a hateful toll of our fighting men.

My husband, my baby and I left Singapore for England, freedom and feeding. What the future held we did not know - it was enough to be together again.

I have often been asked why I stayed until it was too late to leave Singapore with the first boats that got away to India, Australia and Ceylon. I suppose I stayed because I could not bear to leave my husband to face it all alone; I was working on high security plans and I knew the police would look after me - and my baby had not yet been born. Thus in some strange way I worked out my destiny which meant I could go back to Singapore and work among its people and for its wellbeing, trusted and respected because I, too, had been in the bag. I knew what it meant to be a prisoner and what a cruel foe can do to people in a powerful country when war breaks out.

Postscript by Ian Richardson:

As **Daphne** wrote in her first lines, "The passing of the years has kindly drawn a veil over those parts best forgotten", there is much she has not touched on. Husband **Jim Davidson**, was also sent up to the Death Railway but survived it to be eventually reunited with her. Absence of mention of this means he had a horrible time.

They went to Scotland after liberation but were back in Singapore within a year to start over. Daughter **Jenny**, who spent the first three years of her life as POW, was christened with the names, "**Jennifer Tyndall Coventry Simpson Davidson**". Her mother said that if anything happened to her there could be no doubting who her father was.

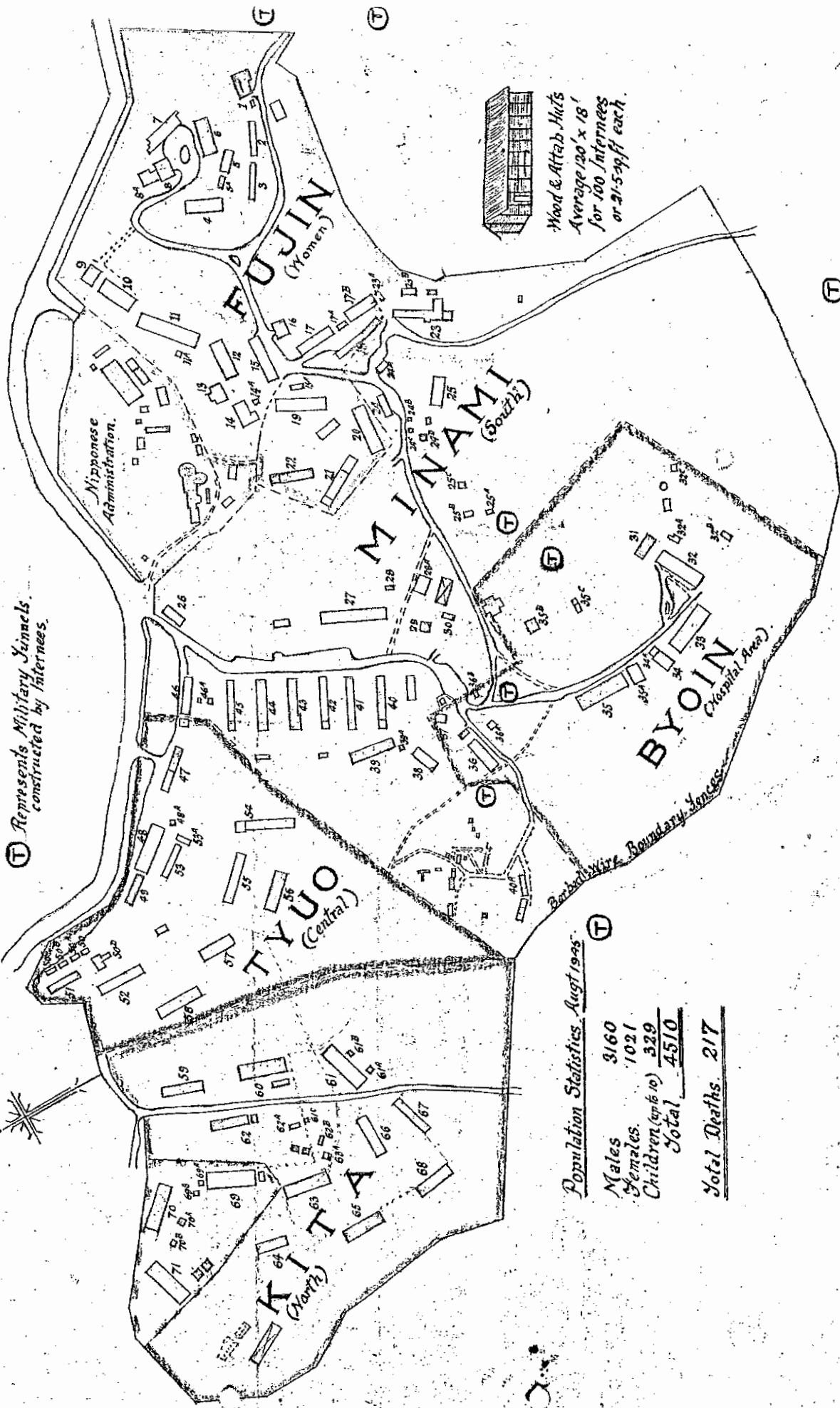
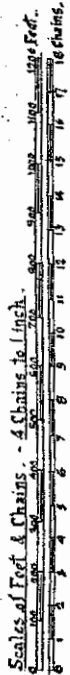
Jenny when old enough went to school in Scotland. When **Jim** and **Daphne** retired from Singapore they went to live in Jersey in the Channel Islands where **Jenny** joined them. **Jim** died of a heart attack in 1959 aged 54 and was buried in St. Martins on Jersey.

Jenny married in Jersey, had two children and now lives with her present husband in Edinburgh, Scotland. N.B. "Cover My Defenceless Head" is under copyright to the British Red Cross and therefore reproduction of any part of it requires permission. Contact Ian on ilgonr@yahoo.com if further details are wanted.

Plan as drawn, 1:1 scale
of the Drawing Office files

Civilian Internees
16 Months Internment in

Sime Road Internment Camp Plan June 1945.



T Represents Military Huts
constructed by Internees.

Wood & Attab Huts
Average 100' x 18'
for 100 Internees
or 21.5 sqft each.

Population Statistics Aug 1945

Males	3160
Females	1021
Children (up to 10)	329
Total	4510
<u>Total Deaths</u>	<u>217</u>

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EXTRACTS OF LETTERS FROM RICHARD PEALL – JUNE 1941 to JANUARY 1942

By kind permission of Elizabeth Bunney

Note: These letters were written by **Richard (Dick) Peall** from Kuala Lumpur to his wife, **Isabel**, then in **Perth**, Western Australia, who with small daughter **Elizabeth**, was visiting her parents who had retired to Perth. The visit was only 'for a spell of cool weather', but lasted the whole of the war.

Richard and **Isabel** were married in Singapore in 1937 and lived in Kuala Lumpur thereafter. **Dick** worked for **Harrison Barker**, an insurance company, while at the same time was a Volunteer in "**B**" Company, 2nd Battalion of the **Federated Malay States Volunteer Force**.

Elizabeth was born in October 1938, so was only 2 ½ when she and her mother left for Perth.

Isabel did not know **Dick's** fate until 3 ½ years later.

Elizabeth adds:

I have included names of people my father mentioned, as this might be of interest to the next generation who may possible read this. I am grateful for the help on the computer from my daughter **Anne Ashby**.

October 2010.

These extracts are in memory of Richard Peall: 23rd September 1907 – 15th February 1942

June 9, 1941

Bob White moved in on Sunday and we both think it will be quite a 'Good Thing', sharing exes* including cars. **Bob** and I get along very well together and **Cooky** is treating us to good grub in his usual style, so everything runs along quite smoothly.

On Friday afternoon the **RSM*** rang me up and told me to "stand by" for a possible funeral on Saturday as **Major Hobbs** was very ill and not expected to recover. Sure enough, he died that night and I had the unpleasant job of being one of the eight pall-bearers; officers given a military funeral have to have Warrant-Officers as pall-bearers.

Today's news reports our entry into Syria, an excellent move and one which will no doubt make **Adolph** squirm with rage and fury.

*Exes – expenses

*RSM – Regimental Sergeant Major

June 13, 1941

By the way, I ran into **Joyce Carter** in Singapore when I was down seeing you off. **Carter** has got a commission in the **Malay Regiment**, and she is in Singapore doing War work of some kind.

June 16, 1941

Yesterday the 2nd \$10 million **FMS*** War loan opened and the lists closed exactly three hours afterwards – oversubscribed – not a bad effort.

*FMS – Federated Malay States

June 21, 1941 [Saturday]

Was on parade on Wednesday evening and will be again next Wednesday. No news of any 'reorganisation' yet, still lots of rumours though, so meantime am still fooling about as **CSM***.

[**Sunday evening, 22nd**]. This morning we were up in time for the London News which made very good hearing – the capture of Damascus, the shooting down of 26 German planes over France and **Wavell's** "ultimatum" to Jibouti. I hope it is the beginning of telling France where she gets off. She has been altogether too much of a nuisance too long.

[**Monday evening, 23rd**]. So Russia is now in the Big Scrap. It should certainly be of help to us in beating **Hitler**, but if Russia is not defeated in the process it will complicate sorting out the "peace". Gosh what a mess the world will be in when it is all over. It will be interesting to see Japan's reactions – I don't suppose she will altogether like the idea.

*CSM – Company Sergeant Major

July 5, 1941

I have got five Volunteer parades this month, three Wednesday evenings and two Sunday mornings. **Bob** is now a full Corporal ('A' Coy) and has two parades a week. **Rom** is acting **CSM** of 'A' Coy and doesn't like it a bit, he is just waiting for **Knocker's** return from leave (also Sydney) tho' that won't help him as I know **Knocker** is booked for **CSM** of 'HQ' Coy when he gets back.

July 12, 1941 [Saturday]

This afternoon we played a tennis match against officers of "Corps HQ" here – three doubles pairs. **Elkins** passed the challenge on to me as tennis member and I fixed it up through the Selangor Indian Association from whom the challenge came. It was originally supposed to be against Indian Officers but I heard by phone this a.m. from **Col. Challon** (the bloke I have played with a couple of times before) that he – as "Corps HQ Sports Secretary" – was bringing a mixed team. Anyway, to cut a long story short, I managed to get **Moir** (Borneo Co.) who is just back from leave, and I thought that he and I as "1st pair" would certainly win, and that our other two pairs (**Leyland** and **Imry** and **Grundy** and **Guy Livingstone**) would probably hold their own, neither **Wagstaffe** nor **Murphy** being available. However, our other two pairs won and **Moir** and I lost. We played **Col. Challon** and **Major Goshe(?)** [an Indian] and they cleaned us up 6-2 9-7. The Indian chap **Goshe** was very good indeed and **Moir** was right off. He only arrived back from Sydney this week and it was his first game. We are playing the same pair a friendly on Thursday, and if **Moir** can strike his usual form we should win, because I am really playing quite well again now – says me anyhow. There is nothing worth seeing at the cinema tonight, and as I have a Volunteer exercise tomorrow morning I am staying in tonight.

[Monday evening, 14th]. Yesterday morning's Volunteering went off OK as we had a small Company battle and I acted as an umpire – which generally means you walk about 4 times as far as the combatants through trying to watch everybody at once.

July 25, 1941

We are all still quite calm, here, about the latest Japanese and Indo-China news, so if you are all getting another of those Australian scares, you can forget it. It looks a cert. that **Vichy** will have to agree to whatever the Japs ask for, but that still means a very long time before Tokyo can seriously consider worrying us down here. And America is obviously working with us, and probably Russia too, so just pause and think what Japan would be taking on. Us, China, Russia and the USA – a pretty good mouthful to chew.

[Sunday evening, 28th]. This morning was volunteering again from 8 until 12 and a pleasant little sleep this afternoon. The news is just about what everyone expected, freezing credits all round and cutting out trade with Japan. There is not much doubt that working in with the USA for some time past we are now in a position here to say to Japan "OK, do your worst". She is obviously getting all she wants in Indo-China, but that's about as far as she can go with safety.

Wednesday 6th August

No Japs arrived yet, so we are not duly alarmed at the latest "crisis". Keep smiling as it will probably all die down again very shortly.

As our parade this evening was a lecture for NCOs. I pushed off early, so here I am writing a proper letter.

Before I left Singapore on Tuesday night, **Joe Farriday** (who is this year's President of the Selangor LTA*) rang me up and asked if I could suggest anybody willing to put up an Australian Air Force officer who was coming up to play in the Malayan Championships. Like a mug I fell for it and said we could.

Thursday worked until about 5 p.m. and went to the early show at the Alhambra and saw **Merle Oberon** in something quite amusing, but forgot the name. Then walked to Raffles for dinner but didn't get any as I ran into **Jock Murray** and **Facey**, down there waiting for the Quantas to take them to Sydney next morning. Caught the train (just) and arrived back here to find **Pilot Officer Dunlop** had turned up on Thursday night. Fortunately I had warned **Bob**, so he had fixed him up alright. **Dunlop** won the Australian men's doubles with **Donohue** a few years ago, beating **Crawford** and **Hopman** (I think), and is a real class player – when on the wagon; a very cheery cove, about 37 years old and a tough baby!

Being an "Official" I was an Hon. Member of the 'Dog' during the tournament, and the blitz started there on Friday evening. **Jack King** and **Alexander** finished up at our place for late makan* and from Saturday morning onwards the alcoholic haze got steadily thicker. Saturday night **Dunlop** was in a separate party, so **Bob** and I managed to get to the cinema, but all joined up at the 'Dog' again afterwards about 12.30. Big dance and much gaiety and got to bed about 3.30. Sunday morning down to the Club again to watch the tennis and we had the RSM (**Ossy**) and the **Morris's** along for a Mee Tiffin*. Then more 'Dog' and the **Whits** asked us all (**Bob**, **Dunlop** and self) along for a pahit*. Some other tennis enthusiasts were there and we all adjourned to the Czeck (sic) Café for grub and then the 'Eastern' for dancing until 1 a.m. Even then, **Dunlop** would neither go home nor let us go either, so we had to show him round the beer dens. Another quite late night. Monday watched the men's doubles finals in the morning, and then a bunch of us adjourned to the swimming pool. **Dunlop** and I eventually got a late tiffin at **Jack King's** house (with **Alexander**), then back to the 'Dog' at 3.45 to see the remaining finals. **Joyce Carter** won the singles and she and **Kho Sin Kee** (China Davis Cup bloke) won the mixed. General mix up at the 'Dog' after the prize giving and found ourselves in a

party having makan at the Club Chambers. **Bob** and I had to think about work next day so got **Dunlop** home (by trickery) at midnight. But he wouldn't stay in, and we wouldn't go out, so off he went in a taxi on his own. ~~Have an~~ idea what time he returned as we have not seen him since! **Paul Clere** collected him from here at 6 a.m. on ~~Tuesday~~ and drove him back to Singapore according to plan.

I was in a very sorry state all Tuesday and was in bed by 9.30 p.m. Wednesday, a bit stronger but had another ~~early~~ night. Today (Thursday now) almost normal again and we are playing our usual bridge game at **Rom's**. But ~~Bob and~~ are still on the wagon and intend to remain on until the end of the month. It really was an "old fashioned" ~~holiday~~ weekend, and should last me for about three years. I thoroughly enjoyed every minute of it I admit – up to ~~Tuesday~~ morning – but Heaven save us from menaces like friend **Dunlop!** His expression for a beat up was "Come on ~~chaps~~ we'll go out and skin a cat tonight". About the only cat in Selangor still unskinned must be ours, because we ~~were~~ never in!

*LTA – Lawn Tennis Association

*makan – dinner

*Tiffin – lunch

*pahits – drinks

Monday August 18th

The old Jap situation seems to have eased a shade in the last couple of days, though obviously the next few weeks ~~are~~ likely to continue to be a bit strained. If the position is no better than this when your boat is due to sail, I should ~~like~~ you to stay down there for a bit longer. No earthly point in coming back in the present kind of atmosphere, ~~and~~ although I still feel that all will be well here, we can only wait and see what the future brings forth. The constant ~~and~~ very heavy reinforcements arriving in Malaya almost every week are all the more arguments against Japan taking ~~the~~ final plunge, and should not be looked on as signs for alarm – just the opposite.

Bob and I play quite a bit of bridge at one place or another (have been losing steadily again lately) and then Volunteering twice a week and weekend camps take up a lot of time.

Harry Noon has just phoned asking us to bridge and makan on Wednesday, that makes four nights running this ~~week~~ – tomorrow we go to **Brand's**, Wednesday **Harry Noon**, Thursday **Rom** and **Barnard** here and Friday **Peter Taylor** and his Mem* come here. **Betty Taylor** is shortly going on leave to Eastern Australia, but there are still hundreds of Mems here and nothing in the nature of an "exodus" at all. Our bridge dates are all "after parade" as **Bob** ~~parades on~~ Monday and Thursday and I parade on Wednesday and Friday and we both probably have a camp or an exercise of some sort or other over the weekend.

We had a very appreciative letter of thanks from our "cat skinning" friend **P/O Dunlop** after the recent Malayan Championships. Was glad of that as we did him pretty well, and so often people just don't bother to write afterwards. He was rather like **Jack** in some ways, all out to make a party as soon as "two or more are gathered together", and ~~full~~ of fun and stories which he told rather well.

*Mem – wife

Thursday August 21st

One or two little odd items of news I can jot down before I forget – **Andrew Carruthers** has announced his engagement to somebody **Edwards** in Singapore, and has got a job there with the Malayan Broadcasting Corpn. – telling bedtime stories I should think. **The Bovings** have moved into **Read's** house in Golf View Road as **Read** ~~has~~ now gone on leave. **Mrs. Bunny** is up Fraser's Hill for a month as per doctor's orders as she has been very run down lately – probably doing too much. Do you remember **Bill Morgan** in Singapore – a big chap, "Manufacturer's Life Insurance", who died some years ago? **Maisie Morgan**, his widow, was left with two young sons, just little lads, in Singapore. Well, the elder boy got a Commission and was accidentally shot dead whilst cleaning his revolver, ~~and the~~ younger earned his wings, and then had a head on crash with another plane and was also killed. Poor old **Maisie**, ~~both~~ gone and before either had done any actual fighting; pretty tough, eh?

I have been very energetic lately and have been getting up at about 6.45 and going for a trot and walk down the road. Didn't really enjoy it so changed over to cycling to the club, and having a quick ten minutes swim and a cup of tea there. Very pleasant too and I'm going to try to keep it up. I eat twice my normal breakfast after the exercise.

Sunday 24th August

Another week gone by and August nearly at an end. How I am hoping and praying that conditions will have improved sufficiently for you to return in the near future. I just don't like this "Grass Widower" business one little bit.

Friday morning my before breakfast ride and swim, and then a parade in the evening. Same on Saturday morning ~~and~~ camp at the range over the weekend. Our Coy Commander has now ruled that sergeants and above need not sleep in

camp provided they are back in time for the first parade on Sunday morning, so naturally I slept at home. Finished about midday and had too many gins before coming back here for tiffin about 2.30. Tea upstairs at 5.30 and then went to the first house at Odeon and saw Edward G. Robinson in "The Sea Wolf" – very good indeed but not your style at all. Rough stuff from EGR as a tough sailing ship skipper.

Next week is a quiet one, thank goodness. Tennis (singles) v. **Murphy** on Tuesday, parades on Wednesday and Friday and bridge on Thursday.

Monday 25th August

This morning I missed my early ride and swim – just felt lazy, so did not get up until 7.20 for the news. This evening went out on the range on my own and did a bit of solitary practice with a Lewis Gun. I so seldom actually handle the gun that I should probably be slower on the various stripping and assembling and rectifying "stoppages" than the troops I instruct. However, after half an hour's private practice this evening I found I am still pretty slick at it – though "I says it as shouldn't". Just after tiffin **Col. James** rang me up at the office and asked me to attend a lecture at HQ tomorrow evening at 5.20 to be given by an American War Correspondent who has been at all the best wars lately. The lecture is actually for officers only, but the CO wants CSMs to attend as well; it should be jolly interesting, so I have cancelled my tennis date with **Murphy**.

Have just listened in to San Francisco (7.30) and hear that Britain and Russia have moved into Iran. Damn good job too; **Wavell** was obviously not taken away from Egypt for a holiday. The old Russkies seem to be doing pretty well, and this development will improve the general situation as far as their left flank – and Turkey – is concerned. Also **Winston's** plain warning to Japan to "lay off", and the further reinforcements arrived in Malaya (even since my last letter) will make the little yellow b-s stop and think even more.

Wednesday 26th

This should have been posted yesterday, but **Bob** forgot to remind me, so blame him if it misses the mail. The lecture – or talk, rather, yesterday was amazingly interesting. Given behind locked doors up at HQ with guards outside, too. Three Generals were present, including **General Heath ("Heath of Karen")**, umpteen Brigadiers and Colonels, several Majors, a sprinkling of Captains, a couple of Lts. and ME! Will tell you all about it one day.

Sunday 31st August

Gibby gets married tomorrow, so I popped into Robinson's to get him something from us. They told me he had bought a complete set of "Stuart Crystal" glass except the decanter, so I picked on that - \$15 I'm afraid. I had also organized a collection from the Europeans of "B" Company and **Bretherton** and I went to **Hendry's** and ordered a solid silver beer mug suitably inscribed. It was a real beauty and he should be very bucked with it. Don't know where or what time the wedding is, as I don't think he is asking anyone along. Don't blame him either, these days.

The general situation in the Far East should clarify itself somewhat in the very near future if these "talks" between Japan and USA come to anything. Meanwhile, we can only wait and see how things develop before deciding whether you should return here or stay down there. Your suggestions re: packing up silver and glass if I am mobilized are duly noted, but I am not expecting anything drastic like that. I think the Australian newspapers must be painting a pretty lurid picture of conditions in Malaya. Actually everything is very calm here, although we are by no means adopting the old ostrich policy of pushing our heads into the sand – not a bally soul about!

As from today, we have an extra ten minutes "daylight saving" throughout Malaya, putting us exactly 7 ½ hours ahead of Greenwich time. So what? Oh well, I just thought I would mention it.

To be continued in April.

IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM – DOCUMENTS AND SOUNDS SECTION

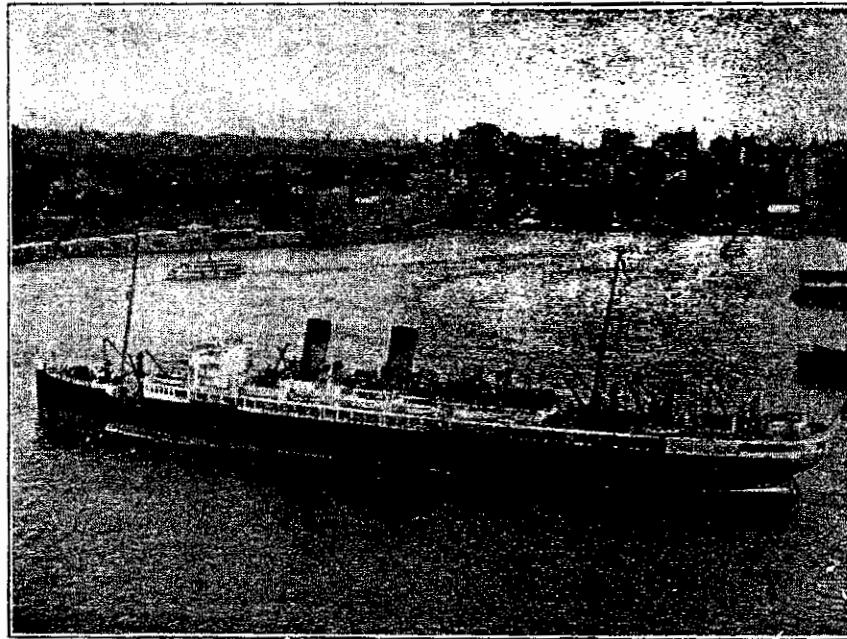
Following the publication of the Malayan Volunteer Holdings in the Imperial War Museum in the October edition of "Apa Khabar", we received a letter from **Rod Suddaby**, Keeper of Documents at the Museum, indicating that the Museum is very anxious to promote the widest possible use of its holdings to family historians as well as to the academic world.

He wrote:-

"I am very glad that you were able to amalgamate my list of the papers of **Malayan Volunteers** held here with the details about our collections which **Jonathan (Moffatt)** had already included in his book, and to print the consolidated list in your October *Newsletter*. We are, of course, keen that our holdings should be as accessible as possible and I hope that interested members of your Group will get in touch with us if they want to come here and read any of the documents. I will make a point of sending you an update to the list before I retire. Just yesterday, we received from his great nephew a 200 page diary written by **W.T. Crossley** as a civilian internee in Changi."

[Note: Those of us who have met Rod and received help from him in researching family diaries held at the IWM, thank him very much for his assistance and kindness. We wish him a long and happy retirement.]

The S.S. MONOWAI
The 1st Liberation Ship from Singapore to Arrive in Liverpool, England.
James Davidson's family reunited and returns home.



*s.s. "Monowai" Singapore to Liverpool Sept. 11th to Oct. 11th, 1945
(Actual arrival date in Liverpool was 9th October.)*

The S.S. Monowai was first built by the P&O Line in 1924 for the Bombay / Aden run. It was commissioned as the SS Razmak to carry a total of 392 passengers with a ship's company of 262. It was 10,600 tons with a length of 159 meters and was capable of 19 knots. In 1930 it was transferred to the associated Union Steam Ship Company of New Zealand.

On arriving in Wellington she was refitted during which gun mounts were installed. At this time she was renamed the Monowai. Her funnels were painted red with black tops and looked fine in the company's colours of bronze and green with white above decks. From Wellington she commenced to run the Pacific islands as far as Vancouver and San Francisco.

In October of 1939 the ship was requisitioned by the Royal Navy and was refitted as an armed merchant cruiser. Eight 6" guns were her main weaponry and because of her designed agility she carried depth charges for anti-submarine warfare. Her first tasks were to escort vessels in the Pacific and move New Zealand troops to Fiji for at this time German raider vessels were at large.

In January 1942 the Monowai was attacked by a Japanese submarine but none of the four torpedoes hit. Just as the Monowai gained her artillery range the submarine crash-dived.

By April 1943 the Monowai was due for a refit but was then considered surplus for what she was doing. She was sent to Liverpool via the Panama for conversion to an assault landing ship. Twenty assault landing craft swung from the davits capable of transporting 800 troops and their equipment. It was the invasion of Europe that was its intended future. Her first journey was moving troops to and within the Mediterranean. By April she joined a mass of other vessels in the Solent in the mouth of the Thames preparing for the D-Day landings.

On June 3rd 1800 Canadian and British Commandos embarked her at Southampton and at dawn of the 6th was seven miles off "Gold Beach" when the first assault wave commenced. The landings continued all that day amidst heavy opposition. Surrounded by naval vessels their heavy guns fired non-stop broadsides on the coastal inlands.

Only six of the Monowai's assault craft survived the day and after taking on casualties returned to England to take on another run to "Utah Beach". She made 45 crossings to France carrying some 73,000 troops.

Her next big task was to sail for Colombo to prepare for the invasion landings against the Japanese in Malaya. The sudden surrender of the Japanese changed all plans and the **Monowai** was redeployed as a mercy ship from Karachi with supplies and liberation forces to arrive in Singapore on 8th of September 1945. She was part of the third convoy of ships moving British and Indian forces to Malaya and Singapore.

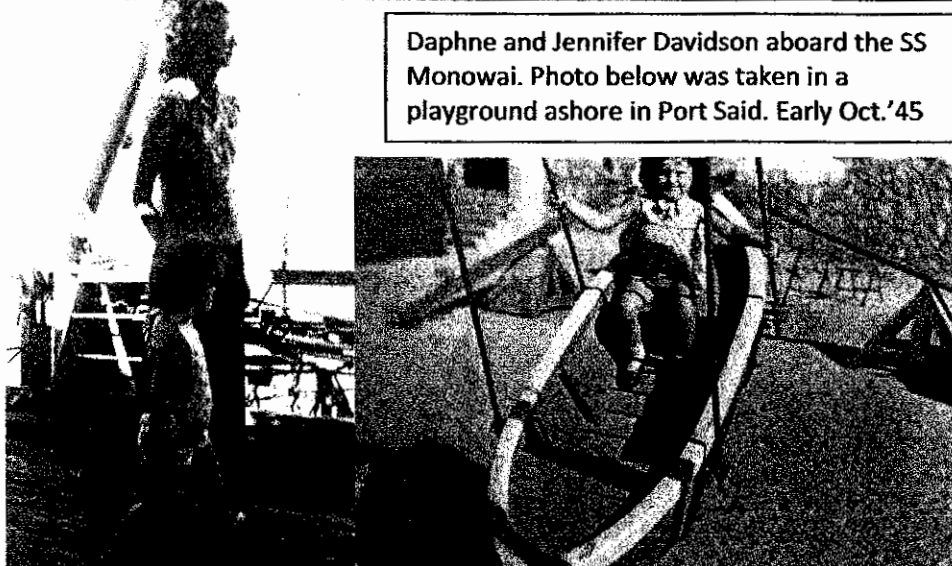
On the 11th September the **Monowai** boarded 650 service personnel and 199 civilians who had been POWs in Changi Prison and Sime Road Camps for the past three and a half years. It included the women and children of British expatriates who had survived the three and a half year internment. Amongst them was **James Davidson**, a signalman for the SSVF Volunteers who had survived an early Burma railway work force. On release from Changi Prison he had met up with his wife, **Daphne Davidson**, who came from the Sime Road POW camp, with their daughter, **Jennifer**, who had been born during captivity. (See "Cover My Defenseless Head", October 2010 issue) They reunited in the Raffles Hotel where they talked of plans to return to England. They were now homeward bound.

Jennifer, who was then three years old, said, "I have a memory of entering our cabin and being transfixed and thrilled by the sight of fresh, clean sheets on the bunks, which of course, I had never seen before."

Jennifer Martin, who now lives in Aberdeen, Scotland, has given permission to use these photographs which her father **Jim Davidson** took on the homeward voyage. It is thought he must have purchased a cheap Kodak camera and film in Port Said. It is doubtful there were many photographs taken by passengers on this ship and these may be among the precious few.



Daphne and Jennifer Davidson aboard the SS Monowai. Photo below was taken in a playground ashore in Port Said. Early Oct. '45



The Monowai arrived to a great celebration on the Liverpool docks and all was done to get them on trains to their homes throughout Britain. The homecoming was a front-page event in the newspapers.

By now, the Monowai was in very run down condition. She was put to work sailing the Middle East and the Indian Ocean. She is no longer a dignified old lady. June 1960 saw her do a last Pacific cruise and she was then sold for a mere £160,000 sterling for scrap. Some New Zealanders who were fond of her tried to save her but she was finally towed across Kowloon Bay to the breaking yards near the Kai Tak airport.

Article by Ian Logan Richardson ilogonr@yahoo.com

LAUNCH OF THE LIVERPOOL PIER HEAD REPATRIATION MEMORIAL APPEAL

The launch of the Liverpool Pier Head Appeal was made on BBC Radio Merseyside between 12 and 2 p.m. on Tuesday 9th November 2010, on the Roger Phillips Show. In the studio with the presenter were Meg Parkes, who initiated the appeal, Geoff Gill, Professor of International Medicine at the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, Maurice Naylor, who was repatriated on board the *SS Orbita*, and Stan Buchanan a member of the ship's crew.

On the 9th November 65 years ago, the *SS Orbita* docked at the Princes Landing Stage at the Pier Head in Liverpool. Also on board this ship was Lt. Col. Philip Toosey.

The programme created such an interest that the whole 2 hours was devoted to the appeal, with many local listeners phoning in with their memories of those times and stories about their relatives who had been repatriated to Liverpool. Towards the end of the two hours, MVG's Jonathan Moffatt was also interviewed.

The Liverpool Daily Post and the Liverpool Echo carried stories about the launch on both the 9th and 10th November.

An appeal for donations to fund this project has been launched by The Researching FEPOW History Group as follows:-

"Permission has been granted by Liverpool City Council for the erection of a permanent memorial to the memory of the FEPOW and civilian internees who returned via Liverpool from captivity in the Far East during the autumn of 1945. The appeal was officially launched on November 9th (the 65th anniversary of the arrival of SS Orbita on the Princes Landing Stage in Liverpool).

This national fundraising appeal proposes to raise in the region of £8,000 and that's where we need YOU! Donations can be made by cheque or postal order, made payable to:

Researching FEPOW History, write 'Memorial' on the back and send to:

Mike Parkes, 34, Queens Road, Hoylake, Wirral, Cheshire CH47 2AJ.

Full details can be found at www.researchingfepowhistory.org.uk

And any further queries should be directed to:-

Sarah Hawkin, Secretary RFHG, at sarah@researchingfepowhistory.org.uk

DEVELOPMENT OF THE FORMER SSVF HQ AT BEACH ROAD, SINGAPORE.

We are very grateful to Neill and Morag Aitken for agreeing to contact Ho Weng Hin at the StudioLapis, following the announcement of the new South Beach Road Project in the October edition of Apa Khabar, by the StudioLapis consultancy. As the last European Officer in the post war Singapore Volunteers, Neill is very keen that as much of the historical building as possible should be preserved and incorporated into the new development, particularly the iconic main façade of the building.

This is his report about his meeting with the Consultancy partners:-

"On November 4th, I met Mr. Ho Weng Hin and his partner in StudioLapis Ms Tan Kar Lin, and over lunch at the Cricket Club gave them as much background as I could on the SVC Headquarters in Beach Road and the Memorial.

The South Beach Project encompasses developing the entire site and involves two massive tower blocks being constructed between Beach Road and Nicholl Highway. These blocks will face on to Beach Road, with the three existing "Volunteers" buildings adjacent to the road being incorporated as a front or entrance to the towers standing behind them. The computer graphics were stunning and I was delighted to see and hear of the efforts being made to preserve the buildings and heritage. What StudioLapis is intent on ensuring is that they get the rehabilitation of the buildings absolutely right. They have been much altered, even since my time, and details are needed of the original layout, usage, colour schemes etc. to help with this. Personally, I have photographs of relevance and a white-ant riddled copy of the Official History which I will send to them but, unfortunately, all of the images are black and white. What we need is colour photography and anything else which may be relevant to these three buildings.

The Drill Hall is central to the project but, facing south, the buildings on either side of it, facing Beach Road, will also be preserved. These were, to the west, the HQ of the Gunners and the Armoured Car Squadron in the "50s" and "60s" and, to the east, the main HQ building incorporating the Armoury.

If anyone has anything of relevance I would be glad to hear from them. I am now liaising with StudioLapis and will happily act as the interface between them and the Group. Naturally, as with my own material, I shall endeavour to see that anything which turns up is treated with care and copied and /or returned, as appropriate.

I shall be back in Singapore in the New Year, so anything requiring special care can be hand carried. There is a genuine and very pleasing effort being made to treat these buildings with respect and ensure historical and cultural accuracy, and anything MVG members can contribute will, I can assure them, be most welcome."

IF YOU CAN HELP PLEASE CONTACT NEILL ON:- the.aitkensandm@btinternet.com

OBITUARIES

ROGER MANSELL – born New York 1935 – died Palo Alto 25/10/2010

Roger Mansell was the outstanding historical researcher of the story of the 35,000 Allied POWs held in camps in Japan during the Second World War. Over more than twenty years, **Roger** uncovered documents previously buried in inaccessible archives. He made numerous visits to the United States National Archives copying thousands of documents. He founded the Center for Research Allied POWs under the Japanese to post this information on its website, www.mansell.com. Rosters, photos, camp descriptions are now readily accessible online to the families of POWs. He personally assisted hundreds of people from not only the USA but also the UK, Australia, New Zealand and elsewhere, who came to the website looking for information about what happened to friends and relatives. As one result of his research, **Roger** has helped several families locate the remains of soldiers who were missing in action during the war. He was equally generous in assisting fellow researchers worldwide.

Roger Mansell was born in 1935 in Brooklyn, New York. After graduating from Mepham High School in Wantagh, NY, he attended Brown University. Commissioned in the U.S. Army Artillery he was stationed in Korea then at Fort Bliss, Texas. Having completed his military service in 1962, he moved to California and a successful business career. It was to be the deep impression made upon him by an employee who, as a child, had been a prisoner of the Japanese during World War 2, that set him on a course to discover more. A family friend, **Maj. General Ralph Smith**, who died aged 104 in 1998, the oldest surviving general of World War 2, encouraged him to join the local American Legion and participate in their activities such as a lunch group that met regularly to discuss World War 2 History. When he met a veteran who had been taken prisoner by the Japanese on Guam, **Roger** realized that many of the ex-POWs, now elderly, had never told anyone about their experiences in what was a crucially important part of the history of the war in the Pacific.

Roger spoke at conferences in the USA, the UK and China. In 2006 he addressed the first International Researching FEPOW History Conference held at the National Memorial Arboretum. Only a fortnight before his death he sent a video recorded talk which was greeted with sustained applause at the 2010 Conference.

Roger showed people how to research and stressed the importance of sharing data and preserving rare family and official documents and artifacts.

His book, "*The Forgotten Men of Guam*", will be published posthumously, as edited by historian **Linda Goetz Holmes**.

Roger's chief goal was to compile a database of more than 100,000 records documenting what happened to every Allied soldier who was captured by the Japanese 1941 – 1945. This was approximately 90% completed at the time of his death. In September 2010, the **Roger Mansell Collection**, which consists of more than fifteen linear feet of documents, dozens of first hand interviews with former POWs or their families, some fifteen hours of video recordings, and approximately four hundred published titles, many exceedingly rare, was donated to the **Hoover Institution, Stanford University**.

In the words of historian **Goetz Holmes**: "His was a legacy to everybody wanting to know about the Pacific War, not just researchers but also people who want to know what happened to their loved ones."

Roger Mansell died on October 25th 2010 at Palo Alto, California. He is survived by his wife Carolyn and daughters Alice and Catherine.

Compiled by Jonathan Moffatt.



GORDON MACKENZIE GLENCROSS – born England 17/4/1918 – died Sydney 8/6/2010

The MVG is sad to report the death of **Gordon Glencross**, a Veteran Volunteer in the 2nd Battalion SSVF. We send our sincere condolences to his wife **Joyce** and daughter **Alexandra Coffey**, who sent his obituary through **Mason Nelson** in New Zealand. We are grateful to **Alexandra** for supplying the details of his life as follows:-

"Educated in England, **Gordon Glencross** joined the Commercial Union Assurance Co. in London 1936. He was a Volunteer soldier in the British Territorial Army – a 2nd Lt. in the Queen's Royal Regiment. He was posted by his employers to their long established Singapore branch in 1938. Soon afterwards he enlisted as 2nd Lt. in the second Battalion of the Straits Settlements Volunteer Forces. He was married to **Barbara Ellercamp** circa 1940 and she was subsequently lost in the course of evacuation from Singapore in the last convoy which left in February 1942.

Upon the fall of Singapore, **Gordon** became a prisoner-of-war, initially in Changi and soon after he was drafted to the Burma-Siam Railway labour force. Occupied latterly in the unusual role of elephant handler, as a result of which he developed a life-long affection for the animals and an impressive collection of replicas.

In 1946, he joined the New Zealand Insurance Co., becoming Manager of the Hong Kong Branch, a long established and important office in that company's extensive Asian network. He married **Betty Eadie** in 1950 and in 1953 he was transferred to the New Zealand Insurance Head Office in Auckland. He was divorced in 1971, and later, in 1976, married **Jocelyn Mair** of Christchurch, New Zealand.

He became the Deputy General Manager of NZI in Auckland before being sent to Sydney as Australian Manager of the NZI. Under **Gordon's** leadership, the business expanded very successfully. He retired in 1983."

PETER CHOPPING – born England 4/1/1917 – died 16/11/2010

After reading medicine at London University and St. Thomas's Hospital, he joined the RAMC in 1941 and was sent to Singapore and worked at a hospital in Changi barracks. The hospital was evacuated after the Japanese invaded the island, and Peter Chopping drove to Singapore with other medics, where an operating theatre was set up in a cinema. Later they moved to the post office building, and set up mattresses on the floor to accommodate about 100 wounded men. Two days later Singapore fell, and he was captured. Sent to Farrar Park, he acted as MO to the 5th Norfolk Regiment. Improvised ointments to treat a variety of tropical diseases, was hurriedly called for, with the lack of care provided by the Japanese for the wounded. Later with 2 RAMC colleagues he was moved to Serangoon Road where they cared for 500 men. He managed to get hold of radio parts from the Japanese radio station, through POWs who were working there, and built a short-wave radio which could receive transmissions from the BBC in London. He hid his first radio in the bottom of a pail containing dirty water – a later model was built into a filed ambulance water bottle. Every day at 11p.m. he and a fellow POW tuned into the BBC and took down the news in shorthand in the dark. Next morning the news was typed out and passed round the camp. When the war ended; Chopping was in Changi jail. His radio was donated to the Imperial War Museum, and he was mentioned in dispatches.

RON DUCKENFIELD – Born England 15/4/1917 – died 19/11/2010

Group. Capt. Ron Duckenfield flew Hurricanes during the Battle of Britain, but in February 1942 he was appointed to command No.615 Squadron and sailed with the squadron for India. In December 1942, as the Japanese advance into the Arakan, operations against them commenced, flying from Jessore. He flew armed reconnaissance sorties and on 27th December led 8 Hurricanes to attack Magwe airfield. Over the target his engine failed and Duckenfield was forced to crash land in a creek 200 miles behind enemy lines. He was captured and put in solitary confinement before being taken to the notorious Rangoon Jail. Here, he taught himself Japanese and created a Japanese/English dictionary. Despite his harsh treatment as a POW, after the war, he studied Japanese at the School of Oriental Languages, and later spent 3 years as air attaché in Tokyo. After retirement from the RF he joined Rolls Royce and was appointed marketing director for Japan, where he spent more time, making many friends, and was admired for promoting Anglo/Japanese relations.

HAVILDAR LACHHIMAN GURUNG, VC. – Born Nepal 30/12/1917 - died 12/12/2010

Lachhiman Gurung won the Victoria Cross while serving with the Gurkha Rifles in Burma in 1945. At the end of April 1945 the 89th Indian Brigade of 7th Division was ordered to cross the Irrawaddy and destroy the enemy north of the Prome-Taunggy Road. After fierce fighting the Japanese were withdrawing towards the Taungdaw Valley. "B" and "C" companies of the 4th Gurkha Rifles were positioned to block them at the village of Taungdaw. Surrounded by the Japanese, Gurung with 2 other men were manning the forward post when the Japanese attacked. This post blocked the advance along a jungle track leading to the platoon's position and it was vital that it was held. After throwing back 2 enemy grenades, the 3rd exploded in the trench severely wounding Gurung and his companions. Lining up shoulder to shoulder the Japanese tried to storm the trench, but despite his wounds, Gurung loaded his rifle and kept firing, repelling wave after wave of attack for 4 hours, shouting "Come and fight a Gurkha". By morning 31 of the enemy lay dead in front of Gurung's post. Lord Louis Mountbatten invested Gurung with his Victoria Cross at the Red Fort in Delhi on 19th December 1945.

In 2008, Havildar Lachhiman Gurung was to become closely involved in the campaign to allow Gurkhas to settle in Britain. Entry had been refused to the 2,000 Gurkhas who had retired before July 1997, when their base was moved back to the UK from Hong Kong. Both Gurung and another Gurkha VC Tul Bahadur Pun had been told that they would not be allowed to settle here because they had failed to "demonstrate strong ties" to the UK! Luckily this ruling was overturned, and outside the High Court the Gurkhas and their supporters, including Joanna Lumley were heard to give their battle cry of "Ayo Gorkhali".

In November this year, Gurung attended the Remembrance Sunday ceremony at the Cenotaph, and was also present at the VC and GC Association reunion in the presence of the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh.



IN MEMORIAM

The MVG is deeply saddened to report the tragic death of Dr. Ian Noble, aged 26, in a road accident. Dr. Ian was the son of MVG member Rod Noble. We send Rod and his family our very sincere sympathies on their terrible loss. We also offer our deep regret and condolences on the death of Rod's mother Gwen Noble in her 100th year. Gwen Noble was the widow of Ian Noble who went out to Malaya in 1928 as a Chartered Accountant, working initially for Evatt & Co. in Penang, then French Bank in Singapore, before being sent to Ipoh. He joined the MAAF, but was interned as a civilian in Changi and Sime Road during the war. Gwen was evacuated by flying boat to Sydney.

AIR FORCE MEMORIAL – SUNGAI BESI AIRBASE MUSEUM. Report by Andrew Hwang dated 20/10/2010

I visited the Sungai Besi Airbase Museum, as I heard that the memorial had been completed after some delay. The memorial is a large 2-metre high triangular pedestal which serves as the base for a *Tebuan* (Strikemaster) trainer jet plane, which is mounted on it. There were only 126 names on the memorial and these were all Malaysian names for the period 1962 to 2007. All these pilots died in air crashes. No combat-related deaths were recorded.

In Gallery 2 of the small museum next to the memorial, there were another 84 names listed on plaques and these were of pilots who died in air crashes between 1985 and 2009. I did not check to see if there were any repetitions in the names between the memorial and the plaques. I had the impressions that the 84 names were *in addition* to the 126 listed on the memorial.

POST-WAR COMPENSATION – A request from Audrey Holmes McCormick.

Looking through family papers, it was recalled to me that the compensation my mother received after the war, for the death of my father in Singapore, was the sum of £43. I remember how angry she was: possibly rather having had nothing than this miserly valuation of her husband. He had been the Plants Manager for the Straits Trading Company, and when the Japanese landed he was in the north of Malaya. Long before this, he had sent us to safety in Australia, paying our boarding fees until the end, when my mother and other wives suddenly found themselves having to keep themselves – by taking smaller rooms and even jobs in the boarding houses where they were staying. My father was at this stage engaged on making the Pulau Brani smelters inoperable as the Japanese arrived, and then there was the destruction of oil reserves in the islands, alight on 13th February. He was killed at Keppel Harbour the next day in a raid and went into a mass grave at Pearls Hill. My mother never knew what happened to him. And it was some time after the war that this miserly award arrived.

For research interest, I wonder if other women also received such sad awards for lost husbands and would let me know what amounts were paid, and if they received living expenses or other help? The armed forces, however, presumably looked after their own people. I am interested in how valued our men were. I know of students at university in Australia at the fall of Singapore, who found themselves in great difficulties. Also, many unfortunate amahs who had been taken to Australia with families, and then sent back to Singapore before the ban on them was lifted, permitting them to stay in the country – too late for most of them.

My mother had to be in court to have **Robert “Bob” Trotter** declared dead post-war. Until then, funds from his estate were only released to her on loan at chargeable percentages by her lawyer, and so for some time she took on housekeeping.

If anyone can recite their own experience in this field, I'd be most interested to know.

My address is: 30, Kirk Brae, Kincardine, Clackmannanshire, Scotland FK10 4PX

CORRECTIONS TO THE ARTICLE IN THE OCTOBER EDITION – “EUROPEANS ONCE PLAYED THE DRUMS.....”

Sent by Liz Moggie, who says:-

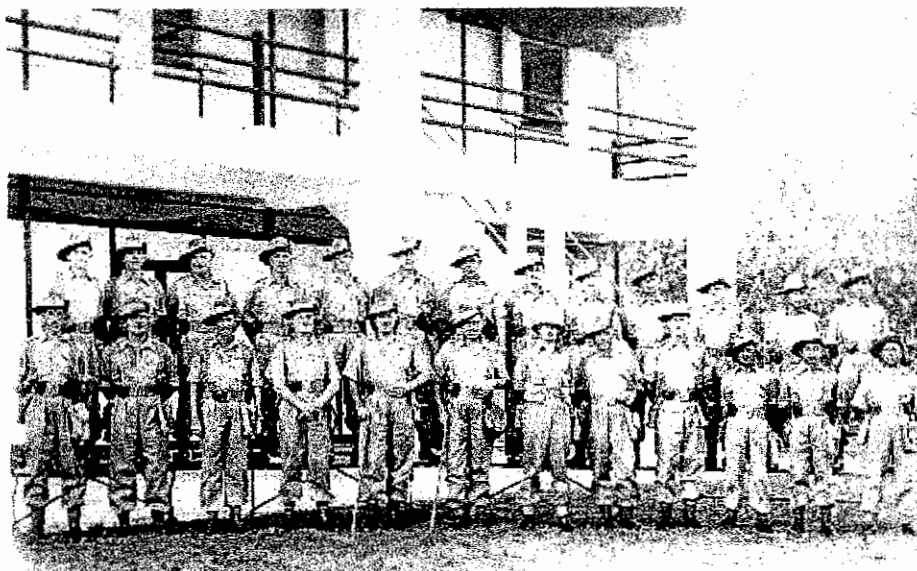
“There were a few mistakes in the spellings of various estate and other names, as verified by Henry Barlow:

- 1) For Wardleburn Estate (P.17) read **Wardieburn Estate**, which was an estate which was developed along the Ulu Kelang Road. Part of it became a military camp and the rest housing.
- 2) For Bukit Blimping (P.17) read **Bukit Belimping**, which was an estate out near Kuala Selangor, now either developed or merged with another estate - possibly Sime Darby.
- 3) Dour Estate (P.17) I have not heard of this and cannot think of a similar estate name in the Batu Caves area.”

[Editor: Apologies for the errors. Thank you for the corrections.]

OFFICERS in the 3RD BATTALION FMSVF (NEGRI SEMBILAN)

Sent by Peter Windsor – can anyone put names to the men?



IPOH WAR MEMORIAL, PERAK – Sent by MVG and NMBVAA member Bill Adamson.

For some time, I have been collating as much detail as possible to identify all the personalities who responded to British call to arms during WW 1 from Perak, Federated Malay States.

I have had good reason to complete this "research", for my father gave me considerable detail in note form and often commented upon various 'names' and their relationships within Perak and the Plantation Community. These details will be produced later in a further presentation.

My father often directed my attention to the fact that the "Station Monument" (his name for it) "should be declared as **virtually** Planters' Monument". He considered the names on the Station Monument reflected 80% of Plantation stock! In fact, he and other pre-WW 2 planters believed that from the numbers who had responded to the constant British call to arms is **likely to** have reflected around 75% Planter stock throughout the Federated or Unfederated States. I am continuing my research into all the Monuments known around the Federated and Unfederated Malay States, but feel that I can do little more with the Perak Monument's basic records.

If we review Perak's Monument – the commemorated names thereon display 51 planters, 6 tin miners, 1 lawyer, 3 **merchants**, 1 chemist, 1 engineer, 1 party I have been unable to research details about and 1 extra who was not applied to the **plaque** – therefore 65 names in all. Well, my father was not far out, the monument indeed depicts 78% plantation identities **amongst** the names listed.

Dato' Pillay you have commenced these past three years the Commemoration at this site. You should indeed be **proud of** what you have achieved, and being an old Planter myself, thank you for your gracious effort. I hope the details of these figures will benefit your presentation in some little way in the future, but, I also feel the detail may be of measurable **good for** the M.P.O.A.

The memorial carries 4 names from George Williamson Agency Estates, with 2 from Jong Landor and its subsidiary.

Editor: I have a list of these names, with rank, regiment, address and occupation, if anyone would like a **copy**.

MVG PLAQUE

At the RFH Conference at the NMA in October, plaques of the MVG logo were presented to **Rod Beattie**, for display in the Thailand-Burma Railway Centre Museum in Kanchanaburi, and to **Jeya** for the Changi **Museum** in Singapore. The plaque was designed by **Donald Fell** and hand made by **C.H. Munday Limited**. A **sample** was on display at the London Lunch, and can be ordered through Rosemary or directly through Munday's. The cost of the plaque which is mounted on a beech wood base is £43.20p although this may increase **with** the new VAT amount. The address if ordering direct is:-

Oxford House, 8, St. John's Road, St. John's, Woking, Surrey GU21 7SE. Tel: 01483 771588



WEBSITES TO VISIT

<http://www.coventrytelegraph.net/news/coventry-news/2010/10/20/wartime-prison-camp-was-best-start-in-life-says-coventry-man-92746-27511330/> Don Newman's story – a Veteran Volunteer
<http://singaporeevacuation1942.blogspot.com/> Some vivid Singapore Evacuation footage 4th screen down
<http://standrewschurch.org.my/2010/11/13/remembrance-sundayunstick-after14-nov-2010/> Sent by Andrew Hwang of the Remembrance Sunday Service which was the most successful for more than 20 years.
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/medicine-obituaries/8160649/Peter-Chopping.html> The full obit for Peter Chopping, the Changi medical officer.
<http://www.herberthistory.co.uk/cgi-bin/sitewise.pl?act=det&pt=&p=236&id=herbhis> Lt. Herbert of FMSVF Light Battery [Ipoh]
<http://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/queensland/i-knew-he-was-a-fraud-in-three-seconds-20101221-1944g.html> Investigative military historian Lynette Silver with Di Elliot outside the Brisbane Court where Arthur "Rex" Crane was revealed to be a bogus veteran and ex-prisoner of war and ordered to spend 6 months behind bars. He had claimed to be in the Kedah Volunteer Force.
<http://thestar.com.my/lifestyle/story.asp?file=%2F2010%2F8%2F8%2Flifefocus%2F6746729&sec=lifefocus> An article entitled "Heroic contributions of the Nanqiao ji gong", by Chow Ee-Tan. This is the story of Chinese, Malay and Indian military drivers and mechanics who were recruited in 1939 from Malaya and Singapore by the Chinese Nationalists to serve in China and Burma. It's a fascinating story of how they travelled 1,000 km from the railhead town of Lashio to Kunming, the capital of Yunnan Province where they were set to work.

BOOKS

"THE FLAMBOYA TREE. A family's war-time courage". By Clara Olink Kelly. Published by Arrow Books, paper back. ISBN 0-09-944553-0 and ISBN 978-0-09-944553-1
A powerful story which grips the reader with its simple descriptions of the appalling deprivations and impersonal brutality of the "women's camp" where Clara and her family were interned by the Japanese on the island of Java. It is a moving tribute to the indomitable courage of her mother, which kept the family together and alive throughout their ordeal. When the Japanese invaded Java, Clara Kelly was four years old. Her family was separated, her father sent to work on the Burma-Siam Railway, and she, together with her mother and two brothers (one a six-week-old baby), was sent to a "woman's camp" where her mother endured all manner of degrading treatment. Clara tells of standing in the baking heat for hours; of the "Tenko-style" roll-calls; of living on one cup of rice a day; and of how her mother was forced to work clearing the sewers. Finally released from camp, they returned home to Holland to be greeted by an uncomprehending grandmother whose first words were "Why didn't you try to escape?" Trying to adjust to normal life again was also a challenge to the family, but Clara emerged from her early ordeal and survived to become happily married with children and grandchildren of her own.

"IN THE SHADOW OF THE RISING SUN". By Mary Thomas. Published by Marshall Cavendish Editions, paper back. ISBN 9-789812-618597
When Mary Thomas left England for Singapore in 1939, she expected to live a leisurely life as an Englishwoman in a colonial outpost. When the Japanese bombed Singapore in December 1941, she chose to serve in the Medical Auxiliary Service instead of escaping on one of the evacuation ships. Captured by the Japanese at the fall of Singapore, Mary was interned in Changi Prison together with thousands of other women, children and civilians who had also stayed behind. Mary recorded the sufferings and joys of her fellow inmates in a diary – kept secretly. She revealed in her writings surprising kindness, bravery and redemption shown by many of her fellow prisoners.

"SURVIVING TENKO. The Story of Margot Turner". By Penny Starns. Published by The History Press, paper back. ISBN 978-0-7524-5553-2
The story of Margot Turner's survival as a POW on Banka Island, is one of incredible fortitude and courage. Escaping from Singapore on the *Kuala*, which was sunk by the Japanese, she was picked up with other survivors from Pom Pong Island by the equally ill-fated *Tanjong Pinang*. Rescued by a Japanese battleship, as the only survivor from the makeshift raft on which she and 16 others escaped drowning when this ship was sunk, she was taken to Muntok and imprisoned with other civilian internees on Banka Island. Margot Turner not only survived her ordeal but went on to become a brigadier and matron-in-chief of the British Army, post war.

"RAILWAY OF HELL. War, Captivity and Forced Labour at the hands of the Japanese". By Reginald Burton. Published by Pen and Sword Military, paper back. ISBN 1-84884299-6 [Originally published as "The Road to 3 Pagodas".]
As a junior officer in the 1st Battalion, The Royal Norfolk Regiment, Reginald Burton was stationed in India when war broke out in 1939. In the summer of 1940 the Regiment was sent to England and was caught up in the evacuation from Dunkirk. Following duties to defend the outer parts of London near Croydon, Reginald was moved to the 4th Battalion and stationed in Scotland. In October 1941, he was with the force which set sail from Liverpool for the Far East, finally arriving in Singapore just before its fall. He witnessed the last desperate struggle for survival, and was badly wounded just before being taken into captivity for 3 ½ years, and being put to work on the Burma-Siam Railway.
His original book, written in 1963 when he was still a serving officer, had to be vetted by the War Office. In the spirit of "reconciliation" he was required to "dilute" the grimmer aspects of Japanese brutality and atrocity. However, once retired from service life, Reginald felt at liberty to present the truth as it unfolded, without constraint, hence the new edition, first re-printed in 2002.

"PENANG AT WAR: A HISTORY OF PENANG DURING AND BETWEEN THE FIRST AND SECOND WORLD WARS 1939 – 1945". By Andrew Barber – a former British Diplomat residing in Kuala Lumpur. The launch in Penang on 6th November 2010 was attended by MVG member Leslie James. The book contains some references to the Volunteer Forces.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES

WEDNESDAY 16TH MARCH 2011 – GUIDED TOUR and LUNCH AT ARUNDEL CASTLE

This special event is by kind invitation from our Patron, The Duchess of Norfolk. There are still a few places available if anyone else would like to come. All those who have replied to the invitation, which was sent out in October 2010, and sent their cheques to Rosemary, are assured of a place.

A reminder of the arrangements for the day:-

10.30 Arrive at Arundel castle.

11.00 Conducted Tour of the Castle by Her Grace, the Duchess.

1.00 Lunch.

Only 2 per family at £25 per head. Please send your cheque, post-dated to 1st March 2011, made out to:-

Mrs. R. Fell Malayan Volunteers Group

And send to:- Millbrook House, Axminster, Devon EX13 5EE.

Final details will be sent to those coming nearer the day. We look forward to this event and thank our Patron very much.

SUNDAY 8TH MAY 2011 – ANNUAL SERVICE AT THE FEPOW MEMORIAL CHURCH IN WYMONDHAM, NORFOLK

If any MVG member would like to attend this service, you will need to book a seat. Write to:-

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

This is an ecumenical service in memory of all Far East POWs. The small FEPOW Chapel within the Church has books displayed in a glass-topped cabinet containing the names of all FEPOWs and civilian internees.

SATURDAY 4TH JUNE 2011 – SUGGESTED SPRING MEETING OF THE MVG AT THE NMA

It has been suggested that the MVG should arrange a Spring Meeting in addition to the annual lunch in October. If there is sufficient interest in this idea, the suggested venue is the NMA and either:-

PLAN A – Meet at 11a.m. – do some work in the Memorial Garden – have a buffet lunch arranged by the NMA – cost c. £15

PLAN B – Meet at 11a.m. – tour of the NMA – lunch at own arrangement – work in Memorial Garden

If you would like to come, please let Rosemary know with your chosen option. I need to book the buffet asap, and find out the costs if we wish to book a place in the restaurant, marquee or lecture room. If anyone has any other ideas – please let Rosemary know.

MONDAY 15TH AUGUST 2011 – V-J DAY.

There will be a short informal service to remember V-J Day, held in the MVG Memorial Garden at the NMA. The service will be arranged and conducted by the MVG members who regularly attend the event. Please let Rosemary or Jonathan know if you plan to come, and would be willing to take part in the service. The service will be held at midday, followed by a picnic lunch in the grounds of the NMA.

SATURDAY 8TH OCTOBER 2011 – LONDON LUNCH AND REUNION AT THE RAF CLUB, PICCADILLY

Hugh Chaplin reports that all the Function Rooms at the RAF Club have been booked for the first Saturday in October, and that the Ballroom is also unavailable for the second Saturday. He has therefore taken the option of booking one of the smaller rooms with a reduced capacity of 40 for the SECOND Saturday in October. We are very sorry about this, and Hugh has already booked the Ballroom for the first Saturdays in October in 2012 and 2013 to make sure of it.

It is important to book early with Hugh if you wish to attend the lunch. At present the menu and costs have yet to be decided, but the meal will be the usual 2-course with coffee and petit-fours to follow. There will be a bar available for pre-lunch drinks and wine if required. Again, with limited space, places will be allocated on a first-come-first-served basis.

SUNDAY 13TH NOVEMBER 2011 – REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY AT THE CENOTAPH IN LONDON

If you would like to join the regular marchers at the Cenotaph service in Whitehall, please let Rosemary know early, as numbers are limited. Those of us who meet every year find it a very special event, and well worth the wait until it is our turn to march. The lunch afterwards at the "All Bar One" is a welcome chance to relax after standing for the duration of the ceremony. To date we have not heard about the proposed Remembrance Service in Malacca, which was mentioned in the October newsletter. When we have some news about this we will let members know.

WEDNESDAY 15TH FEBRUARY 2012 – SERVICE of REMEMBRANCE on the 70TH ANNIVERSARY of the FALL of SINGAPORE

We are still awaiting details about the Service which is being arranged at the Changi Museum by Jeya and his Staff. There will also be a Dawn Service at the Kranji War Cemetery in Singapore. Members are advised that this date coincides with the annual Singapore International Air Show (14 – 19th Feb) and accommodation will be at a premium. If you are planning to attend the Kranji Service or any of the other services which take place on this date, you are advised to book your accommodation as soon as possible. Details will be sent out as soon as we have them.

MVG SUBSCRIPTIONS – DUE IN APRIL 2011

The annual subscription falls due in **APRIL 2011**. We are holding this at **£ 15 sterling** for a **FAMILY MEMBERSHIP** for April 2011 to 2012. Cheques should be made payable to:

Mrs. R. Fell Malayan Volunteers Group

and sent to:- Millbrook House, Stoney Lane, Axminster, Devon EX13 5EE.

I would be very grateful if you would let me have your subscriptions in good time. If you do not wish to renew your subscription, please let me know so that reminders do not have to be sent.

Australian members – please pay **John Pollock** in Australian dollars – **AUS \$30 PER FAMILY MEMBERSHIP**

Malaysian members – please pay **Andrew Hwang** in Malaysian ringgit – **as per request**.

Members in non-sterling countries may pay in their own currency as long as it converts into the equivalent of £15 sterling. Please let me know if you are having difficulties with high bank charges.

Receipts for subscriptions will not be sent unless requested. Donations will be acknowledged to the best of my ability – and apologies if I have overlooked an acknowledgement.

NEWSLETTERS

Back copies of all newsletters are posted on the MVG website, together with an index from each copy. These can be accessed by using the password “**dindings**”.

Printed copies are posted to UK and European members, and to other overseas members who have requested a printed copy. Other overseas members will receive **e-mailed copies**.

Please let Jonathan, Rosemary, Andrew or John know if you change your postal or e-mail addresses.

MEMORIAL SERVICE AT ST.MARTIN'S CHURCH, NORANDA, ON 12TH SEPTEMBER 2010

The report of this Service was printed in the October newsletter. The photographs below show **George Hess'e** who organized the service, the Padre and tributes being laid by the model of the “**Fallen Warrior**”.

REV. BARRY MAY & VETERAN GEORGE HESS'E



LAYING TRIBUTES BY “THE FALLEN WARRIOR”



OVERSEAS CONTACTS

JOHN POLLOCK – MVG AUSTRALIA

5, Aitken Street, Kangaroo Flat, Victoria 3555, AUSTRALIA. e-mail: mvg_australia@gmail.com

ANDREW HWANG – MVG MALAYSIA

28, Jalan Batu Laut, Taman Bukit Seputeh, 58000 Kuala Lumpur, MALAYSIA. e-mail: mvg.malaysia@yahoo.co.uk

PLEASE NOTE NEW E-MAILS

UK CONTACTS

JONATHAN MOFFATT – MVG Historian & Archivist on British Malaysians/Volunteer Forces/Argyll & Royal Marines

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

HUGH CHAPLIN – MVG Reunion and Lunch Tel: 01865 881664 Mobile: 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, Stoney Lane, Axminster, Devon EX13 5EE. Tel: 01297 33045 e-mail: dinraf-millbrook@tiscali.co.uk

MALAYAN VOLUNTEERS GROUP
NEW MEMBERS – OCTOBER 2010 TO JANUARY 2011

CORK, Ronald.

Middleton Farm, Tenterden Road, Sissinghurst, Kent TN17 3PA.

e-mail: cardont@aol.com

Son of **Stephen CORK** a Prison Officer at Changi pre-war. Evacuated with mother and brother in February 1942 possible on the Empress of Japan.

Evacuated on the "Empress of Japan?"

EVESON, Mary Anita.

P.O Box 22792, 84501 Gavrión, Andros, Cyclades, GREECE.

Tel/Fax. 0030 22820 72101 e-mail: ricanita@otenet.gr

Daughter of **Dr. Stephen EVESON** Colonial Service 1925 -1953. Changi and Sime Road internee. Evacuated as a child with my mother Catherine and sister, Jane, to grandparents in Northumberland, then Hampshire in 1945. Father returned to Malaya post-war, but we did not return with him due to the Emergency. Jane emigrated to Australia in 1966, and I went to Greece in 1963 and have remained there.

Evacuated on the "Empress of Japan"

HENDERSON, Olga (nee Morris) [HONORARY LIFE MEMBER]

18, Netherfield Avenue, Eastbourne, Sussex BN23 7BS.

Tel: 01323 764979

Interned as a child of 9 with mother, three brothers and a sister in Changi Gaol and Sime Road. Daughter of **Harry MORRIS**, PWD Clerk of Works – civilian internee in Changi and Sime Road.

HEALE, John.

Blanchdown Farm, Tavistock, Devon PL19 8JF.

e-mail: johnheale@ymail.com

Son of **Lt. Reginald W. HEALE, MRNVR**, HMS Sultan [Singapore Naval Base] Merchantile Assistant and Sub Lt. SS RNVR in 1930s. POW Padang, Sumatra. Returned to Singapore then to Thailand.

HENVILLE, Dr. John.

13, Oxford Road, Woodstock, Oxfordshire OX20 1UN.

Tel: 01993 811942 Mobile: 07785 367926 e-mail: jhenville@waitrose.com

Son of **Laurence** and **Marguerite HENVILLE**. My father joined SOCFIN (then Selangor Rubber) in 1929 aged 22 and was Acting Manager of Sungei Rambai Estate near Kuala Lumpur at the time of the Japanese invasion. My sister **Lorna** was born in Kuala Lipis in 1936 and I was born in Kuala Lumpur in 1939. My father had been a member of the FMSVF (Selangor) for several years. During the battle for Singapore he was seconded to the RASC, sent to Changi at the surrender and then to Blakan Mati (with Noel Disney), and in April 1943 sent to Thailand with H Force to work on the Railway at Hintok River Camp where he died in April 1943. My mother, sister and I were evacuated from Singapore on the **Narkunda** to Fremantle, together with **Ella Newman** and her daughter **Geraldine**, then to Perth and then to Adelaide where we lived for three years, returning in April-May 1945 to Liverpool on the **Rangitiki**. My father is commemorated on the Kuala Selangor memorial, and his grave is in Chungkai War Cemetery.

Evacuated on the "Narkunda"

WHEELER, Sheena. (nee Dick).

41, Dalry Road, Darlington 6070, Western Australia.

e-mail: gtandsmwheeler@bigpond.com

Daughter of **Alastair Mackay DICK, JVE NCO i/c No.3 Section**. Planter Manager, Tai Tak Estate, Kota Tinggi and Sungei Dangar Estate Johore Bahru. POW Singapore. A tapper for Changi POW Camp Rubber Factory. Stayed in Australia until 1945 with Mother, **Sally (nee Rennie)** and sister **Elizabeth** then to Edinburgh. Father returned to Malaya post-war and retired to Darlington, WA

Evacuated on the "Narkunda"

WINDSOR, E. Peter L.

1, Dodd's Howe, Crosthwaite, Kendal, Cumbria LA8 8HX.

Tel: 01539 568554 e-mail: Peter@windsor8hx.freemove.co.uk

Son of **Lt. Col. Edward P. WINDSOR** of **3/FMSVF [Negri Sembilan]** then **FMSVF Training Battalion**. General Manager British Malay Rubber Co. Ltd., Nilai, Negri Sembilan. POW Singapore to Thailand in October 1942 until the end of the war. Returned to Malaya 1946, Kubang Estate Nilai, NS.

Self: born in 1929 in KL and lived on Sungei Mahang Estate, Nilai, NS until 1938. Mother evacuated to Australia.

WORBOYS, Fiona.

5, Scott Street, Wangaratta 3677, Victoria, AUSTRALIA.

e-mail: fiona.worboys@nhw.hume.org.au

Granddaughter of **John GORDON CSM 1/FMSVF**. NZ Assistant Engineer, Tronoh Mines Ltd., Injured pre-hostilities but unable to leave Singapore due to fractured spine. Changi & Sime Road internee. Great uncle, **Hugh GORDON** murdered by Japanese in South Thailand.

AMENDMENTS AND DELETIONS

BALCOMBE, David and Judy.

Extra details omitted from October's list:-

Grandfather **Colin Douglas CAMPBELL** was Manager of Selaba Estate Perak, and evacuated on the "Giang Bee" 13/2/42 . Also relatives **John CAMPBELL**, and **Richard** and **Maie GORDON** were interned in Changi.

FLETCHER, Julia.

New address:-

3, Bonaly Gardens, Edinburgh, Scotland EH13 0EX

Tel: 44 131 623 2595

HOLMES, Imogen.

Daughter (not niece) of Dr. Kirkwood. (Apologies to Imogen)

MUIRHEAD, Lauriston and Katherine.

New address:-

22, Nullah Court, Table Top, NSW 2640, AUSTRALIA

PATERSON, Bob.

Evacuated on the "Giang Bee"

PATERSON, William David and Sonja Karen.

Details omitted from October's list:-

Son of **William Smith PATERSON** and **Nancy PATERSON (nee Hollingsworth)**. Father a rubber planter on Sadang Estate, Parit, Perak. **Sgt. FMSVF 45 Reserve MT Co.** POW Singapore to Thailand with "D" Battalion. Died Tarsao 1944.

Mother evacuated to Perth with sister **Sandra Ann (now Burdett)** in one of the last ships to leave Singapore – the boat they missed was bombed.

THOMPSON, Lynda.

Father was in the SSVF not FMSVF. (Apologies for the error)

WOODFORD, Des.

Evacuated on the "Mata Hari"

Please note e-mail addresses for:-

Malaysian Secretary ANDREW HWANG – mvg.malaysia@yahoo.co.uk

and Australian Secretary JOHN POLLOCK – mvg.australia@gmail.com

AN IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

Unfortunately the information in the January newsletter about the MVG's proposal to present the Australian War Memorial with a plinth and bronze plaque is no longer relevant. The following letter (post-marked 22nd December 2010) was received too late to be included in the newsletter, which was ready for printing. We will have to reconsider our position, but it may be possible to approach the authorities in Perth, Western Australia, for permission to present this Memorial to the State War Memorial in King's Park, through MVG member Bill Adamson, who is also Chairman of the Western Australia NMBVAA Branch.

Merdeka Day, on the 31st August, is celebrated each year with a Commemorative Service in King's Park. Those who served and died in WW 2 in Malaya and Singapore are remembered amongst others from later conflicts in the Far East up to the present day. Our proposed memorial would therefore seem to be in keeping with the Service which is held in King's Park every year.

We are very sorry for this set back in our attempts not only to commemorate the Australian Volunteers but also to thank the Australian Nation for taking in so many war-time evacuees from Singapore. I am sure that we will find a suitable venue somewhere in Australia.

S. N. Gower AO AO(Mil)
Director



17 December 2010
File: 10/2746

Dear Mrs Fell

I write in response to your letter of 8 November and your group's very kind offer to donate a memorial to commemorate Australians interned whilst living and working in Malaya during the Second World War, and those who served with the Malayan Volunteer Forces.

I note your group's achievements in regard to seeking recognition of the Malayan Volunteer Forces (MVF) and I am sympathetic to your cause. We do have a plaque dedication program: however, the program guidelines specifically require the units commemorated to be Australian units. Individual memorials erected in the grounds are established under similar guidelines and understandably space for new commemorative installations is extremely limited.

For these reasons, I do not believe I am able to accept your offer of a stone or brick mounted bronze memorial plaque. I understand this will be a disappointment to you. Let me assure you that the Australian involvement in Malaya during the Second World War is comprehensively covered in the displays and archives at the Memorial.

If your members do wish to come to the Memorial as a group (I note you have an Australian Secretary) we would be very pleased to offer facilities or activities (such as a guided tour) to ensure the visit is memorable.

Yours sincerely



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