

APA KHABAR

Patron: Her Grace The Duchess of Norfolk

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MVG MEMBERS REMEMBER 15TH FEBRUARY 1942 IN SINGAPORE AND PRESENT PLAQUES IN AUSTRALIA AND SUMATRA

Forty one MVG members, families and friends attended the Remembrance Ceremony to mark the 70th Anniversary of the Fall of Singapore at Kranji War Cemetery at 6.00p.m. on Wednesday 15th February 2012. Organized by The National Archives of Singapore and The Changi Museum, the service was attended by over 1,000 people representing all nationalities which had been caught up in the short, savage war waged by a ruthless, elite Japanese Force. The service commemorated those who made the sacrifice so that generations that followed could live in peace, and took place on the day and over the exact time of surrender 70 years ago.

At precisely 6.10p.m. on Sunday, 15th February 1942, Lieutenant-General Arthur Ernest Percival, General Officer Commanding (GOC) Malaya Command, signed the unconditional surrender of all Allied Forces in Singapore at the Ford Motor Factory at Bukit Timah. The surrender was accepted by Lieutenant-General Tomoyuki Yamashita, Japanese Commander of the 25th Army, heralding three years, six months and twenty eight days of Occupation during which both civilian and military personnel witnessed much suffering.

Also on 15th February at 9.30 a.m. MVG members attended the 45th War Memorial Service for the Civilian Victims of the Japanese Occupation at the Civilian War Memorial Park in Beach Road. Organized by the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the short but significant service was attended by inter-religious organizations, Singapore Armed Forces Veterans' League, Cadet Corps and school children. Among the distinguished guests listed were the Australian Minister for Veterans' Affairs **The Hon. Warren Snowdon MP**, and Australian & New Zealand WW11 Veterans. There were no British Representatives at this civilian service. **The Hon. Warren Snowdon MP** and Australian Veterans also attended the Kranji Service, where the United Kingdom was represented by **The Rt. Hon. Lord Green of Hurstpierpoint, Minister of State for Trade and Investment** and the Chief of the Air Staff, **Air Chief Marshall Sir Stephen Dalton**. The Australians also arranged their own Service of Remembrance at Kranji at 7 a.m. on 15th February, to remember their own war dead and veterans who had fought in the Malayan Campaign, as well as attending the other services.

Other events had also been arranged for MVG members to attend during that week in Singapore, and there were also exhibitions, events and talks taking place which had been organized by the Singapore National Heritage Board and partners (including the Changi Museum). In the following week, plaques were presented, on behalf of the MVG, in Australia and Sumatra. The success of all these activities in which MVG members took part was due to careful planning. Several people were involved with this, but in particular the MVG would like to thank the following people for their hard work and expertise:- **Jane Nielsen** for organizing the Historical Tour on Monday 13th February. It took a great deal of time and effort to get this tour off the ground, not only in arranging the itinerary, but in the research involved with planning the places to visit and the route to take. We also congratulate Jane on creating a unique war-time map of Singapore showing prominent sites from that time. The Changi Museum has already started to use the map in conjunction with their tours of the Museum and Island.

Judy Balcome for designing and planning the presentation of 4 plaques in Muntok and Palembang. This is a wonderful achievement, and we are pleased that so many MVG members were able to attend the presentations.

Bill Adamson whose untiring efforts in seeking and obtaining permission for the Australian plaques to be placed in the City of Stirling War Memorial Gardens (Perth WA), achieved success in 6 weeks, after 18 months of applications failed to find a site elsewhere.

Liz Moggie for planning and organizing the charter of a boat which followed the route taken by some of the ill-fated ships through the Riau Islands as they left Singapore shortly before it fell to the Japanese.

Anthony Cooper for arranging a private tour of Adam Park for MVG members with battlefield archeologist **Jon Cooper**, who had worked on the project.

Reports about all these events and activities are included with this newsletter, and we are very grateful to **Merilyn Hywel-Jones**, **Bill Adamson**, **Judy Balcombe**, **Yvonne Wurtzburg** and **Imogen Holmes** for their excellent and interesting articles. Thanks also go to members of the MVG who attended the moving service at Ely Cathedral on Sunday, 12th February 2012, to mark the 70th anniversary of the fall of Singapore. The service was organized by the National FEPOW Fellowship Welfare Remembrance Association (NFFWRA) to remember those who gave their lives, and to give thanks for those who returned. There were many reports in local Singapore newspapers during the week of 15/2/12 relating to the events of 70 years ago. However, let us recall here one brief, stark headline, recording the tragic fall of Singapore, but not its terrible consequences.

THE DAILY TELEGRAPH LONDON, MONDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 1942
PREMIER ANNOUNCES FALL OF SINGAPORE

NEWSPAPER REPORTS RELATING TO THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF 15TH FEBRUARY 1942 IN SINGAPORE AND MALAYSIA.

The publicity in Singapore and Malaysia surrounding the 70th anniversary commemorations, brought forth a wealth of newspaper stories and information about surviving veterans who fought in the Malayan Campaign, and about the plight of different local families who lived under Japanese occupation.

The New Sunday Times in Kuala Lumpur.

On 12th February, this newspaper ran an article by MVG Malaysia Secretary, **Andrew Hwang**. It tells the story of how his two great-uncles fought with "B" Company in the Malacca Volunteer Corps at Cluny Hill in Singapore. **Captain Cho Seow Lim** was killed during the battle for Cluny Hill. His brother-in-law, **CQMS Tan Kim Tee**, was captured and shot by firing squad along with 26 other Chinese Volunteers who were massacred, probably on Bedok Hill. Their names are recorded on the War Memorial outside the Stadthuys in Malacca and on the Singapore War Memorial in Kranji.

The Straits Times in Singapore.

At a reception at the Changi Museum on **Friday 10th February**, **Mr. Seah Kim Bee** recounted how, aged 13, he helped his mother, **Mrs. Mary Seah**, (The Angel of Changi) deliver food to the POWs in camp.

Also present were three sisters whose whole family was interned in Changi Prison because their father served with the British Army. One sister, **Mrs. Louise Branson** aged 81, said she suffered from claustrophobia for many years after her time in Changi. Another, **Isabel** aged 82, contracted malaria in prison and still suffers flare-ups today.

Another extraordinary coincidence emerged during this reception. **Mr. Joginder Singh**, aged 93, recalled that he had served with the Malacca Volunteer Corps in the Signals Section, and that the officer in charge of the section was 2nd Lt. **Eric Reeve**.

[Editor: I am his daughter! **Jeya** - Director of the Changi Museum - phoned me minutes before leaving for Heathrow.]

Four very different stories appeared in The Straits Times on **15th February**. These related to 4 Singaporeans and how the war affected them.

Mr. George Prior was only 18 when his home was bombed by the Japanese. With a Eurasian father and Indian mother, his parents and siblings had been evacuated to India. **George** felt he had nothing to lose and enlisted in the British Army's Royal Artillery. He was assigned to the Changi beach area and operated a cannon with 2 other soldiers. **George** recalls that on 15th February, when the British surrendered, they were told to stay with their units so that the Japanese could count them. Those who tried to escape were shot. Then along with more than 100,000 other POWs, **George** had to march through the streets of Singapore to Changi, where he spent some time before being sent to Thailand to work on the Burma-Siam Railway. Due to his part-Indian heritage and appearance, he was often singled out for a beating by the Japanese guards because of his allegiance to the British instead of the Indian National Army (INA) which sought to liberate India from British rule. He survived nearly 3 years on the railway, before liberation. Then came a period of recuperation in Britain, before he was re-united with his family in India. He returned to Singapore and joined the Police Force. **George** maintains that his survival was due to his pre-war fitness as a sportsman.

Madam Zaleha Sumun witnessed her parents being taken away by the Japanese in Johore as they occupied Malaya. A Peranakan Chinese by birth, she and her other siblings were adopted by Malay families. Her adoptive father was an *ustaz* (Muslim religious teacher) and so she was brought up as a Muslim. Later the family moved to the Geylang Serai area of Singapore, where she remembers being constantly hungry, and having to queue once a week for the family's rice and tapioca rations. Apart from other privations such as having to use candles at night to conserve electricity, their lives were fairly peaceful. At the age of 16 she entered into an arranged marriage to a carpenter and had 10 children. Due to her wartime experiences, she tells her children and grandchildren to finish their food and not to waste anything.

Mr. Bala A. Chandran came from a Tamil Indian family which had settled 3 generations ago in Ipoh, but moved to Singapore. Hoping to be spared by the Japanese, his family displayed pictures of **Mahatma Gandhi** [a leader in the Indian independence movement] on their doorstep. However, they did hide Chinese neighbours in their home, at great peril to themselves. Deprived of his education, **Bala Chandran** joined the youth wing of the Indian National Army in 1943, but although trained in intelligence work, he was never sent to the Indo-Burma border. Despite the family's INA allegiance with the Japanese, there was very little hostility from local people until after the war. He still maintains that one should fight for one's rights, without fear or favour, in a peaceful manner.

Mr. Paul Cheah Thye Hong was aged 11 when Singapore surrendered. He came from an English-speaking Hokkien Chinese family, which should have been celebrating the first day of the Chinese New Year on 15th February 1942. Instead, they had been told of the surrender the night before by his 22 year old brother, **Thye Hean**, who was a member of the Straits Settlements Volunteer Force. Although **Thye Hean** had abandoned his uniform, he was rounded up with other Chinese males, aged 15 and over, by the Japanese a few days later to be screened, and never came back. His name is on the Kranji War Memorial. This was how **Paul Cheah's** family came to be caught up in the infamous "Sook Ching" massacres. He said that his experience of the Japanese occupation made him more resilient, patient, compassionate and humble.

Two stories of interest appeared on **16th February**. One was a letter from a Japanese Teacher who had met the late **Mr. Jimmy Chew** - RAF and POW in Java. She was grateful for his annual talk to her high school students about his experiences as a POW. Something they knew nothing about. The second was a report on remarks made by **Professor Kevin Blackburn** about the ceremony at the Civilian War Memorial, in which he said that the ceremony was less evocative than other war remembrances overseas. The article attempted to explain why this should be so, if true.

The Star in K.L.

On 11th March, a story appeared about **Private Ujang Mormin**, aged 91, who fought in one of the last battles for Singapore. He is the only survivor from a group of 42 men in the **First Malay Regiment**, under the command of **Lt. Adnan Saidi**, who made a final stand against the Japanese on Bukit Chandu. He was photographed receiving his **Pingat Jasa Malaysia** from the Malaysian Defence Minister.

AUSTRALIAN NEWSPAPER REPORTS RELATING TO SINGAPORE, THE BOMBING OF DARWIN & EAST TIMOR

The West Australian and The Nation

An article on **15th February 2012** describes how the all-WA 2/4th Machinegun Battalion faced 15 battalions of Japanese troops as they stormed on to Singapore Island on the night of 8th February 1942. 93 year-old **Ron Badock** still recalls the horror of that night, as the hard-pressed Australians fought hard with machine gun fire and hand grenades to stop the enemy landing on the beaches. His company was part of the support for the Australian Imperial Force infantry battalions – about 1500 soldiers in all. “This was the sum of the defence as opposed to the thousands of battle-hardened troops the Japanese had,” he said. Having withdrawn in the face of such overwhelming odds, they were ordered to get back into action to give covering fire until the infantry got out. Cut off by the Japanese, the unit followed a water pipeline back to Singapore, where they went into their final positions forming a perimeter around the city. More than 3,000 Australians were killed and wounded in the battle for Singapore. The first working party **Ron Badock** and his mates were assigned was to build a monument to the Japanese troops killed in action.

The weekend paper covering **18-19th February** carried articles about the bombing of Darwin 70 years ago. Attacked by a force of 188 planes from 4 Japanese aircraft carriers, the first of 64 raids which were eventually carried out, Darwin was totally unprepared for such an attack. A second wave of 54 bombers hit Darwin an hour later. In all at least 252 people were killed, houses were flattened and 7 naval and merchant ships in the harbour were sunk, including the **USS Peary**, an American destroyer. It had a devastating effect on morale – widespread panic set in and people fled the town by whatever means they could, and looting occurred. For many years after the attack, reports on what happened were kept secret by the Australian Government, and it is only recently that the truth of what happened has come out.

On **20th February 2012**, it was reported from Darwin that **Julia Gillard**, the Australian Prime Minister, had visited the town to commemorate the bombing of 70 years ago, saying that **19th February 1942** was Australia’s darkest day in a year which was the darkest in Australia’s history. It is now recognized that more aircraft were used and more bombs dropped on Darwin than on Pearl Harbour. About 90 veterans from the bombing attended the ceremony at Darwin’s cenotaph, along with an estimated 5,000 people.

Veteran **George Woodward** was 18 and an army private, the day war came to Australia.

He remarked that it was a wonderful privilege to be there. 98 year old **Eric Thompson** was a gunnery officer on HMAS Deloraine said that he would never forget the day. **Ray Chin**, who was 17 on the day of the bombing, was evacuated first to Katherine and then to Adelaide where he joined the air force. He said that it was satisfying to make Australians more aware of what happened to the north of the country during WW11. Today still little is known about the raids, due to the prime minister of the day, **John Curtin**, suppressing details of the bombings and their aftermath.

Another extraordinary wartime story appeared on **Tuesday 21st February** – that of the legendary **Double Reds** in East Timor. This was the nickname of the WA 2/2 Independent Company – a group of 275 ‘Aussies’ who took on 1,000 crack Japanese troops in East Timor – due to their blood-coloured, twin diamond insignia. At an exhibition at the WA Museum in Perth, the full but little-known story of their courage and incredible determination in the face of overwhelming odds is told. Helped by the fearless East Timorese, who ultimately paid a terrible price for their support, the Double Reds held out from their hide-out in the hills for 10 months, fighting a guerrilla war, until early 1943 when, under cover of darkness, a Dutch destroyer pulled out the survivors. It was only due to a short transmission received in Australia from the Company in 1942 that some of them were known to be still alive and operating. The message read, “Force intact. Still fighting”. 10 survivors of that force are known to be alive today. Two of the men, 89 year old **Harry Sproxton** and his mate **Keith Hayes**, are still friends. Keith was the only survivor in a party of men who tried to resist the initial Japanese invasion of Dili. He was rescued by the local people and survived, despite being shot and bayoneted through the throat.

An interesting article appeared in the “Inquirer” section of the Weekend Australian by **Paul Cleary** who sets out the argument that an invasion of Australia was not the purpose of the Japanese attacks on Darwin and Broome – they were designed to divert attention from their true target – to invade the island of Timor. Indeed, as Darwin was being bombed, a convoy of 13 enemy ships carrying 6,000 troops, were steaming towards Timor which was invaded 12 hours later. By knocking out the Allied sea and air power based in Darwin, the Japanese sought to prevent a counter-attack from Australia on their troops in Timor.

On **20th February 2012**, East Timor’s Prime Minister, **Xanana Gusmao** attended a ceremony to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the invasion of Timor, and the beginning of his country’s involvement in WW11. The ceremony took place at a small memorial, dedicated to the special forces which served Australia in WW11, in Martin Place in Sydney. Records show that over 50,000 Timorese lost their lives during the fighting in 1942, the Allied bombing and 3 ½ years of Japanese occupation – a heavy price to pay.



THE STORY OF 'FORCE Z' MEMBER SCOBELL MCFERRAN-ROGERS AND "OPERATION RAVEN"

Compiled by Jonathan Moffatt.

The remains of an officer of the Australian S.R.D. [Special Reconnaissance Detachment] 'Force Z' special forces were recently discovered in the Celebes, 66 years after he was killed-in-action on "Operation Raven" on June 20th 1945. His name was **Scobell McFerran-Rogers**, formerly Sergeant 5381 in the 3rd Battalion [Penang & Province Wellesley] SSVF.

Born in India in 1905, he grew up in Nottingham. In 1935, he went to the USA as a ship's engineer. He arrived in Singapore in 1936 and was employed as an electrical engineer by John Morey & Co. electrical contractors working on the construction of the Civil Airport. He was then Works Superintendent, United Engineers, Ipoh 1937-1938 when he lived in a delightful bachelor pad 'Eveless Eden' before moving to United Engineers, 87, Bishop Street, George Town, Penang. We have no record as to whether he served in the FMSVF during his time in Ipoh, but in 1941 he was a Sergeant in 3/SSVF. Escaping from Singapore on the 'Gorgon' on 12/2/42, he arrived in Fremantle, enlisting in the AIF later that year, giving his year of birth as 1910.



As an Instructor in the Army Training Scheme, he moved all over Australia: Port Moresby, Townsville and back to Perth WA. In December 1944, he joined the Z Special Unit.

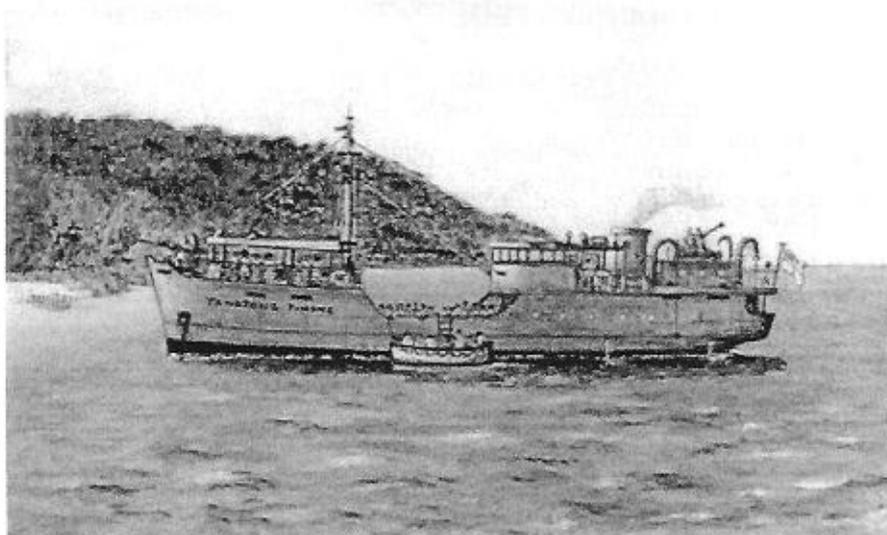
In June 1945, he was sent on "Operation Raven", a mission to gather intelligence on the fate of the crew of a US Navy Mariner Flying Boat which had been forced down near Rando in the north west Celebes. It was to be a two phase operation - a brief sortie for interrogation and extraction of natives, then to insert a re-enforced party for a 24 hour reconnaissance. The party was to be inserted by rubber boat, but it was flooded by their Mariner Flying Boat engines before it was clear. So the two landings had to be made directly from the Mariner, the first at a small village north of Rando, and the second near the crashed US flying boat.

According to a native who was interrogated, three of the US airmen had been captured and one had died. It was decided to return to Morotai for re-enforcements then make another attempt to get more information on the missing airmen. The re-enforcement team took ill and did not return with the party. Eleven men departed with the Mariner Flying Boat which arrived at the insertion point which was 3 miles south of Sodi. During the reconnaissance, some 10 to 12 natives were interrogated but no information was given on the missing men. A short time later, some 30 to 40 natives appeared. They were also questioned, and two of these agreed to return to Morotai. The party moved up the coast. Towards Rando, the going was tough owing to soft sand and thick undergrowth. It took 3 hours to reach the village of Sodi. The inhabitants were frightened and did not give any useful information. The party then moved to Lalombi where the locals were very nervous to start with, then settled and helped the party make tea. A bullock cart with 4 natives was seen on the north bank of the river. When they saw the party they turned and took off; they appeared to be wearing American shirts. Two of the SRD men swam across the river for reconnaissance; they found 36 houses in excellent condition but no inhabitants. After a search of the houses, only a pair of US sunglasses and some Japanese invasion currency was found. The reconnaissance party returned and they bunked down for the night. The next morning, the party leader decided nothing further could be gained, so they would remain where they were and await aircraft extraction. It was 8.45 a.m. and the party leader thought that he had heard the plane, so they moved down the beach to light the smoke candles, but no aircraft could be seen. It was at this point he was aware of movement, and walking about 75 yards from his position, 6 Japanese soldiers appeared and both sides started firing. The party took cover in a shallow tidal wash, the enemy fire became intense and it was at this time **Lt. Scobell McFerran-Rogers** was killed along with the native **Roestan** by MG fire from their left flank. After some exchange of fire, the party withdrew south by crawling down the wash way, but not before one of them had removed **McFerran-Rogers'** dog tags. The enemy was kept at bay by grenades and Bren gun fire as the remainder of the party withdrew rapidly southwards, where they were safely extracted by air.

YORKSHIRE MALAYA & BORNEO VETERANS' ASSOCIATION.

Cathy Pugh (Project Manager) reports that £17,000 has been received from the Heritage Lottery Fund to fund their project, "Forgotten Conflicts of the Far East." Led by local members of the Association and Volunteers, the project is designed to record the experiences of veterans who served in the Malayan Emergency and Borneo Confrontation, so that future generations can learn about these often neglected aspects of our military history. An archive of digitally recorded interviews plus photos, letters, diaries and other documents collected by the veterans is planned. In the second phase of the project, veterans will be equipped and trained to make presentations about their experiences in the Far East. Many of the veterans enlisted as National Servicemen and had the briefest training in jungle warfare before finding themselves facing vicious attacks by guerrilla forces. The YMBVA was formed in March 2010; holds monthly meetings & writes monthly e-newsletters. The MVG offered written support to **Cathy Pugh** for her application for Lottery Funding.

H.M.S. TANDJONG PINANG
Painting by David Wingate



MVG member **David Wingate** is offering a limited run of signed prints of his painting of the **H.M.S. Tandjong Pinang** to members, to mark the 70th anniversary of the tragic loss of this small ship, and to honour those who were lost on her, including David's grandmother. The ship is shown in the painting in the early morning of 17th February 1942 off Pom Pong Island, picking up survivors from the "Kuala". **David** started his research into the appearance of the ship nearly 20 years ago. Very few images of the ship exist, and those that do are very grainy, so there is a certain amount of artistic license in the painting. However, it is thought to be a fairly accurate drawing of what she looked like. The actual image of the ship is 5.45" x 7.55" (13.7mm x 19.2mm) and the white surround is 8" x 11" (21.7mm x 27.9mm). It would take a frame size of 11" x 14" or larger. The prints will be made on Hahnemuhle Ultra Smooth Fine Art 100% Cotton Rag, 305gsm paper, on an Epson Pro3800 art printer with archival inks. They are giclee prints. If anyone would like to order a print, please contact **David** by e-mail on: panmaule@aol.com or let Rosemary Fell know on: dinraf-millbrook@tiscali.co.uk **Price: £40 plus postage**
Other pictures can be seen on: www.davidwingateart.com

70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ESCAPE OF FOUR CHILDREN FROM SINGAPORE ON 31ST DECEMBER 1941



Yvonne with Rae, Roddy and Mike

Everyone had a highly entertaining time comparing childhood photographs, remembering on board incidents, asking questions & trying to clarify puzzles. There were memories of wounded from Prince of Wales & Repulse & soldiers on board but not other civilians.

There may be someone reading this who knows more. If so, please contact Yvonne.

Yvonne Wurtzburg writes:

In 2010, **Liz Moggie** put a brief article in the MVG newsletter about the war time escape by ship from Singapore of three children. As a result, another child who had travelled on the same ship was found.

On 6th October 2011, **Rae (Frampton) Keeling, Roddy & Mike Dewe, and Yvonne (Dymond) Wurtzburg** met for lunch in London. Their lives last touched on 31st December 1941, six weeks before the island capitulated to the Japanese. **Rae (11)** with **Roddy (6) & Mike (18mths)** left Singapore with her mother **Peggy Frampton** (later **Marjoribanks**) on the **SS Lyeemoon**, a small coastal steamer. On the same ship was **Yvonne (Dymond) Wurtzburg (4)** with her mother **Winifred Dymond**. After a hazardous journey they arrived in Colombo about 14 days later & the two little families went their separate ways – **Peggy & her three charges** to India & the **Dymonds** to America where they all remained for the duration of the war. The two groups had never met before & try as they might couldn't remember the presence of other children on board!

WALTER PETER RICHARD ALLCOCK – SERGEANT 1/FMSVF

The moving story of Peter Allcock's war and its aftermath, is told by his nephew John Allcock.

Born in Battersea, London in 1916, **Peter Allcock** (as he called himself) died in South Africa on 8th August 1960.

In honour of a personal hero – a man I sadly never met.

Most of the things I have come to know about **Pete Allcock** were either learned from my **Aunt Ruby** or from the people she put me in touch with in South Africa. My **Uncle Peter** left England in 1937, after working for the Port of London Authority, and went to join Henry Waugh & Co. in Ipoh. A Sergeant with the 1st Battalion FMSVF when the Japanese invaded, he was captured in February 1942 and became a POW in Changi. I only have the faintest of outlines as to his time in captivity, passed on by my **Aunt Ruby** (one of Pete's two sisters) in later life. I'm told he stole medicines from the Japanese for the camp hospital. **Ruby** also told me that he was put to work on the "death" railway. When liberation came in 1945, she said he was found literally on a heap of dead bodies, on the point of death himself from TB. The story goes that they were South African soldiers who discovered him. I can only guess that this must have been somewhere in Burma, but this was never mentioned. Those in command wrote him off because of his state of health. However, two South African nurses pleaded for him to be moved from where he was and, eventually, he was shipped from Chittagong or Calcutta to South Africa. I believe the two nurses accompanied him for all the journey; one of whom (**Tilly**) married his travelling companion, soldier **Bill O'Driscol**. I only learned this part of the story on a visit to the **O'Driscol's** home, whilst on business trips in 1980 and '82. On arrival in South Africa, **Pete** was sent to Voertrekkerhoogte Military Hospital (which later became Baragwanath). He remained there for 9 long years, having only one third of one lung with which to breathe. His mother and father visited him on at least two occasions from England. I have many witty letters and poems of his, written to my father and mother, his mother and father and my **Aunt Ruby**. In 1954, discharging himself from hospital, he went to work for S.A.B.T.A. as a Warden at Uitenhage TB Hospital. Later, he moved on to be Secretary of Jose Pearson Centre, Bethelsdorp, and finally St. Lucy's Hospital, St. Cuthbert, Tsolo, in the Transkei, as Warden and Secretary. He sadly died following a motoring accident, going into a drainage ditch in his Triumph Herald on the way back to Tsolo from a hospital check-up. I also learned from **Bill** and **Tilly O'Driscol** that **Pete** had been married to a **Pamela Theresa Greville-Smith**. In his papers, after my Aunt's death, I discovered that this marriage was dissolved in December 1947. It must have been a cruel blow to **Pete**. Luckily and thankfully he did have friends to keep him uplifted and focused. Names passed on to me by my Aunt were the **O'Driscols**, **Erica Jones** a nurse, **Mr. & Mrs. Urwin** (I kept in touch with **Mary Urwin** for many years until her death), **Mr. & Mrs. Tom Bell**, **Mr. & Mrs. Paul Kinsey**, the **Berlyns** and **Elizabeth Butler**. I was fortunate enough to meet some of these kind people, but, unfortunately, not my Uncle himself, although my South African Agent did arrange for me to visit the grave at St. Lucy's Hospital, Tsolo. I am thankful, though, to have moving tributes to him from people who knew him well and that is a real comfort, as it appears he did not die unfulfilled.

A letter from the children of S.A.N.T.A. Bantu School, Uitenhage: 31st May 1958.

Dear Sir,

There are two phases in the human life which we think are the saddest:-

- (a) when a friend or relation crosses the River Jordan.
- (b) when true friends bid one another farewell.

Today, we are experiencing the second phase, a painful occasion to us, as we are taking leave, not of a friend, but a father. We even forgot you were white, for the love you showered upon us was that of a true father. SANTA owes you a great debt, sir, because we are able to hold up our heads too, when healthy children start boasting about their school facilities and we just hit back by telling them of the wonderful amenities we are enjoying, and all because of you, sir. There was nothing we wanted which you considered too expensive, so long as it could make us happy. Even when you punished us, we accepted the punishment in the spirit in which it was given, i.e. from a father. Your memorial stone, in the form of the above school, will remain a living memory unto a great man, a true Christian. May the Lord you serve bless, guide and guard you, sir.

Your affectionate children

Signed: (Mrs) M.N. Edwards.

'Notes from the study of Reverend W.H. Kinsey: September, 1960.

"He was a brave man."

I put aside the notes prepared and use these precious inches in this letter to pay tribute to a most gallant man, 44 years old, who crashed to his death on the way from East London to St. Lucy, an Anglican Mission Hospital near Tsolo, on 7th August.

The news of **Peter Allcock** came a few hours ago – this is his story:-

I met him first when doing Chaplain duty at the Imperial Hospital at Baragwanath. It was being used for T.B. cases. **Peter** was in Malaya, a fine strong athlete whose sporting hobby was running cataracts in log rafts; daring fun it was, for the rafts broke up and it needed a very strong swimmer to get ashore. He joined up and was taken prisoner by the Japs and placed in a concentration camp. In this camp he contacted T.B., was tortured for helping men to escape, flogged and left tied to a tree all night to suffer in agony. He was not prone to talk of what happened, but he saw his best friend flung into a fire. **Peter** was lucky to escape and was brought to Baragwanath for treatment. There I found him through the introduction of a friend, whose friend had shared experiences with him in prison camps. He was worn to a shadow and had been saved by a nurse after having been nearly left behind – no-one thought he could live to get to the ship. For nine years he was in bed having practically everything done for him that medicine and surgery could do. In 1954 he could stand it no longer, and, fragile as a man could be and live, he got S.A.N.T.A. to give him a job as a Warden of a T.B. Hospital at Uitenhage. There he tamed about 30 acres of bush and built wards, offices and so on with native helpers. He walked slowly and with dignity, barely able to put one foot before the other. His one ambition was to fight T.B. by preventative measures, lecturing to groups of people, urging the sane and preventative method. With open wounds in his chest, he escaped dying through the ministrations of Doctors at Port Elizabeth, where he went for periodic checks and treatment. I cannot recall a braver man in my experience – his courage was stronger than his body and he rarely complained. None could keep him down. He bought a car with his limited resources and Transvaal roads could tell a tale of fast trips to keep in touch with a world he loved. Unexpectedly, he would arrive in Johannesburg, spend a night at the Manse and return to hospital castigation, then at Pretoria Military Hospital. His very presence was an inspiration, his letters were full of fun and attack; he knew he could not survive much longer, so every moment was spent in service to the ideal of preventative medicine. How I laughed over his escapades and dressed him down for them! He was a devout Anglican and turned what might have been sheer misery into a mission. Burnt in the Manse fire were copies of plans he drew for the kind of house he thought he could build someday for himself. Oh, Peter, God rest you for ever! I can only add, not knowing the nature of the crash that killed him that he would not have wished for a better end.'

AN INTERESTING ITEM FROM IAN RICHARDSON

Ian found the following information in the Singapore National Archives – with no other information on the sheet. He says that he thinks it was written on a typewriter by a British Officer, [who didn't think writing an organized draft first was necessary], and put out by the British Command. He thinks it was issued at the time when Postcards were issued both at both at home and in POW camps to replace handwritten letters which were taking up to a year to process and deliver – possibly in 1944?

COMMUNICATION WITH HOME

Regulation for Postcard Messages.

1. Messages should be written in writing that can be read at a glance, not in scribble that is ineligible (sic) like 40% of cards already handed in.
2. Short messages in block letters will be ideal form of communication; these cards will be dispatched first of all.
3. Messages must be in English only. The ADDRESS MUST BE IN BLOCK LETTERS. There must be no mention of the location of the POW camp or of any other camp or the country you are in, there must be no mention personnel movements and no mention of Japanese troops or military subjects, there must be no mention of politics official business, trading or commercial enterprise in matters connected with it.
4. Post Cards cannot be addressed from one POW to another.
Post Cards will only be sent to country of origin of the POW.
Post Cards will not be sent by way of one country to another.
5. The use of code words, words with double meaning, the use of secret inks or the use of Braille is prohibited as well as any other form of secret or special writing.
6. The name, member rank of sender must be written on the back of the card in black letters.
7. All rank must be informed of the sample rules and must remember they are not writing a letter but a short, easily read message (which the censor can read at a glance) on the back of the postcard. Failure to comply with these rules means that the opportunity to communicate with home has been lost entirely.
8. THESE RULES MUST BE CONVEYED TO ALL RANKS BEFORE THE POSTCARDS ARE ISSUED.

In spite of the detailed instructions issued it is regretted that some postcards have NOT been passed by the IJA authorities.

Text of message will be written in Telegram form

Text of message including opening phrase (Dear) and signature will not exceed 24 words.

[Editor: The wording sounds more like the translation of a Japanese document? Can anyone shed any light on this?]

THE LAST DAYS OF FREEDOM – SINGAPORE TO SUMATRA – 15TH FEBRUARY TO 17TH MARCH 1942
Excerpts from the Diary of John Hedley JVE & 1st Mysore Infantry contd.

We had known one or two of the nursing sisters who had been in Johore General Hospital prior to the outbreak of hostilities and we renewed acquaintances here. We hadn't been long on shore when we had been asked by a number of people if we would take them across to Sumatra. We made the acquaintance of the Controller and he came down to see what sort of boat we had. When he saw it he said, "Well I don't mind you taking men in that, but you are certainly not going to take any women." We certainly hadn't thought it looked as unsafe as that. However, he was the man in charge at that particular time and we very soon had twenty people who wanted to come with us.

We therefore arranged that we would set sail at about 3pm in the afternoon and would sail round the south of the island and head to the northwest to the mouth of the **Indragiri River**. When we were due to embark, the wind got up causing the waves and sea to become very rough. We got our passengers aboard but then found that the wind was catching our boat and though we cast off we found we were unable to make headway out to sea. This frightened some of our passengers, who thought they would prefer to stay behind and would we let them off please? We considered discretion the better part of valour and so abandoned our idea of getting off that day. We tied our boat up as best we could so that she wouldn't get too much of a buffeting and made our way back to the Controller's house in the town.

We stayed a night there and in the morning we went down to see if any damage had been done to our boat and, as luck would have it, there was none. We therefore made it known that we would be leaving for the mainland soon after mid-day that same day.

We didn't have as many volunteers to join us this time, but finished up with, I think it was, about 14 passengers, so with the three of us it made 17 altogether. We had also acquired, from one of the passengers, a chart of the seas and the islands thereabouts which we thought would be of great help. We also acquired some candles which we could use in the binnacle of our acquired "**Grasshopper**" compass. When it came to embark the seas were calm and we had no difficulty in getting away. We moved on a southerly course to go round the southern end of the island *

[* **John adds a note here to his diary entry** – "After the war I learned that one of our passengers had recorded this journey in his book "Singapore to Freedom". **Oswald Gilmour** had joined us at the second attempt to leave **Dabo**. I feel that his account of the trip back to Sumatra is worth adding as a postscript to my narrative and is included further on. **Ed: it will be added where shown in the diary**].

The only excitement that occurred on this particular leg of the journey was the passing overhead of several Japanese planes. Now we had not personally experienced aerial bombing, but some of our passengers certainly had. They panicked, and got down alongside the engine under the awning, crammed into quite a small space in the hope that we would not be spotted by the Japanese aircraft. In the event we were not, or if we had, we were far too small and insignificant for them to bother about us. The rest of the journey round to the south of the island was uneventful though we did lose our chart, blown overboard by a gust of wind that left us with only a school atlas map. Having gone round the south east point of **Singkep**, we then dropped anchor. It was felt that to make the crossing from the island to the mainland in daylight, would have been asking for trouble. The shore here is pretty shallow and so we were able to strip off, have a swim, and generally smarten ourselves up. We climbed back aboard and, pooling what food resources we had, prepared an evening meal. Not a very good one, but nevertheless quite tasty.

As it was getting dark, we started up the engine and set sail for Sumatra. The evening was not as bright as it had been when we came across, but nevertheless was not too bad and we set course on our old fashioned 45' in the hope that we would hit the right place at the other side. Some of our passengers were certainly very nervous and, whilst we had no major incident on that crossing, we had two minor ones which caused a certain amount of consternation. The first was when someone left a towel on the exhaust pipe which soon caught alight. The second incident was when our little engine suddenly cut out and refused to restart. We thought we might have run out of petrol, but it certainly wasn't this. We refuelled and still the engine refused to start. I suppose it was an hour before we managed to get the thing going again and I am convinced, to this day, that engines are just like humans – they can take so much and then they need a rest. I am certain that this little engine of ours, which was doing very well indeed, had just had enough and wanted a rest! When we got it going again, it went as sweetly as before and we continued on our journey.

When dawn came we were within sight of the Sumatra coastline, but if you have ever been to sea and looked towards a coastline of mangrove swamp and looked to see if you could find an inlet, you just don't find one. However, we knew that if we got a little closer, we should be able to find an entrance to the **Indragiri River**. We did and, knowing that the **Indragiri River** had a delta at its mouth, felt pretty sure that whichever inlet we took we would come into the main stream of the river sooner or later.

During the morning we entered one of the rivers of the delta and we sailed up, joining the mainstream and arrived at **Tembilahan** just before mid-day. I think all our passengers were very relieved to find themselves at a village where there were other people about and on the mainland of Sumatra at last. Our passengers disembarked and expressed their thanks and amazement that we had the intention of repeating our trip to

Singkep to pick up more survivors should any still be there.

The same afternoon, we started to retrace our steps to the islands. I think our passengers of the previous trip thought we were completely mad, it was certainly the last thing we thought we were.

We reached the open sea just before it got dark but found the sea in a much more difficult mood than it had been on the previous occasion. In fact, we had not been on the open sea more than an hour when a sudden windy squall hit us and the driving rain lashed down to soak us. I should mention that we had acquired at **Tembilahan** a very small dinghy which we towed behind us in the forlorn hope that if anything happened to the launch we would be able to get into the dinghy and use it as a lifeboat. This had seemed a very good idea at the time, but I rather doubt, in retrospect, as to whether it would have worked. Anyway, it was a nice little dinghy and it had at one time been aboard the **Sultan of Johore's** yacht. Anyway, this dinghy, instead of staying behind us was now shooting alongside and all over the place in the rough seas. I was on the tiller at the time but I left it for a moment to get an old waterproof which was just forward of the engine and before I got back to the tiller, the boat had turned through 180°. I wouldn't have believed this was possible, but the compass that we acquired from **HMS Grasshopper** now came into its own. The compass confirmed that instead of going towards the islands, we were heading straight back for Sumatra. This meant we had to do another 180° turn and in seas that were running, it wasn't a very pleasant experience, though we accomplished it without mishap. We then continued on an uncomfortable but uneventful journey across and again were lucky in hitting the islands at the point we had hoped. This time we did not go right round to **Dabo** on the east coast, but cut in to a small town in a bay in the north of the island. We knew that this town had a telephone connection with **Dabo** and were able to make use of this and ascertained from the Controller that there were no further people wishing to be evacuated from **Dabo**. The last group having left the previous day in a launch called "**Florence Nightingale**". We asked the Controller if he knew of any other pockets of survivors and he said that he understood that most of the survivors on the islands north of **Singkep** had already been picked up and taken over to Sumatra, so he considered that it would be in our interest if we too headed back to Sumatra.

This we decided to do. We took the boat out of the bay and started to set sail back to Sumatra. Again, however, the wind had got up and the sea had become rough. **John Parsons** was not as good a sailor as either **Tex** or myself and was already prostrate on the floor of the boat being very ill. **Tex** and I sat either side of the tiller and really we were hoping for the best. The sky was overcast but it wasn't raining and whilst we were moving away from the shore, we had one remarkably lucky escape. It was dusk, the wind had got up and was whipping up the sea to quite a fervent. We had hoped to be able to move almost due west but there appeared to be a reef just ahead of us. We thought we ought to take evasive action and try to steer round the northern end of the reef. Unfortunately, when we turned in a northerly direction we found we were making no headway whatsoever. **John** was being very sea sick and was lying prone in the boat forward, feeling very sorry for himself. **Tex** and I, sitting side by side on the stern of the boat, decided that the only thing for it would be to run across the reef. We altered course and did just that. It was quite a hair-raising experience for when we got on to the reef we should, by all accounts, have been holed, however, thanks to the very shallow draught of our launch, together with a great deal of luck, we were able to hoist ourselves, or that's what it appeared, on to a wave which just took us over the reef. We used the boathook just in case and whilst this would have made very little difference, we did have it ready over the side to push us up or keep us a little higher in the water.

We survived, and leaving the reef behind we had another uneventful crossing back to the mainland of Sumatra. This time we hit the right mouth of the **Indragiri River** and sailed back to **Tembilahan**.

The trip from **Tembilahan** up to **Rengat** obviously took us a great deal longer than the trip coming down with the Dutch Policemen. We had to battle against the current of a now swollen and flooded river. At **Rengat** we found the place almost deserted. There were no further stragglers trying to move through to the west coast of Sumatra. We sought the Dutch Police and they were able to help us once again and said that we would be able to go in a '**pigi bus**' to the next stage of the route through Sumatra. This was to a rubber estate at a place called **Ayer Molek**. We were sorry to leave the Singapore Harbour Board Red Cross launch; this had stood us in very good stead and we had been aboard for quite some time. We couldn't really say it had become our home but at least we had become quite attached to it and it was certainly a great friend to us in our rescue attempts to bring people from the islands to the mainland of Sumatra.

The next stage of our journey through Sumatra was slow progress. We duly arrived at the **Ayer Molek** rubber estate now being used as a transit camp. We were billeted in the hospital Coolie Lines, and were greeted by a number of army nursing sisters together with civilian women and a **Colonel Hennessey, R.A.M.C.** who was caring for the sick and wounded. We were pretty tired and found ourselves a space on the boards in one of the Coolie Lines but were unable to get very much sleep that night on account of the mosquitoes. There is one thing about traveling overnight on the sea - there are no mosquitoes, but at **Ayer Molek**, like **Rengat** before, things were different, for even with a scrounged mosquito net, we were unable to get much sleep at nights.

The second day we took stock, and learnt that most of the troops who had escaped from Singapore and were passing through Sumatra, had been billeted in the smoke-house area of the factory on this rubber estate. We understood that there were Japanese Prisoners of war being escorted back to India. I suppose it was nice to know that we had taken prisoners of war in Malaya. It must have been rather surprising to a great many people because of the speed of the operation. We made little contact with this group at all during the day but learnt

later that transport was being arranged for this group to be moved to the next staging post, which was the town of **Taluk**. Some of the army nursing sisters had been down to the Smoke House area and contacted the officer in charge to enquire as to how they were expected to move up the escape route. They were callously informed (by a **Major Nicholson**), that as they had left their posts in Singapore, that as far as he was concerned they were no longer service personnel, they were civilians and would have to fend for themselves. This didn't please them one little bit. They were smarting under this insult when they came back into camp. When we heard of this, we too thought it high handed and a callous action to take.

It could truthfully be said that none of us was particularly enamoured with some of the people that were in senior positions in our forces at that time. Though we had no direct allegiance to anyone other than our own volunteer units, we felt it right to help whoever we could. After getting nowhere fast with the lower level of authority in **Ayer Molek** we were able to get on the telephone to **Col. Dillon** who, by this time, was at the next stage at **Taluk**. **Col. Dillon** had been helpful before at **Rengat** and was again equally as helpful. He accepted all that was being said and in the end promised that three buses would be sent back to us at **Ayer Molek** to transport all the people from the hospital area of the rubber estate up to **Taluk**. **Col. Dillon** was as good as his word and the following day, three buses arrived. These were not the normal Far Eastern 'pigi bus' which would seat about a dozen people inside on seats facing each other. These were coaches and the nearest approach to the old fashioned 'char-a-bang' that we had not seen since childhood. These coaches consisted of six or seven forward facing bench seats with a door at the end of each seat for entering. There wasn't much time wasted in embarking on these coaches and the party was evenly divided - we were the only three fit service people present and were expected to take over the leadership. So that there would be some control in each of the buses; we allocated ourselves accordingly. **John** had the first bus, **Tex** the second and I was in the rear coach. Our next stop was to be **Taluk**. A drive in these conditions was expected to last about 24 hours. In the event this is almost exactly what it did take. The only excitement of that particular drive was when one of the buses broke down during the night and refused to move. The driver got out and fiddled with the engine, but all to no avail. He then asked if any of his passengers had a torch. One, a **Mrs. Smart**, who was the wife of the chief of the Federated Malay States Railway network, had a torch but was most reluctant to lend it to the driver and insisted that before she did so someone should indemnify her for the use of the battery in the torch. She asked for a written note to the effect that the British Government would replace the battery at the end of the war. This assurance was eventually given to her and I signed a worthless piece of paper which, no doubt, she probably still has to this day. I am not aware whether she tried to redeem my note or not. The bus came back to life however and we proceeded on our uncomfortable journey.

We arrived at **Taluk** just after mid-day, possibly the last of the organized parties to arrive before the Japanese. The town is built around a market square and we parked in the market square. There were a great number of other troops around who were on their way through Sumatra. They had got as far as **Taluk** only. This was also as far as anyone could get up the **Indragiri River** if one had come up all the way by boat. The strict instruction to the people in our three coaches was not to go far away in case we were given permission to proceed further. I set off to look for **Col. Dillon** at the Headquarters of the organization helping escapees. I found him in an office set up just off the market square, and pleaded that as we had three buses, ready to move on, that we should be permitted to do so rather than have to wait and take our turn in what could be seen to be pretty chaotic conditions. Without too much cajoling and wheedling, he told us that as we were already in a close-knit group, we would be allowed to proceed straight away in the buses to the next staging post which was the town of **Sawahloento**. **Sawahloento** was the head of the railway and we would be able to catch a train there to take us down to **Padang** on the west coast of Sumatra. I went back to our buses in the market square to give the glad news that we were to proceed to **Sawahloento**. However, to my annoyance, I found that some people had moved off into the market place and were not ready to go. The opportunity to move forward was not one that could be missed and a decision had to be taken as to whether to leave those people who were not on the coach and hope they would be able to come up later. Fortunately, this decision did not have to be taken - we had given the people a quarter of an hour to get back and all of our group did come back within that quarter of an hour, so it wasn't long before we were on the road once again.

By this time, we had been able to take stock of the people in our party. We had Army Nursing Sisters of QAIMNS, Civilian Nursing Sisters, Territorial Army Nursing Sisters, nurses from the Indian Medical Service, other civilians, men and women from industry and the Malayan Civil Service, one very sick young soldier who was being cared for by the army nursing sisters and **Col. Hennessey** of the R.A.M.C. There was a father looking after his small son, his wife having been killed on the **S.S. 'Kuala'** when leaving the docks in Singapore, and he and his son had again escaped when the **S.S. 'Kuala'** was sunk by enemy action south of Singapore, near **Pom Pong Island**. There were children who had lost parents, and others who were separated from their families. All would have a tale to tell if they survived. All were full of courage and eager to help.

But always the main objective was to get through to the west coast. On the journey up to **Sawahloento** the sick soldier, **Corporal Bradbury**, had become gravely ill and required a lot of attention. He was given one of the seats to himself and was nursed during the journey by the Army Nursing Sisters and it is to them that he certainly owes his life. When we left **Taluk** we had hoped that we would have a fairly trouble-free run to **Sawahloento**. This, however, did not materialize, for the following day we ran into some very severe floods which held us up at a little village called **Peranap**. [To be continued].

INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Michael Pether writes about the 70th anniversary of the sinking of the "S.S. Kuala" on 14th February 1942:

I spent an hour with **Brenda Macduff** to coincide with the day/hour/minutes that the "S.S. Kuala" was being bombed on 14th February 1942, as she and most others were trying to swim to Pom Pong Island.

Brenda is quite frail these days but her memory of the day was very clear and her comment was "...wasn't I a lucky thing to be a tall, strong, young nurse on that day so that I could work at nursing the injured...".

Michael also sent an interesting story about the Riau Islands, which adds to the information given in **Yvonne Wurtzburg's** diary of their boat trip through the islands:

...the town of **Tanjong Pinang** is an integral part of the overall story of escapees from Singapore – particularly of men. Many men who escaped after the Surrender made their way in small boats in the channel between **Pulau Bintan** and **Pulau Batam** – as a result many stopped briefly in **Tanjong Pinang**. Many managed to board small ships, launches and junks heading to Sumatra.

When the Japanese arrived in **Tanjong Pinang** on 20th February 1942, they captured 55 officers and men of the AIF (at least 11 Australians), British Forces and, in my view, a few Malayan Volunteers who had not managed to move on in their escape attempts. These men were held on the tennis court (which still exists in original condition) near the Catholic Church for a couple of days, before they were taken in small groups to the local **Kampung Djawa**, the Hospital up the hill from the Kampong, the "Wireless Tower" and one man down to the beach front south east of the ferry terminal. All these places were still pretty much unchanged a few years ago when I made an exploratory visit to **Tanjong Pinang**.

The men were then executed by beheading or shooting in these places.

A number of unidentified European civilian men and women were also killed around the town as well.

The story was taken into Changi and Sime Road camps by the Dutch Catholic Priest, the Dutch Administrator and British Electrical Engineer, by the name of **Young**, who had all been in **Tanjong Pinang** at the time. Some of the Singapore Police held in these camps believed it explained the unresolved disappearance of men who had been serving on the islands around Singapore (mainly the ones such as **Blakan Mati** with the bigger guns).

The Kempeitai took over the priest's house (it still stands on a corner near the church) for their interrogation headquarters. Locals have forgotten all this history, but they have a legend that the well at the hospital (where in fact some 6 British or 'Empire' men were thrown into after execution) is inhabited by ghosts – they do not seem to know why the ghosts are there. I have learned all this from the affidavits of the three men who were the witnesses mentioned above, plus a couple of local people – the documents I found are in the war crimes investigation files in the NAA in Melbourne.

I have some note of closure as well – I also found the files of the post war War Graves Search party in the Melbourne files and have been able to identify which specific graves at Kranji these men were subsequently relocated to in 1946-47. Sadly the CWGC administrators at Kranji a few years ago were not even aware of the origin of the men who lay in these specific graves – I gave them the details on a visit several years ago. The relevant graves of the British and 'Empire' (to use the formal descriptive of the time for all others) in Kranji are located in the plots towards the top of the rise as you walk towards the main memorial:

- Plot 29 B Graves 4 – 20
- Plot C 1 - 12 and 15 – 20
- Plot 29 D 1 – 6
- And then the AIF men in Plot 30 (directly across the cemetery) in Graves E 1 – 11

You may wonder why I spent so much time and effort on this – the reason is that my father and grandfather who were in Changi and Sime Road believed that this was the fate of my 19 year old uncle in the Selangor Btn (2nd) of the FMSVF who went missing after being on **Blakan Mati** at the time of the Surrender. Subsequent research in the last decade leads me to believe that he actually reached **Padang** and lost his life after boarding one of the two evacuation ships sunk after leaving that port.

Penny Dembrey writes:

"I hope this gets to you before your departure for Singapore. I will be thinking of you there and the 'Volunteers' so much on 15th February. I remember in the last few years of my father's life he would always phone his great friend, **Bob Darby**, also a POW, and they would talk on the phone for ages.

I am sending a photocopy from the Daily Telegraph (dated 13th January this year) which printed one of their news reports dated 13th January, 1942, which read:

JAPANESE FORCES ENTER KUALA LUMPUR

"It was reliably learned in Singapore to-night that the Japanese have entered Kuala Lumpur.

The fall of the town was implied in the statement in this afternoon's communiqué that the British troops had withdrawn to positions north of Seremban, in the State of Negri Sembilan."

It brought it back to me again just how very lucky we were to get out of Malacca and down to Singapore before the Japs arrived there! My father had already been sent to Singapore with the 4th Bt. SSVF (on Christmas Day I believe). He had been in hospital with a tropical ulcer so he was late to join the rest of them and my mother, with my brother and I, was still in Malacca. My mother writes that we left on the 9th January, having heard on a crossed telephone line that the Japanese were already in K.L. We left directly with a driver from the Municipality and only just crossed the **Muar** ferry in time. There were long queues of traffic waiting to cross. She always called it a nightmare journey with the road being bombed. A few days

later, **Maur** was very badly hit (I believe on the 11th Jan) so we would never have made it. Having arrived in Singapore, my mother sent a cable to her mother in England to say, "Safe in Singapore", whilst that night **Winston Churchill** was on the radio broadcasting, "The beleaguered City of Singapore awaits its fate". We then had three weeks in Singapore with more bombing before boarding 'The Duchess of Bedford' which eventually sailed (she writes) on the 1st February, having embarked on the 31st January, and making it through the Atlantic to arrive in Liverpool on the 2nd April 1942 (she writes) which happened to be Good Friday. Again so fortunate not to have been torpedoed, which we were warned was a serious possibility." The newspaper cutting brought it back to me how awful it must have been for my mother with two small children, and also leaving my father behind.

John Corner writes:

I am looking for information about a Chinese man who came to Singapore in the early 1920s. He worked as a general labourer, including some time in then dockyards, before settling in the **Pandan Forest** – now long gone. Eventually he was employed (pre-war) by the Singapore Botanic Gardens to look after the **Pandan Forest Reserve**. He became the honorary Chief Warden earning the nickname of *towkay*.

His name was **Chua Ho Ann** and he is mentioned in my father's book, *The Marquis – a tale of Syonan-to*, published by Heinemann Asia late in 1981. His brother was **Chua Soo Ann** who lived pre-war at 225, Telok Ayer Street, this address now long gone! **Chua Ho Ann** survived the double tenth massacre and post-war was active against the emerging PAP and **Lee Kuan Yew**. He was imprisoned for his anti-PAP actions and eventually released.

If anyone has any information on **Chua Ho Ann**, or on any surviving relatives, please contact me on:

astley22@bigpond.net.au

My book on the life of my father **Professor EJH Corner** is expected to be published in Singapore by Landmark Books Pte. before the middle of this year.

Judy Balcombe writes:

I thought you would be interested to see this e-mail which I received today (12th February 2012)

"I am writing to let you know that I have just returned to Adelaide from Muntok/Mentok. I visited with my sisters **Maxie** and **Sue**, and brother **Brian**. We went to see the places our aunt, **Jean Ashton**, saw or lived in as a POW in 1942 – 45. She was a nurse in the 2/13th AGH. She survived the camps and lived to 92 years, dying in 2002. She was our father's sister. We read your report of your visit to Palembang and Muntok on the web, and had been trying to contact you before we went. Within a few hours of arriving at Muntok though, we were fortunate to meet **Mr. Rizki**. He was very, very helpful, and arranged for us to see all the sites. He told us that you will be visiting again later this month. Our blog for the trip is:

<http://vynerbrooknurses.blogspot.com>

In Adelaide every year, there is a memorial service to the nurses at the Woman's Memorial Playing Fields. We went to that service this morning. **Ian Shaw**, author of "*On Radji Beach*" was guest speaker. **Maxie** and I collected the contact details for 23 people who are interested in possibly supporting the Muntok Museum, either with donations of memorabilia (copies or originals) or money. At this early stage, we don't know what will result, but we are pleased we have some names.

We are very interested in being in contact with you, especially to help support the museum in Muntok.

It is signed – 'Rose'

Anne Hinam sent an article by Midge Gillies from "Who do you think you are" featuring her father Kenneth Dohoo:

He was born in Hornchurch, Essex, studied at Oxford and started his career in the Malayan Civil Service as a Cadet in 1929 aged 22. He married **Beryl Beck** in April 1938 and they had two daughters: **Jean** and **Anne**. The war in Europe meant that they could not return to Britain for the leave due to them in 1941 and instead went to Australia. The Japanese invasion prompted **Kenneth** to fly back to Singapore at Christmas.

After the war, **Beryl** was told he had enlisted as a stoker on a small boat helping with the evacuation. Only recently **Jean** and **Anne** discovered that he was onboard the *Mary Rose* and that he may have been working for **Dalforce** (the Singapore Overseas Chinese Anti-Japanese Volunteer Army).

The Japanese captured the boat and he was classified as a civilian prisoner and taken to the old prison at **Palembang** in **Sumatra**. **Beryl** received one card from him – in March 1942-3. He was then moved to the nearby island of **Muntok** (sic). **Beryl** and her daughters returned to Britain in 1945 and heard of **Kenneth's** death before VJ Day. The diaries of journalist, **William H. McDougall Jnr.**, recorded that **Kenneth** died in October, 1944 of malnutrition and malaria, adding that he was a man "other men loved because he was a genuine gentleman."

Peter Bampton sent a report from the "Daily Express" about his grandparents' time in Changi Prison, following his appearance on the "Antiques Roadshow" with his grandmother's letters:

"Cottage Dream that kept couple alive in horror of prison camp"

A couple's dream of a country cottage helped them survive 3 years in a WW 11 prison camp, recently discovered letters reveal. **Donald & Isobel Grist** risked execution by secretly exchanging notes at the notorious Changi (civilian) POW camp in Singapore, where they were forced to live separately. **Mrs. Grist** nearly died from malnutrition and diseasethe one thing that helped them survive was the hope of living in an English country cottage. In one letter dated 2nd June, 1944, **Mrs. Grist** wrote "...oh for a house, garden and seclusion". They were taken prisoner in K.L. where **Mr. Grist** was an agricultural chemist. He later became a world authority on rice after becoming interested in how it could sustain humans for so long. **[Donald Grist's Diary "Orderly, Orderly!" will be included in the July newsletter].**

Henry Langley writes:

...my late parents and my three sisters were all evacuated from Singapore on 30th January 1942 on the *USS West Point*. There seem to be two factors that are pertinent to my family's situation. Firstly, I am not aware of any other families who were evacuated twice – my mother and sisters being evacuated from Hong Kong to Melbourne in July 1940, and then, having rejoined my father in Singapore in December 1941 being evacuated again from Singapore at the end of January 1942. And secondly, as I discovered when contacting **Tony Banham** in Hong Kong, my father was the first person he had come across who had moved (possibly evacuated) from working in the Hong Kong Dockyard to the Singapore Naval Base in this period, and also my family is the first he is aware of who went to Singapore after being evacuated to Australia. I find it difficult to believe that there aren't any other examples in both categories.

My contact at the *USS West Point Reunion Association* (for the crew) is the official historian **Bill Lee**. He has produced a couple of very well-written and very interesting stories about two of the escapees on the ship and I know he is happy to provide some information on the ship itself for the MVG website. As he has been so helpful, I am helping him update the list he has of people whom he knows who were evacuated on the ship from the MVG and COFEPOW sources. As there was no official passenger list recorded (as far as anyone knows) he will still only have details of around 25 people who were evacuated on the ship, compared with almost 2,000 who were on board at the time. [Ed: list is available if requested.] **Bill Lee** is eventually going to be producing a story of my family's evacuation, probably concentrating on my father. I am keen to provide him with as much information as possible, not only about my own family, but also about the situation at the time to put everything into context.

[Ed: Henry has promised to write an article for the newsletter about his family and the *USS West Point* evacuation. If anyone has any information about the ship or her passengers, please let Henry know on: hclanqley@btinternet.com]

DID YOU KNOW?

Nick Clegg's mother is Dutch. MVG member **Pauline Berkhout** was interned in Camp Tjideng with her and they became friends. She was born **Eulalia Hermance van den Wall Bake** on 23rd November 1936 in Palembang, Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia) to **Herman Willem Alexander van den Wall Bake** (1906) and **Louise Hillegonde van Dorp** (1910). She married **Nicholas Peter Clegg** (1936) on 1st August 1959 in **Laren, North Holland**. Ancestors are from Indonesia and The Netherlands. When the Japanese army invaded in 1942, she was sent to a concentration camp with her parents and two sisters. They were separated and spent the next three years in terrible conditions. On liberation the family returned to Holland, but in 1956, **Hermance** travelled to England where she met and later married **Nicholas Clegg** senior. She now lives in The Netherlands but keeps in regular touch with her son, the Deputy Prime Minister!

Dr. Bill Frankland is still working at 100 years old and as Britain's oldest active scientist is a very busy man. When war was declared, he joined the RAMC and was sent to Singapore. On arrival he tossed a coin with a fellow medic to decide upon the institution where each would work. His colleague chose Alexandra Hospital and died there during the Japanese massacre of staff and patients. **Bill Frankland** survived the war in an internment camp on Blakang Mati (now Sentosa Island). After recovering from his ordeal, during which he nearly starved, he began working in the Allergy Department of St Mary's Hospital, and has become one of the most eminent scientists in this field.

OBITUARIES

DR. NOWELL PEACH - JUNE 1913 to JANUARY 2012

The death of **Dr. Nowell Peach** was announced in the Daily Telegraph on 13th March 2012, aged 98. While a POW in the Far East between 1942 and 1945, he undertook important research into tropical illness. He also used his time to memorize an entire second-hand copy of *Gray's Anatomy*, enabling him to pass his surgical exams very quickly on his release.

Having qualified as a doctor in 1937, he joined the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve when war was declared, & was posted to Malaya in 1940. In December 1941 he was mentioned in dispatches for his bravery in helping to evacuate patients from a hospital in northern Malaya under heavy bombing, where he remained until the last minute before retreating in style in a Ford V8 driving the length of the country to Singapore. He was drafted to Sumatra with the RAF, but was, almost immediately, evacuated to Java to the No. 1 Allied General Hospital, an Australian field hospital in a converted school. There he worked alongside **Lt.-Col. "Weary" Dunlop**, who was the commanding officer. On 8th March 1942 when the Dutch surrendered, they remained at the hospital for 6 weeks to treat battle casualties before the Japanese closed it down.

Having acquired the 1936 American edition of *Gray's Anatomy* he took it with him to the POW camp in Batavia (now Jakarta) where the Jap censor stamped it with his mark or "chop" giving **Peach** permission to keep it. In late October 1942, he joined other medical staff at Tandjong Priok Camp where he began his research into a complaint called "burning feet". He carried out a detailed neurological examination of more than 50 men with the condition – due to nerve damage caused by severe malnutrition and vitamin deficiency – keeping meticulous notes of his findings. A special patellar hammer was made for him to test the men, but he had very little medicine to alleviate the condition. He adapted a Dutch Dentist's X-ray equipment to administer basic barium meals to POWs with severe gastric ulceration. With only one small bottle of barium, he devised a way of "re-cycling" the barium once nature had taken its course – unbeknown to subsequent patients! He invented walking aids for men struck down with beri-beri, and an orthopaedic bed.

He was generous with sharing his memories of captivity with researchers and in 2007 took part in the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine's Far East POW oral history study, and agreed for academics to write a paper based on his prison camp study of "burning feet". His ingenuity is included in **Midge Gillies'** book "**The Barbed-Wire University**".

MAURICE HUMPHREY

We are sad to report the death of MVG member **Maurice Humphrey** in March 2012, and send our very sincere condolences to his family. The MVG has **Maurice** to thank for seeking permission to place our Memorial Stone in the NMBVA Plot at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire. Permission to put the Stone in the FEPOW Plot had been denied, and the MVG had no home for the Stone. Not only did **Maurice** get permission for the MVG to use the NMBVA Plot, but he also organized the Standard Bearers from the Yorkshire Branch of the NMBVA to attend the dedication of the Memorial Stone in August 2005. **Maurice** went on to encourage the MVG to apply for its own Plot in the NMA, and gave practical support for the project which culminated in the MVG landscaping and dedicating its own Memorial Garden Plot on V-J Day 2007. On that day, **Maurice** presented the MVG with 2 plaques which he had designed himself for the Memorial Garden. The plaques now lie one on either side of the Memorial Stone – one plaque shows the SSVG unit badge, and the other the MVG's logo. As well as these plaques, the MVG logo is also incorporated on one of the arms of the Cross which **Maurice** built on the NMBVA Plot. For all these kindnesses we will always remember **Maurice** as a good and true friend of the MVG.

Two obituaries appeared in the Daily Telegraph of Army Captains who fought in Burma. **John Chesshire** was awarded an MC while serving with the RAMC in Burma. In 1944, he was serving as Medical Officer to the 1st Btn. The South Staffordshire Regiment (1/SSR), part of the 77th Indian Infantry Brigade, when their regimental aid post was overrun. With his colleague **Captain Thorne**, he continued to operate until a counter-attack repelled the enemy, even during heavy shelling and in the open. 500 men passed through his hands during the campaign. Post-war he became a GP but in the early 1950s he joined the Colonial Service and spent 8 years in Malaya during the Emergency, and a year in Sumatra as Esso's chief medical officer. Later in life his desire to become a missionary surfaced, and he set off for Borneo. During a trip into the jungle he diagnosed his own severe stomach pains as acute appendicitis and, on a primitive operating table after a large dose of local anaesthetic, proceeded to conduct his medical orderly through an operation on himself to remove the infected appendix. **Capt. Peter Doresa** fought at the Battle of Kohima with the 4th Battn. The Queens's Own Royal West Kent Regiment (4/QRWK). Ordered to reinforce the garrison at Kohima, which was under pressure from the build-up of Japanese forces, they lost their trucks under fire as they approached the town. For nearly 2 weeks they endured constant bombardment from the enemy which devised all kinds of tactics to deter and dislodge the defenders. At one point, as platoon commander in "D" company, **Doresa** was ordered to dislodge the Japanese from some huts near an ammunition dump. He bombed the dump setting in ablaze and the Japs were driven into the open where they were killed. Later in the battle the Japanese infiltrated 4/QRWK's position, but **Doresa** ordered his men to hold fire until they were a few yards from his trench, then they opened fire causing great casualties on the enemy. For his part in the battle, **Capt. Doresa** was awarded an instant MC.

Raymond Hands, who died aged 80 on 12th January 2012, was awarded an MC in 1952 for tracking and killing a notorious terrorist leader during the Malayan Emergency. Commanding a platoon of the 1st Battn. The Suffolk Regiment in the Kuala Langat Forest Reserve, his objective was to kill **Liew Kon Kim**, a commander of the MRLA (Malayan Races Liberation Army). After tracking **Liew** and his fighters for 18 months, one of the patrols suddenly came across a small jungle camp and in the ensuing chase by **Hands**, 3 guerrillas were killed, and one was later identified as the wanted man. Important documents were also recovered together with some firearms.

Lt.-Col. Oscar Palmer was also awarded an MC in the Malayan Emergency, having fought as part of the Chindit force in Burma in 1943. In 1955 he took command of the 1st Battn. The Queen's Royal Regiment (1/QRR) in Malaya. The company was deployed on rubber estates, and worked closely with the local police in operations against communist insurgents. In one operation in the jungle east of Kulai, they picked up the tracks of about 20 communists, but soon came under heavy fire. His battalion killed about 50 insurgents during its 3 year tour and his MC was for his control and command of 4 platoons operating in thick jungle and swamp.

The 11th Lord Suffield has died aged 89. Leading a patrol of 2nd Coldstream Guards at Kuala Ras in the Cameron Highlands, in 1949 against communist insurgents, they came under heavy fire while crossing a river. **Tony Harboard-Hamond** led a small party to attack the bandits, but lost one man with another badly wounded. He radioed to Tapah to seek medical assistance, and organized a team of sappers to build a rope bridge across the river for the stretcher. He got the wounded man to hospital in K.L. and was awarded an MC for the way in which he dealt with the men's casualties.

BOOKS

"DEADLY SECRETS. The Singapore Raids 1942 – 45." By Lynette Ramsay Silver. Published by Sally Milner Publishing ISBN 978-1-86351-410-1 Available in the UK through Gazelle Book Services Ltd. White Cross Mills, Hightown, Lancaster LA1 4XS. Tel: 01524 6876 e-mail: sales@gazellebooks.co.uk

This book tells the story of **Operation Jaywick** and **Operation Rimau** – the raids by clandestine forces on Japanese-held Singapore. The former resulting in the Double Tenth incident during which many civilian POWs suffered dreadfully at the hands of the Kempeitai. The latter was partially successful, but every member of the party was killed.

This book gives an insight into the world of covert operations, partly through the eyes of **Denis Emerson-Elliott**, a British secret service agent closely associated with both missions. She also lays to rest a number of myths which have arisen in the years since the Singapore raids took place. A sobering aspect of many of the special operations carried out by Australian forces during WW11 is that many fine men who volunteered for hazardous service died while carrying out missions that were politically rather than militarily motivated. Also post-war assessments have concluded that many of these operations achieved nothing but death, misery and suffering.

"SINGAPORE AT WAR. Secrets from the Fall, Liberation and Aftermath of WW11." By Romen Bose. Published by Marshall Cavendish. ISBN 978-981-4382-00-7

For the first time 3 of Romen Bose's groundbreaking works have been brought together in one volume, providing a panoramic account of Singapore's experience in WW 2.

Secrets of the Battlebox. Sealed off and forgotten until the late 1980s, until discovered by the author, this served as the British Command HQ in the last days before the Fall. The author reveals the fascinating inner workings of the Battlebox.

The End of the War. In unprecedented detail, this book captures the circumstances, events and unforgettable cast of characters – from swaggering generals to clandestine resistance fighters – that attended the end of WW 11 as the British prepared to return to the region.

Kranji. The war cemetery is the final resting place of those who fought and died in the war. How are the war dead remembered in post-war Singapore? These men and women gave their lives, heroes heralded and unheralded, and till this day amidst them, a traitor?

"THE EMPEROR'S IRISH SLAVES: Prisoners of the Japanese During the Second World War." By Robert Widders. Price £9.74 No other details.

"LOVE FROM DADDY. Messages from Singapore." By Pamela Robinson Baillie. A book of beautifully illustrated letters written in the 1930s by Pamela's grandfather **James Baillie MC** [Manager, Francis Peak & Co. Ltd.] to his son at school in Scotland. This can be previewed on: <http://www.blurb.com/my/book/detail/2923917> or www.blurb.com/bookstore

"FALL OF SINGAPORE." By Justin & Robin Corfield. See details on Facebook:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Fall-of-Singapore/230528373699243>

"70 DAYS TO HELL." By Arthur Lane. ISBN 978-1-897666-76-0 1110 pages Wt.1.2 Kilos Price: £25

The book is a day by day account of the fall of Malaya and Singapore in which Arthur Lane fought, from the 6th December 1941 to 15th February 1942. It also covers the accounts of others who were there. It contains a concise list of all the casualties Killed in Action and those missing with no grave. Also included are various maps and diagrams depicting the various battles which ensued, & the full reports of Generals Percival and Wavell with comments from various other historians.

"BATTLE FOR SINGAPORE. Fall of the Impregnable Fortress." Reflections and Memories of War Volume 1.

This Exhibition Catalogue was presented to Marilyn Hywel-Jones, Jane Nielsen and Rosemary Fell at the Veterans' Appreciation Dinner at the Singapore Cricket Club on 12th February 2012. Produced by the National Archives of Singapore, it is a collection of battle orders, drawings, eye witness stories and other facts about the Japanese invasion of the island. It is available from the National Archives of Singapore. Vol: 2 is a comprehensively documented account of the Syonan Years 1942 – 45.

"SINGAPORE 1942. BRITAIN'S GREATEST DEFEAT." By Alan Warren. Published by Hambledon & London.

ISBN 1-85285-328-X.

The surrender of Singapore on 15 February 1942, with the capture of over 120,000 men, was the greatest and most humiliating defeat in British history and the high point of Japanese expansion in South-East Asia. It graphically exposed the military weakness of the British Empire and its inability to defend its Far Eastern colonies. The defeat left Australia exposed to Japanese invasion, its protection in future dependent on American arms. Based on original records, **Singapore 1942** shows what went wrong and how an outnumbered and poorly equipped Japanese invasion force swept to victory against a mixed army of British, Australian and Indian soldiers, changing forever Britain's imperial destiny and the balance between Europe and the rest of the World.

"JUNGLE SOLDIER." By Brian Moynahan. Published by Quercus. ISBN 978-1-84916-076-6

The true story of Freddy Spencer Chapman is drawn from extensive field research and on Chapman's detailed diary of his jungle ordeal. Part biography, part tale of endurance, part special-forces narrative, this book tells his story as the most hunted man in Japanese-occupied Asia.

[Please note: The "father" mentioned in "The Diary of Gret Surbak" in Edition 29 (Jan 2012) on P.21 is Gwilym Owen POW in Padang & Bangkinang (d.1972). Thanks to Gareth Owen, son of Gwilym Owen, who replied to my query. Ed] **"THE GISPERT STORY."**

Joe Wendell believes he has found the grave of **Albert Gispert** FMSVF/Argylls in the Dairy Farm area of Singapore. **Jon Cooper** (Battlefield Archaeologist) is of the opinion that their bodies were relocated at the time to the Regimental Aid Post area and are buried there. **Joe Wendell** says:

"**Jon Cooper** has been in touch with **Jonathan Moffatt** concerning my **Hash House Harrier** article on **Albert Gispert**. I'm now into my 4th year of writing a book and **Gispert's** was one of the stories in it. '**Moon Over Malaya**' was very important in my working-up the **Gispert** story.

When the HHH heard that I was working on the story, they asked if I could do a write-up for the Singapore club's 50th anniversary – this has accelerated my fact finding. In November I came across some co-ordinates established by a Bangkok Hasher. A Google search for the term 'track junction 751150' shows that many HHH clubs tell a shorter version of the **Gispert** story using these co-ordinates, but they didn't fit in with what I had found or your narrative in '**Moon Over Malaya**'.

I contacted **Stirling Castle** and they gave me a small area photo of the **Stewart** map and narrative, which gave me what I now call the **Dairy Farm Road** co-ordinates.

In the morning of 11th Feb 2012, I held a vigil with 4 candlesticks at 0400 am at the **Dairy Farm** site. I invited others to come, including a priest and a reverend, but I was the only person to show. I also tried to get a bagpipe tune of '**Lochaber No More**' but had to settle for the lyrics and just before 4am a wind blew out the candles. That was it. I read the names of the 4 men and the **Lochaber No More** lyrics. By then it was more than a story about **Gispert**.

I have named **Privates Myles Atkinson, John Harrison and John Hastings** as the men who died at the mortar with **Gispert**. I did this because of an aberration in '**Moon Over Malaya**'. Almost all accounts give the **Gispert** death at around

0400 am on 11th February 1942, but *'Moon Over Malaya'* gives the date of death as the 10th February. I listed the names from the back of *'Moon Over Malaya'* for those men who died on February 10th & 11th and then highlighted them if the place of their death was described in *'Moon Over Malaya'* or Steward's book. I am relying on your methodology being consistent in giving the dates of death. I theorize that the Sgt. Major would do a roll-call at daybreak and anyone not there would be listed as dying the day before. When I isolated the names of people that died on 10th February in your book, which included Gispert, I couldn't account for the place of death of these men. That's how I decided on Atkinson, Harrison and Hastings. Jon Cooper has sent images of a very interesting location near the Gispert site, about 100 yards from it on the Echo Valley track. [Ed: please contact Jonathan if anyone has any information].



We are pleased to announce that MVG members Bill Adamson and Elizabeth Bunney are getting married. Bill is President of the MBVA WA Inc. and Elizabeth is Secretary of our Australian Branch. We congratulate them and wish them every happiness in the future. MVG Australia is in good hands!

NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

The MVG was represented by Jonathan Moffatt at a special event which took place on 28th March between 5.30pm - 7.00pm to hear about the latest development plans. These plans will be submitted to the Lichfield District Council in April 2012. Charles Bagot Jewitt CE spoke for about 15 minutes before introducing the Architect, Michael Cruise. Stakeholders were invited to fill in suggestion forms, and Jonathan confirmed that the MVG would like an archival/ display area within the education block. This has already been requested and noted, but Jonathan ticked the box saying "request to be contacted".

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

WEDNESDAY 15TH AUGUST 2012 – V-J DAY SERVICE AT THE NMA IN THE MVG MEMORIAL GARDEN.

This will take place at noon in the Memorial Garden, followed by a picnic in the Arboretum grounds – weather and building works permitting. We plan to make this service a special remembrance for the 70th anniversary of the Fall of Singapore and to reflect the presentation of plaques in Australia and Sumatra in February. Please try to come this year, and let Rosemary or Jonathan know if you plan to attend.

4TH INTERNATIONAL RFH CONFERENCE – 8TH-9TH SEPT.

We are sorry to announce that this Conference has been cancelled.

SATURDAY 20TH OCTOBER 2012 – LONDON REUNION AND ANNUAL LUNCH AT THE RAF CLUB, PICCADILLY.

Further details will be given in July. We hope to see as many of you as possible again this year, following on from the success of last year's lunch. Please give names to Hugh or Rosemary if you are planning to attend, asap.

THURSDAY 8TH NOVEMBER 2012 – SERVICE AT WESTMINSTER ABBEY & CROSS PLANTING CEREMONY

Please let Merilyn Hywel-Jones know if you would like to attend this service, which is accessible only by ticket. Merilyn will order your ticket for you, but needs to know in plenty of time because tickets are only allocated to military units. This year, we plan to plant a Cross in the FEPOW Plot to commemorate the Volunteers who were lost or imprisoned in Singapore 70 years ago.

SUNDAY 11TH NOVEMBER 2012 – REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY AT THE CENOTAPH

We have an allocation of 12 tickets for Remembrance Sunday. Please let Rosemary know if you wish to join the group of regular MVG marchers. We plan to have lunch afterwards as usual at "The All Bar One" near the London Eye.

SUBSCRIPTIONS – NOW DUE – PLEASE PAY PROMPTLY

Thank you to all those who have already paid their 2012 – 2013 subscription. We have kept this at £15 per annum for next year, but from April 2013 it will have to be increased to £20 p.a. to keep in line with the rising cost of printing and postage. Payments may be made by cheque, BAC transfer or by Standing Order from your own bank. [See separate sheet]

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO HAS SENT IN AN ARTICLE FOR PUBLICATION

Please don't be disappointed if your article has not been included this time. Due to the various excellent reports about MVG members' visits to Singapore, Sumatra and Australia in February this year, the length of this newsletter has been curtailed, in order to accommodate these current reports on MVG activity. All other articles will be kept until July or October. We are very grateful to members for sending in such a wealth of information. It is all important and will be printed just as soon as space is available.

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