

working parties going past and felt a bit of a fraud, as there were some terrible skeletons who looked as bad as I. The I.J.A. ration scheme for some months (I.J.A. = "Imperial Japanese Army", the official way of referring to our hosts) had included 3 scales, heavy duty, light duty and no duty. The main item, rice, amounted to about 9oz, 7oz, & 5oz respectively per day, so if you didn't work you had to rub along on 5oz per day, which was pretty grim. As long as I was strong enough, I qualified for heavy duty by working on the I.J.A. gardens: most people did; but it was a question whether it took more out of you that it put in: in my case I think it must have done, and on 20th April I was overhauled by a specialist and put into hospital as a malnutrition case. I came out at the same weight as I went in, on 27th July, and **Eric** got me into his part of the camp, ostensibly to do light work but really to rest and get the benefit of the better cooking methods there. Thus I played out time, and as I have mentioned, began to get a tummy again when the Red + (*Cross*) food arrived. It's going down a bit now, as the ship's meals are on the light side. It is now the 19th, by the way, and we are really away in the Indian Ocean at last. I have two new gastronomic sensations to record: sausages, and mustard, to both of which I have been a stranger longer than anything else. They didn't come together, unfortunately: the mustard's first appearance was when we were having mutton - but we all took some just the same!

There is great hoo-ha here on account of the civilian internees, who being neither officer nor troops have been accommodated as the latter, and not as the most senior of the troops either: old men with game legs etc. in the bowels of the ship and having to walk three flights of stairs to wash their plates and so on. It is a difficult problem, though, because the civilians range from a Judge of the Supreme Court to Eurasian prostitutes. The Judge raised a stink and they have made a few changes. I hope they won't make any more because I'm sure I shall be affected and at present, as a sergeant, I have about the best of a bad lot. There are a lot of women, of course, who contrive somehow to look fairly normal and have chairs from somewhere and sit knitting etc. Also children, some of them too young to remember anything about Nip domination, which seems queer. By Jove, I should have been kicking myself if you had had to undergo this internment! What a merciful escape. One reunion of husband and wife was somewhat marred by the addition of a dear little Japanese baby! However, they managed to smooth this out apparently, and the child, who was christened "Tojo" has not come aboard. It is though it may have committed hara-kiri (sic).

L.V. Taylor is on board, so I told him you had seen **Dolly** in London. **Guy Hovil** was a prisoner in Java, otherwise we know nothing of him. I'd better mention a few personalities, but in the case of deaths I shall only mention them if I'm sure: in fact I don't think I'll mention any at all at present. **Bill Cooper** was another who went up country in 1942 and is probably all right: so was **Douglas Waring** and so was **Giles Faber, Bill Akhurst, Ian Mackintosh, Ross McPherson** and **Dr. Hardie**. **Emery** I believe was in the bad party in 1943 and I gather did very well: the men speak highly of him. He came back and was one of the hospital staff here at the end. **Guy Grace** was last seen up country in good shape. I can't think of any others at the moment. Do you remember **Poyntz-Roberts**? He is here, heading for Chipstead. Several are for Purley, including one K.L. woman I was talking to: I didn't catch her name, but I don't think you knew her.

I'll leave this now till we are nearer Colombo and we'll see if anything more has transpired about our future. I've just been converting a pair of longs into shorts - you wouldn't think me capable of such a thing, would you darling? But they are really quite a neat job. An expert would now make the remainder of the legs into another pair of shorts - that is what used to be done!

Friday Sept. 21st. Early in our captivity **George Ferriday**, whom you probably remember, had a dream in which we were going off as free men, and he asked someone what the date was. The reply was "Friday the seventh." I never forgot that and kept tabs on all the months in which Friday came on the 7th. There was a batch in 1944, January, April and July, but when that lot finished no more came till Sept. 1945: and now, behold, that is the month and the dream must have come true for many - but not, I'm afraid for poor **George Ferriday** himself, because he died in Siam in 1943. I've been looking at a few numbers of "British Malaysians" of this year, much more news seems to have come to you of civilian internees than of us - with the exception that there is a lot about "No. 4 camp, Thailand." I think that may be where **Charles Mounsey** went.

I was relieved to read in one of your letters that you were glad I hadn't tried to get away as **Rendle & co.** did. I was afraid you might think I had been feeble over that. I don't understand all that you say **Rendle** told you, but what happened was that there were about 30 of us at **Bobby Moir's** H.Q. on the Sunday night of the surrender and **Pat Hayward** called us together and said he had arranged about a junk, and anyone who liked could come with him, and his plan was to get back into Malaya and go on fighting. Well it seemed to us a daft plan, virtually suicide to no purpose. The **Scoulers** and I and others discussed it, and finally only 2 or 3 went (incidentally **Bobby Moir** thought it a poor idea too, though he said he would feel he ought to go himself if it were not for his wife being in Singapore). At the same time **Stokes-Hughes** was also raising a party from a much larger gang who had been sitting around for some

days at a place in town called St. Mary's Girls' School or something, and **Pat Hayward** recruited people from there also. This would be when **Rendle** came into it, as he was down there. So far as I can ascertain, nothing was said at the school about going back to Malaya – it was purely a scheme to get clear away, and that of course was all they ultimately did. If that had been properly stated to us, some of us might have taken the chance. Mind you, the idea of going on fighting in Malaya was not an absurd one: there are men who have recently turned up amongst us who have been doing just that the whole 3 ½ years, moving about in the jungle and kampongs and doing guerrilla stuff with Chinese communists etc. a wonderful effort and I take my hat off to them, but I don't think it would have been much good for me to try it. One that I knew, **Vanrenen** (I think you have seen him play golf in a championship against **Elkins**) led a Bulldog Drummond sort of life, but was finally shot by the Japanese at K.L., another, **Christensen**, who was one of our managers, a very charming and capable young Dane, came through and joined us at Changi after the surrender; he had many stories to tell, and there will be many more, I expect, that we don't know of yet. Mention of **Elkins** reminds me that one of these magazines said that he had taken over the Purley Downs golf club! We must look into that. My clubs are lost though, and I imagine clubs cost about five quid each by now, so that's probably off. I'm told this letter can be sent the same as the official ones if it's only ½ oz, so I'd better stop at this point.

Lots of love, darling,

Trevor

Just seen **Phil Marriott**, who had heard from **Eve Codner**. Her youngest boy **Michael** was captured in N. Africa & escaped, went back and later got M.C.

**THE MANAGER'S BUNGALOW, SUNGEI ULAR ESTATE, KULIM, KEDAH, MALAYA
OWNED BY THE SOCFIN RUBBER CO. LTD.**

By kind permission of Susan J. Wouters – daughter of John & Jean Richmond.

The Richmond family moved into the manager's bungalow on Sungei Ular Estate sometime during 1957. It was an old pre-war wooden building supported on square concrete pillars. The walls were painted dark cream and the *chiks* (blinds) were maroon and cream striped. They covered all the mosquito net windows upstairs and the open verandah downstairs, and were supposed to keep out the rain. On the ground floor at the end of the long, wide verandah was an enclosed wooden staircase. Leading off the verandah, in the centre of the house, was the dining room and on either side of this there were two bedrooms with ensuite bathrooms. At night folding wooden doors were pulled across the dining room to close the house. At the other end of the dining room was the entrance to the kitchen on the left, and on the right was another enclosed wooden staircase for the servants' use. It was all rather dark and dingy. Beyond this was a partially covered backyard which led to the servants' quarters and, in the Emergency period, was also where the SCs (special constables) were quartered.

Upstairs was a T-shaped lounge situated over the dining room and verandah below, and on either side of this room were two more bedrooms with ensuite bathrooms. There was also a locked store room where John kept his pistol, and Jean kept all the non-perishable food items such as Heinz tinned goods, sugar, tea, coffee, rice etc.

By 1957, the old house had reached a critical point in its life. The floors creaked, the *chiks* were rotten, many of the supporting beams were riddled with termites and there were rats, snakes and musang in the rafters. The question now facing the owners, SOCFIN, was whether to renovate it or build a new bungalow. Fortunately, the company decided to renovate and, as John Richmond was the resident manager at the time, he was able to orchestrate the changes and improvements.

Work began towards the end of 1957 when the Richmonds went home on leave. The two wooden staircases were removed and replaced with one panelled, central staircase leading up from the back of the dining room to a landing. From the landing it split and continued up left and right to the lounge. High slatted windows were installed behind the staircase to improve ventilation and light, which could be opened and closed by a hidden pulley system devised by John Richmond (an enthusiastic amateur engineer and inventor.) The original concrete floors were covered in light green mosaic tiles and there were new panelled ceilings, new folding doors and refurbished bedrooms, bathrooms and kitchens.

Upstairs the most important improvement made was to the windows. The lower half of the lounge windows, originally just mosquito net, now had louvered fronts to keep out the rain, and the *chiks* and small mosquito net windows were replaced by two sets of large sliding windows that, when neither was in use, slid out of sight into panelling either side.

One set of windows was mosquito net and the other glass, which was a much more effective barrier to monsoon rain. Finally, the house was painted in a very light shade of green. John and Jean Richmond were enthusiastic gardeners and during the 10 years they lived there they landscaped the grounds, building an orchid shelter, pergolas, a pond and planting many beautiful and unusual trees and shrubs. There was also a small swimming pool for their children.

Sungei Ular Estate straddled the Serdeng road and the manager's bungalow was situated, unusually, at the entrance to the estate rather than in the middle of it. Around the bottom of the garden flowed the Sungei Kulim. The estate got its name from the little kampong further along the road to the town of Kulim.

At some point between 1968 and 1982 the whole of the upper floor was enclosed and air-conditioned, and later still the house was repainted in cream and brown as it is pictured on Page 45 of "The Planter's Bungalow." The estate was eventually sold to a development company and part of it became a science and technology park. Sadly, this wonderful old house no longer exists, as it was burned to the ground whilst standing empty. All that remains are the concrete pillars and the outline of the swimming pool.

"JAPANESE HOLIDAY"
A BROADCAST TO LONDON by Padre J.N. Duckworth

[We thank Donald and Diana Ruffell for forwarding a copy of this powerful talk given by Padre Noel Duckworth on the evening of the official surrender of the Japanese in Singapore on 12th September 1945. Donald says in his letter: "On reading about Padre Captain Noel Duckworth on page 7 (in A.K. No: 32), I was reminded of the reference made to him by my father-in-law, Forbes Wallace, in his book entitled, "War-time Interlude of a Temporary Soldier." I quote, "On the evening of the surrender Padre Duckworth of 2nd Cambs. gave a broadcast on the B.B.C. entitled 'Japanese Holiday.' His talk was printed on our voyage home on *H.M.T. Sobieski* and a copy is included in Appendix 1."]

The Japanese told us we were going to a health resort. We were delighted. They told us to take pianos and gramophone records. *They* would supply the gramophones. We were overjoyed and we took them. Dwindling rations and a heavy toll of sickness were beginning to play on our fraying nerves and emaciated bodies. If all seemed like a bolt from the tedium of life behind barbed wire in Changi, Singapore. They said, "Send the sick. It will do them good." And we believed them, and so we took them all.

The first stage of the journey to this new found Japanese Paradise was not quite so promising. Yes, they took our kit and they took our bodies – the whole lot – in metal goods wagons, 35 men per truck through Malaya's beating, relentless sun for 5 days and 5 nights to Thailand, the land of the *free*. For food, we had a small amount of rice and some "hogwash" called *stew*. We sat and sweated, fainted and hoped. Then at Bampong station in Thailand they said, "All men go." "Marchee, marchee!" We said: "What! We're coming for a holiday." They just laughed and in that spiteful, derisive, scornful laugh which only a prisoner of war in Japanese hands can understand, we knew that here was another piece of Japanese bushido – deceit.

Our party marched, or rather dragged themselves for 17 weary nights, 220 miles through the jungles of Thailand. Sodden to the skin, up to our middles in mud, broken in body, helping each other as best we could, we were still undefeated in spirit. Night after night, each man nursed in his heart the bitter anger of resentment. As we lay down in the open camps – clearings in the jungle, nothing more – we slept, dreaming of home and better things. As we ate boiled rice and drank onion water, we thought of eggs and bacon.

We arrived, 1680 strong at No.2 Camp, Songkurai, Thailand, which will stand out as the horror hell of Prison Camps. From this 1680 less than 250 survive today to tell its tale. Our accommodation consisted of bamboo huts without rooves. The monsoon had begun and the rain beat down. Work – slave work – piling earth and stones in little skips on to a railway embankment began immediately. It began at 5 o'clock in the morning and finished at 9 o'clock at night and even later than that. Exhausted, starved and benumbed in spirit we toiled because if we did not, we and our sick would starve. As it was, the sick had half rations because the Japanese said, "No work, no food."

Then came *cholera*. This turns a full-grown man into an emaciated skeleton overnight. 20, 30, 40, and 50 deaths were the order of the day. The medical kit we had brought could not come with us. We were told it *would* come on. It never did. We improvised bamboo holders for saline transfusions, and used boiled river water and common salt to put into the veins of the victims. Cholera raged. The Japanese still laughed and asked, "How many dead men? We still had to work, and work harder. Presently, came dysentery and beri-beri – that dreaded disease bred of malnutrition and starvation. Tropical ulcers, diphtheria, mumps, small-pox, all added to the misery and squalor of the camp on the hillside where water flowed unceasingly through the huts at the bottom. A rising feeling of resentment against the Japanese, the weather and general living conditions coupled with the knowledge that their officers could do little or nothing about it, made life in the camp full of *dread* that each day would bring something worse. The lowest daily death rate came down to 17 only as late as September 1943, when the weather improved and things began to get a little better. Yet we had to work, there was no way out of it. Escape through the jungle, as many gallant parties attempted, would only end in starvation and disease, and if the party survived and were eventually captured, the torture which followed was worse than death itself.

We were dragged out by the hair to go to work, beaten with bamboo poles and mocked at. We toiled, half-naked in the cold, unfriendly rain of Upper Thailand. We had no time to wash and if we did it meant Cholera. By day, we never saw our bed spaces (on long platforms of those bleak hundred metre huts.) Our comrades died, we could not honour them even at the graveside because we were still working.

The spirit of the jungle hovered over this Valley of the Shadow of Death and my boys used to ask me constantly: "How long now Padre? What's the news?" We had the news. **Capt. James Mudie**, who now broadcasts from here, by an

amazing piece of skill and resource, got it and gave it to us. And we lay and starved, suffered, hoped and prayed. Never in my life have I seen such tragic gallantry as was shown by those men who lay on the bamboo slats and I speak now as a priest who ministered the last rites to all of them. Yet they died happy. Yes, happy to be released from the pain, happy because our cause would not be suffered to fail among the nations of the earth. No Medical Officers or orderlies ever had to contend with such fantastic, sickening, soul destroying conditions of human ailment. No body of men could have done better. We sank low in spirit, in sickness and in human conduct, but over that dark valley there rose the sun of hope which warmed shrunken frames and wearied souls. Here I would like to pay tribute to the stirring work and worth of some Officers amongst many to whom many men now living may owe their lives – **Lt. Col. Andy Dillon, RIASC; Lt. Col. John Huston, RAMC; and to Lt. Col. Hutchinson, M.C.**, known affectionately to us as “Hutch”; also to **Capt. E.J. Emery**, who tended the sick even from his bedside and to **Major Bruce Hunt** of the Australian Imperial Forces. One cheering result comes from this dismal epoch in our lives, the coming close together in friendship and mutual understanding between the men of the United Kingdom and the men of Australia. A new understanding has been born and will endure amongst those who think over the things which are of good report. Those of us that came out of that hell, thank God for deliverance and for the memory of just men made perfect, whose examples as martyrs at the hands of the Japanese blaze yet another trail in the annals of human perseverance.

INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Ivan Ho writes:

I have received the latest MVG newsletter from Jonathan. It makes very interesting reading though I feel I have to point out an error, albeit, as I shall explain, a partial one. In the story about the Union Flag, I am said to have inherited it from my family. That is true, but only fractionally so. You see, the flag belonged to the business my grandfather started. After he died, ownership of his company was divided among his sixteen children. To my best knowledge, all sixteen have also died. They are succeeded by, as you can imagine – I am almost tempted to use the phrase “a swarm of” - descendents, of whom I am one. All of grandfather Yuen’s descendents have a claim on the flag. I just keep it for everybody. There is a likelihood one or two of them may one day read the newsletter and think of me in a somewhat unpleasant light. Is it possible to insert a correction in the next newsletter?
[Ed: I hope this has clarified the situation for Ivan.]

Audrey McCormick writes:

Just to inform you for the newsletter, I have now placed my Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders written material (i.e. the portion which comprises typescripts of all the *recorded* interviews carried out by me personally) into the A & SH Museum Library. The Library continues to be based at Stirling Castle, alongside the A & SH Museum – but the Castle will become – or already is – a “tourist attraction”. This portion of my research work is now available in the A & SH Library, although the A & SH Regiment is, sadly, no longer based at the Castle, having been re-named ‘No: 5 Regiment’. The long-installed Librarians are Rod MacKenzie and Archie Wilson, who also handle the Museum enquiries, and the Library can be contacted by phone on number 01786 475165. The Museum remains within the Castle but, sadly, is somewhat overlooked in tourist terms, and is not as well signed as “The Great Hall” with its historical enactments.

John Corner writes:

In spite of delays, I am pleased to confirm that the final edit of the book is progressing. My editor in Singapore, when he took on my Ms, decided that he wanted to do the editing himself for he particularly liked the story and its connection with Singapore history, rather than give it to a sub-editor, even sending it ‘outside’ for professional editing. Recently when we were discussing it he did explain the reason for the slow progress and asked if I would like him to give it to a sub-editor; without hesitation I said no, please continue it; I will be patient. He will and I will! It WILL be published; I have his word, and I know he will edit it sensitively. To quote from an author/editor who wrote to me recently: “Mr. Goh Eck Kheng is a very old friend and colleague..... He’s one of Singapore’s best and most sensitive publishers when it comes to specializations in local history and heritage, and he has particularly good design instincts. He is a second generation publisher, his father having been the founder of an early company, United Publishers Services and its subsidiary Eastern Universities Press, which is where Eck Kheng had his first publishing job as a young man.” We are working on a title; all will be revealed before too long, as will the launch venue, which will be in Singapore. Eck Kheng hopes to have a finished draft with me by the end of January 2013 ... Good news and progress.

John Corner gives the following information about his father’s botanical work:

Professor Roy Watling, Royal Botanic Gardens of Edinburgh (RBGE) has recently told me that my father’s type specimens have been placed on the RBGE data-base for easier access by researchers: they appear under the **Herbarium** heading and are contained in 21 pages. I know this has been a lengthy job and my first knowledge of it came during our visit to the RBGE in 2007. I am extremely grateful to Roy and all involved at the RBGE for completing this task.

Reference to some of my father's publications has just come out in *Research Pamphlet 132 "Check List of Fungi of Malaysia"* by S.S. Lee; S.A. Alias; E.G.B. Jones; N. Zainuddin & H.T. Chan. ISBN 978-967-5221-82-82010S, published by the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM). Also just published by FRIM is *"Revision of Malaysian Species of Boletales s.l. (Basidiomycota) Described by E.J.H. Corner (1972, 1974)"*. The author Professor Dr. Egon Horak is providing me with some interesting information which will find itself in the Ms!

BOOKS

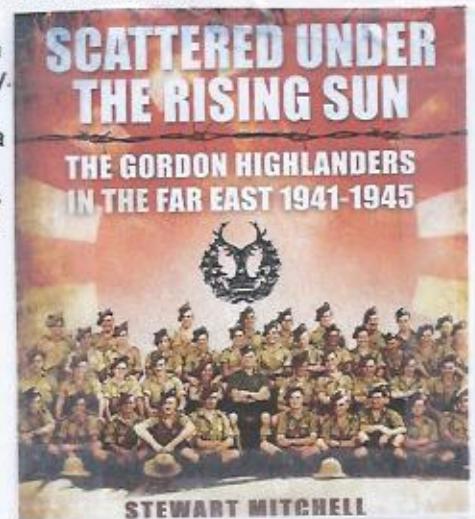
"SCATTERED UNDER THE RISING SUN: The Gordon Highlanders in the Far East 1941-1945." By Stewart Mitchell. Pen & Sword Books Ltd. Hardback 212 pages plus photos. RRP £19.99. Amazon & Co. UK £16.99

Much attention has been given to the dramatic story of the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders in the Malayan Campaign so this important and well written history is a welcome and timely contribution to the story of the Malayan Campaign and captivity. It provides a much more detailed account of the 2nd Battalion, the Gordon Highlanders in the Far East than that in the official Regimental History 'The Life of a Regiment' published in 1961.

Stewart Mitchell's excellently researched book draws on the anecdotes of survivors but also on two very interesting regimental sources: a battalion roll kept before and throughout the captivity by Sgt. Dick Pallant and a detailed scrap book of members of the battalion kept by Mrs. Irene Lees, wife of the battalion second-in-command Major Reggie Lees. Mrs. Lees was evacuated in February 1942 after serving as a Medical Auxiliary Service nurse.

The regimental background, rich in history and tradition, is well explained as is its structure and composition. The 2nd Battalion arrived in Singapore from Gibraltar in 1937 and was garrisoned at Selarang Barracks.

Most regular soldiers, many of those who were repatriated in 1945 had not been home for 11 years. Routine training in Singapore and at Mersing & Kota Tinggi were combined with ceremonial duties and running training programmes for the Malayan & Straits Settlements Volunteers. When Sgt. Milton was dispatched to Penang to train a Chinese company, the CO later reported that his Chinese Volunteers are now speaking English with a strong Scottish accent! Among the junior officers of the Gordons was a young Kedah planter Jim Sandison who resumed his planting career post war.



The experience of the wives and daughters of the regiment is well covered. Later members of the Ladies' Club experienced evacuation, family tragedy and in two cases, captivity.

During the Malayan Campaign, the Gordons, being Garrison troops, were not sent to meet the Japanese invasion in the north of Malaya but dug in to defend the artillery installations at Pengerang, Johore. Sgt. Frank Knight, however, with the FMSVF Railway Operating & Maintenance Company crossed the Thai border in a successful secret mission to blow up railway bridges. As the Japanese advanced towards Singapore the Gordons were involved in a fierce battle at 41 milestone on the Ayer Hitam-Johore Road. Three Military Crosses, a DCM and a Military Medal were awarded to Members of the battalion for this action. Subsequently, in the Battle for Singapore, the battalion saw action in Singapore at Tyersall Park, Bukit Timah and on Holland Road.

The book contains a detailed analysis of the experiences of Gordon Highlanders in captivity across South East Asia and the Pacific. 925 men

entered captivity and 32% of these died, many of these with the notorious F & H Forces to Thailand and E Force to Borneo. Of 105 Gordons sent to Japan on 'Hellships' only 33 men survived the journey. There are tales of ingenuity and courage and credit is given to the work of medical officers including Captain Stanley Pavillard SSVF. There is the moving story of 2nd Lt. Derek Stewart who was put to work as a POW on mine clearance in Johore to be horribly wounded as he took the full force of an exploding mine to ensure none of his men was killed. He died months later at Roberts Hospital, Changi after a massive team effort to save him. Regimental spirit, co-operation and humour contributed to the survival of many in captivity.

The book contains some excellent photos including the last draft of Gordon Highlanders aboard MV Batory, liberated POWs at Funatsu and repatriated Cpl. William Gray with Donald the Thai Duck. The nominal roll of the battalion is supported by small portrait images of most of the men.

Altogether, a very readable and valuable record of a fine battalion.

Reviewed by Jonathan Moffatt.

"RAFFLES: And the Golden Opportunity." By Victoria Glendinning. 367 pages. Profile £25/ebook £25/Amazon £15.25 Adventurer, idealist, crusader against the slave trade and founder of Singapore, Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles left an indelible mark on history. This spirited, fluent and immaculately researched biography demonstrates his enduring legacy. Born in 1781 in Walworth, southeast London, he grew up in obscurity and started work aged 14. By the age of 45 he had lead a

British invasion of Java, fought to abolish the slave trade, established the world's most successful city state, had the world's largest flower (*the Rafflesia*) named after him, lent his name to a host of fish, ants and plants and was the founding father of the London Zoo. He was almost entirely self-made, having had only 2 years of formal education when he started work as a clerk for the East India Company in London. His job was to copy and trace documents for this company which was then one of the biggest businesses in the world. It controlled the spice trade from Asia and had its own fleet, its own civil service, its own army and its own flag – red and white stripes with the Union Jack relegated to a corner. Far from becoming swallowed up in this vast enterprise, the young Tom was an opportunist and wangled a job in the company outpost at Penang, where he first set foot on East Asian soil.

Unlike other young, ambitious British men of his era, Tom was curious about his new surroundings, learning Malay and studying to improve his skills. He became a collector of everything he could from native literature to flowers and reptiles. He dreamt of annexing Java to the Indian Empire, and organized a bloody invasion of the island, then a Dutch colony. He rushed through reforms on land holding and abolished slavery, amongst other things, trying to turn the island into a "first-class country". However, when Napoleon (who had absorbed the Netherlands into his empire) was defeated, Java was returned to the Dutch. So instead, Tom came up with a plan to set up a British Trading Post on a small island just off the Malayan mainland. Situated midway between India and China, he decided that Singapore would become his perfect colony. He worked to establish just this, despite losing 3 of his children to dysentery. By 1824 he was exhausted, and set sail for England bringing with him plants, animals, artefacts and instruments. The voyage was overtaken by tragedy – he lost his 4th child, the ship caught fire and he lost his whole collection. Arriving back in England having lost his fortune, he started planning the world's first scientific zoo at Regent's Park, but died before he saw it come to fruition.

However, his legacy has survived, and although he would not recognize today's modern Singapore his name lives on in the city in the form of 2 statues, a hotel, a hospital, schools, institutions and colleges.

The book is a splendid tribute to a great British character – the kind of man who gives empire a good name.

"CANON NOEL DUCKWORTH. An Extraordinary Life." By Michael Smyth. 104 pages, illustrated, softback. Published by Churchill College, Cambridge.

Although less than 30 pages of this book are dedicated to Duckworth's time as Chaplain to the 2nd Battalion, the Cambridgeshire Regiment, in war and captivity, and despite a few minor errors on the captivity, this book is an interesting read on the life and ministry of a brave man who will be remembered with admiration and affection by many British and Australian FEPOWs. As a POW in Pudu Gaol, Koala Lumpur, Changi and with the notorious F Force in Thailand, this diminutive and unconventional man earned a reputation for standing up to his captors and giving men hope in adversity. A well-illustrated book with good colour images of Duckworth by Ronald Searle and of captivity chapels in Pudu and Changi.

Reviewed by Jonathan Moffatt.

BLOGGER AARON CHANG OF KK, SABAH

This Blog provides a collection of several short accounts of persons who went through or were associated with the Occupation. Entitled "Fan of a Hero" and taken from The Star "Lifestyle", 1st May 2005 – it tells of Harold Speldewinde's war-time exploits. "Harold Speldewinde's tales of WW2 are often tributes to the late M. Saravanamuttu, former editor of the *Straits Echo*, who took charge of restoring order in the aftermath of the Japanese bombing of Penang in December 1941.

A former student of Penang Free School, Speldewinde had completed his Senior Cambridge examinations when war broke out. He was then boarding at the home of the Quays, a Eurasian family that lived on barracks Road, while his Dutch Burgher parents from Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) were in Taiping, Perak."

See: <http://relivethewar2005.blogspot.com.au/> "Reliving the Cruelty of the Japanese Occupation" – for full story and photo.

Information sent by Robert Leembruggen.

"KUALA LUMPUR AT WAR 1939 – 1945." By Andrew Barber. 250 pages, illustrated, hardback. Published by Karamoja, Kuala Lumpur 2012. **Reviewed by Jonathan Moffatt.**

An informative and wide ranging book covering many aspects of the war and Japanese occupation in Selangor. There is a good chapter on Pudu Gaol as a POW and internment camp. There is some good coverage of the 2nd Battalion FMSVF, Stay Behind Parties and Force 136. Several MVG members contributed to this book which makes it difficult to review objectively. Don't expect to agree with all the conclusions reached or the choice of book cover which does not relate sufficiently to the subject matter. A worthwhile read.

Photograph of the book launch, at the British High Commissioner's Residency on 5th November 2012, in the newly renovated & re-named Jubilee Hall, opened by the Duchess of Cambridge.



L to R: H.E. Mr. Simon Featherstone; a friend of H.E.; Ivan Ho (whose family own the V.I. Surrender Union Jack) and Andrew Hwang, MVG Malaysia Secretary.

OBITUARIES

GEORGE LAWRENCE HESS'E – May 1923 to August 2012.

Veteran Volunteer 2/FMSVF Light Battery – Gunner #18435/Dispatch Rider – Changi escapee to Force 136 – mentioned twice in dispatches.

We MVG members mourn the loss of George Lawrence Hess'e, veteran Malayan Volunteer and mentor who passed away peacefully on the 18th August 2012, at the age of 89. We also extend our very sincere sympathies to his wife Hyacinth (nee La Faber), and to their grown up family, Eric and Jude, for their heavy loss.

George Lawrence Hess'e was born on 10th May 1923, in Klang, Selangor, Malaya. Weighing in at a solid 9lbs 6ozs at birth, he was the only son and eldest child of Victor Hess'e and his wife Stella (nee O'Hara), who migrated from Ceylon (Sri Lanka) to Malaya in 1921. Apart from George, the couple had three daughters.

George always claimed to have been a tearaway in his younger years, yet remained respectful of his parents and, in later life, in their memory, wondered just how he could ever replicate such high standards. As a small boy, he attended the Klang convent, moving to the Klang Anglo-Chinese junior school before entering secondary education at the Methodist Boys' School in Kuala Lumpur. He left school to seek employment in 1940. George obtained an apprentice position with Federated Engineering, and in the middle of 1941 he joined the **Light Battery of the FMSVF**. A tall, thin, energetic lad, he became a dispatch rider. He said that he'd hoped to look handsome and dashing in uniform, but rather feared he resembled 'the village scarecrow!'

He was officially called up at the time of the Japanese invasion, and took his part in the fighting withdrawal to Singapore, witnessing the city's fall on February 15th, 1942. A few days later, with thousands of other allied troops, he was marched out to Changi: he was now just one of thousands of POWs seeking suitable sleeping space as a Prisoner of War.

After two days, George, believing himself the only coloured man in Changi (his own words), used his initiative and took his chance to escape. During the first two days of internment he had noticed an Indian labour gang being brought to work in the prison grounds. Weighing up the confusion both the surrendered servicemen and their Japanese jailors were experiencing during those early POW days, he took the opportunity and, with his singlet wound round his head like a turban, he filtered into the labour gang when they were finishing their duties at the end of the day. The labour gang was trucked out of Changi to the Cathay Cinema in Singapore; George was paid 50 cents for the day he did not work, having been off-loaded to a measured freedom. George often reflected on the fact that he was paid by his captors to escape. **It is possible George was the first POW to have escaped captivity. "Well," he would say, "I didn't like the food, and I certainly didn't like the service!"**

Like other Malayan Volunteers, George was able to make his way home from Singapore by a combination of train and truck transport. Like them, he knew it was wise to lie low; he was warned off returning to his old job lest the Japanese should come for him. Inactivity at home caused him and his family more than a little stress. It led him to making contact with the **Puchong Branch of the MPAJA** to undertake menial mechanical jobs. He was able to remove himself from their domination, taking up a job with E.R. Martin & Co. making paper from bamboo, and also worked part time making nails from barbed wire, which paid cash. George had experience with the repair of steam engines while working on an Ipoh Tin steam dredge. His manager approached him to assist with the repair of a steam engine that came under his responsibility, and George agreed. He was taken to a logging mill to repair the engine, a small army generator. The mill happened to be a collection and storage camp for the **Gombak Branch of the MPAJA**. George found he was not permitted to return home and joined the MPAJA as an armourer, thus continuing his war against the Japanese Occupation Force from within the jungle. George was to experience many and various encounters, but he survived.

Later in the war, **officers of Force 136** were parachuted into Selangor to make contact with the MPAJA; one of these officers, Major Ian McDonald of *Operation Galvanic* was amazed to find an English-speaking former Volunteer in an MPAJA camp. George was only too willing to leave the MPAJA and work with Force 136. His group operated within the Kajang area of Selangor, south of Kuala Lumpur. This work continued following the Japanese surrender, and included a shoot-out with a bandit gang at Salak South near K.L.

George proudly wore the 1939-45 Star, the Pacific Star, the Defence Medal with silver leaves depicting the King's commendation for brave conduct, and the War Medal with Oak Leaf. He was mentioned in dispatches and recognized on parchment by the Malayan Commissioner on 30th June 1947 for "gallant and distinguished services he rendered during the campaign in Malaya in 1941-1942," and also by the Secretary of State for War, J.J. Lawson, following King George VI's order, (London Gazette 1st August 1946), the only known Asian to be given a Mention in Dispatches during the Malayan Campaign. George was demobbed in 1946.

George obtained employment with the Government establishments who were keen to use his mechanical and general fitter experience, accumulated before and during the war years. He joined 561 Indian Infantry Command Workshop (later to become A Company, R.E.M.E., Circular Road, K.L.), as a general fitter, in April 1946. He was promoted in August 1946 to Leading Hand in charge of all general fitters, blacksmiths, welders and tinsmiths, and in February 1947, he was promoted Foreman in charge of all light repair work. By 23 -24 years of age, George had proved himself a most capable and reliable fitter and was put in charge of men of varying nationalities, the greater number much older than him. It was his extreme



adaptability, whether supervising labour on the overhaul of mechanical vehicles, or the maintenance labour in their multitudinous tasks in the workshop that made him stand out above others.

In March 1950, he transferred to the Malay Regiment Base Workshop (later to become No. 2 Base Vehicle Workshop R.E.M.E.) in charge of the regiment workshop based in Port Dickson. In November 1952, he transferred to the Malayan Forest Department Chemical Spraying Unit in charge of their workshops based in Sungei Besi Road, K.L., remaining in the post until July 1953 when the unit was closed down.

He was to obtain a further transfer position with the Forest Department Road Construction Unit, where he had responsibility for and undertook large scale field repairs under the most difficult conditions during the Malayan Emergency. He worked for the Forest Department, at Karak, in Pahang, as their Mechanical Supervisor – a less remote station it would be hard to find. George left Government employment on 13th November 1957 in order to better himself. His Government peers were to highly praise his efficiency, organizational ability and his cheerful, willing manner during the entire period of his employment. George had met and married Hyacinth La Faber on the 8th October 1948 at the Church of St. Mary the Virgin in Kuala Lumpur. The marriage was blessed with three children, Victor George, Jude Leonora and Eric Sidney.

George had a great sense of humour and loved telling jokes. He was also playful and enjoyed picnics while living with his family in Pahang in the early 1950s. He would organize picnics with a great many of his friends and family, walking through the forest to get to rivers where they would all swim and enjoy each others company. His love of food, good company and stimulating conversation was always a focal point when George was around. He loved to learn new things and had many hobbies. Even up to his death he was still learning and had become involved with many social projects.

In October 1957, George was offered the position of Chief Clerk with Guthrie & Co. Ltd. Engineering Department, one of the few civilian positions he had sought. He accepted and had commenced work in November 1957. However, shortly after taking up this position, the opportunity to become Workshop Manager with the East Asiatic Company Ltd. (for which he had also applied) was finally offered to him. This position would enable him to better his qualifications with overseas training. Reconsidering his future, George chose employment with the East Asiatic Company Limited, resigning from Guthrie & Co. Ltd. in December 1957 so that he could commence employment on 1st January 1958. The company had acquired both Fiat and Vespa Scooter Agencies, the sales of which George would play a central role.

Ever since George left the Methodist Boys' School during his 8th Grade year in 1938, he moved up the ladder of manual and executive authority in regular steps, always being considered the best employee and sought after. Within 10 years, George's status was enhanced even further, being promoted from Workshop Manager to General Manger Mechanical Operations. During his employment, George attended training with Fiat in Turin, and the Vespa manufacturers, Messrs. Paggio & Cie at Pontedfra, Italy. In 1963 he was appointed Pan Malaysian Service Manager in charge of all Fiat workshops in Malaysia, Indonesia, Borneo, Thailand and the Philippines. In 1966 he was appointed East Asia Company's General Manager of Sales and Services for Malaysia.

George resigned from the East Asiatic Co. Ltd. to emigrate to Australia to seek yet better prospects for himself and his family. He left behind many expatriate Danish, British and Malayan friends, with whom he maintained contact over the years, and he and Hyacinth visited many of them during their retirement travels.

They emigrated to Perth, Western Australia in September 1967. Two months after arrival in Western Australia, George found employment with Anderson Ford, due to his great experience in engineering fields, particularly with vehicles. In 1971, he left Anderson Ford and joined Centre Ford in Perth, where he remained until his final retirement in 1984.

He wasted no time, and became an Australian Citizen on the 16th May 1969.

Tragically, on the 13th January 1970, Victor, elder son of George and Hyacinth, died as a result of heat exhaustion while in the North West part of Western Australia. His unexpected death was a devastating blow for the Hess'e family and it took them all some time to come to terms with the tragedy. George's ashes have been interred with Victor's in the Karrakatta Cemetery, Perth. George joined Probus in 1993, a membership which he found to be a privilege. He could tell his life story as it was, to people he knew would appreciate hearing of his life's trials and achievements. He was granted Life Membership of the Karrinyup and North Beach Probus Club in 2010, after having been elected Vice President in 1997-98, and President of the Branch in 1999. George was, for many years, the Secretary of the Sri Lanka Association, eventually being granted Life Membership by his associates. He was a founder member of the Burgher Welfare League, which raises money for the support of elderly members of the Burgher community in Sri Lanka. This was typical of George, who was an immensely kind and generous man, and, as already pointed out, had a tremendous sense of humour.

George was a prime mover of the Malayan Volunteers Group in Australia, with his executive members chasing the membership of ex-FMS Volunteers and families who had made their home in Australia, particularly in the west.

He requests that MVG Australia members should carry the Flame of Remembrance for the Australian members of the Federated Malay States Volunteers who served with the Allies during the fighting withdrawal down the peninsula of Malaya and into Singapore; and for those Australian families who assisted the Malayan evacuees fleeing from the Japanese invasion during 1941 and 1942, especially those that escaped and eventually made their home in Australia.

To mark the occasion of the 65th anniversary of V-J Day on the 15th August 2012, the Malayan Volunteers Group honoured its Veteran Volunteers, members of the LDC, Nursing Staff and Civilians who were imprisoned by the Japanese throughout the Far East from February 1942 to August 1945 by bestowing on them Honorary Life Membership. George Hess'e, 2nd Battalion (Selangor) Federated Malay States Volunteer Force Light Battery and Force 136, was one of those so honoured.

In respectful remembrance of a man who was deeply respected by all with whom he came into contact.

We will remember him. Lest we forget.

Compiled by Bill Adamson, Jude Hess'e & Becca Kenneison.

HAROLD VERNON SPELDEWINDE – 1924 to October 2012.

The MVG is sad to announce the death of another of our much valued Veteran Volunteers. We send our sincere condolences to his daughter Laureen, sons Kenneth and Vernon and to other members of the family. His wife, Molly, died 4 years ago. Harold Speldewinde was a very well known and respected resident of Penang where he was born, lived and died. He was the founder of the Penang Veterans Association 11 years ago, and organized the annual Remembrance Sunday Service at the Penang Cenotaph on the Esplanade in George Town, at which a wreath was laid on behalf of the MVG.

As a member of the Penang Heritage Trust, his death was announced by Khoo Salma, President of the PHT: With great sadness I would like to inform you that two distinguished Grand Old Men of Penang have passed on – Harold Speldewinde on 13th October and Brother Charles Levin on 14th October 2012 (Brother-Director of St Xavier's Institution, Penang).

The funeral service for Harold Speldewinde will take place at 10a.m. at St George's Church, Farquhar Street, Penang. The family have requested that no wreaths or flowers are to be sent to them, but they would appreciate it if a donation could be made in Harold's memory to the Malaysian SPCA as he was a great lover of animals and kept a "mini zoo" at his home, Villa Bellevue. **[Note: MVG Malaysia has sent a donation].**

Harold Speldewinde was interviewed in the video-documentary "The Fall of Penang" which was televised on the History Channel recently <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UbtDwtanu3k>

Harold was a member of the Penang Volunteers from December 1941 to 1945 – as one of the last recruits, enlisting just as the Japanese were poised to invade the island. He avoided capture, and joined the resistance forces in the jungles of Perak until the Japanese surrender in 1945.

The following information about Harold comes from "Prominent Ceylonese in Penang: Past and Present" by Mr. S. Karthigesu. Hon. Secretary of Malaysian Ceylonese Congress (Penang Branch)

Born in 1924, and known as Harold to his friends, Harold Speldewinde is a second generation Dutch Burgher. Educated in Penang Free School he is the current President of the Penang Veterans Association. He was a Founder Member and Adviser of Persatuan Veteran Keselamatan Negara Malaysia 1955. Further, he has been Chairman of the Persatuan Bekas Pasukan Keselamatan Negara Malaysia, Sungai Gelugor Branch from 1996 to date.

He is the son of Mr. Clair Alexander John Speldewinde, an original Dutch Burgher from Ceylon, who joined the Malayan Forest Department in 1907 as Senior Forest Ranger and retired in 1942 as Senior Assistant Conservator of Forest, Taiping, Perak. He was a State and Federation of Malaya Cricketer. During the war years he was attached to the South East Asia Command, Ceylon (SEAC, Earl Mountbatten's Head Quarters) training RAF and American Pilots in Jungle Survival Courses. His mother, Adeline Alice Siebel Speldewinde was awarded the Medal of Merit for Service with the Girl Guides and was an active committee member of the Y.M.C.A.

As a student in the Penang Free School, Harold played an active part being the School Assistant Head Prefect, School Champion Athlete, School Rugger Captain, School Hockey Captain, School Athletics Captain, 2nd Lt. in the School Cadet Corps and School Boxing Captain.

During the Japanese Occupation (1941-1945) he was branded as a Third National by the Japanese. He joined the Anti-Japanese guerrillas in the Tapah/Cameron Highland Sector to escape detection, and came out at the end of the war to take up planting as a career by becoming a member of the planting profession.

He had an illustrious career as a planter commencing as an Assistant Planter in 1946 and by 1957 became the Manager of Sungei Bernam Estate. There was nothing to stop him after that from serving in several rubber, oil palm, coconut and cocoa plantations as either Senior Manager or General Manager.

His experience as a planter has been well respected and he has presented several papers on the industry. He has visited research stations in Sabah, Sarawak, Thailand, Indonesia, India, Sri Lanka, Kenya, Nigeria, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Senegal, South Africa, Egypt, Denmark, Spain, Canary Islands, Germany, Italy, England, USA, Australia and Holland.

He has also served in Planting Councils & Research Committees, namely Malaysian Agricultural Producers Association (MAPA), Malaysian Estates Owners Association (MEDA), Malaysian Oil Palm Growers Council (MA OPGC), United Planting Association of Malaysia (UPM). He is a member of the Incorporated Society of Planters and the Malaysian Institute of management.

Report on Harold Speldewinde's funeral by MVG member Leslie James.

There was a huge turn-out for the funeral of Harold Speldewinde at St. George's Church this morning – several hundred people of every ethnic background and religious faith, including a large contingent of the Penang Veterans Association (PVA) in their trademark batik shirts and military-style wedge caps. The casket was wheeled into the church led by the crucifer and the Vicar, the Venerable Archdeacon Charles Samuel. The processional hymn was 'Amazing Grace'. Other hymns included 'What a Friend We Have in Jesus' and 'You Raise Me Up'. Bible readings were by members of Harold's family and three eulogies were delivered by a long-time planter friend, his son Vernon and his Australian son-in-law Michael Kidd. The Vicar gave a sermon on the theme of the "warrior king" of the Bible, King David. The service lasted ninety minutes, ending with the congregation filing past the open coffin and members of the family while the final hymn 'How Great Thou Art' was sung. I extended condolences to Harold's two sons Vernon and Kenneth on behalf of the Malayan Volunteers Group, recalling that Harold had been an honorary life member of MVG. At the conclusion of the service members of the PVA (of which Harold had been the founder) gathered at the casket for the folding of the PVA flag and the singing of the 'Veterans Song' composed by Harold's son-in-law. Eschewing the gurney on which the casket had been brought into the church, a dozen pall-bearers then carried the casket on their shoulders from the chancel to the church door followed by the crucifer and the Vicar, a touching end to a very moving service. The funeral procession then proceeded to Batu Gantung Crematorium for the committal.

We also note with sadness the deaths of several former FEPOWs & those having post-war connections with Malaya.

PHILIP CROSLAND – July 1918 to October 2012

Philip Crosland survived as a wartime prisoner of the Japanese to become one of the last British journalists to make his career in India. At the outbreak of war, he enlisted as a specially commissioned officer in the Indian Army. His first Christmas was spent in neutral Goa – then Portuguese – where he found German sailors & spies sending information about Allied shipping. In May 1941, with the 2nd Battalion 15th Punjab Regiment (2/15PR), he was sent to Kuching, Sarawak to defend the landing ground. In December, with the Japanese invasion imminent, they were ordered to destroy the oilfields. Having invaded Sarawak, North Borneo and Brunei, the Japanese reached Kuching on 24th December, where they were resisted by the Punjabis but overran them. The CO ordered a withdrawal into Dutch West Borneo to join forces with the Dutch. Sadly for the 2 rearguard companies of Punjabis, the Japs cut off their retreat and most were killed or captured.

Crosland commanding 2 platoons in a new rearguard action, finally joined up with the battalion at Sanggau, but by February they were running out of food & ammunition. The CO decided to withdraw to the South Borneo coast through the jungle in an attempt to reach Java by boat. It took them 10 weeks to cover 800 miles, and exhausted from lack of food, they finally surrendered at Kumai. 6 officers were murdered, the rest became POWs, were taken to Batavia & then by boat to Singapore.

ERIC LOMAX – May 1919 to October 2012

Well known for his book "The Railway Man", in which he describes his torture at the hands of the Japanese in Thailand, Eric Lomax was enabled to come to terms with his ordeal by writing about his suffering. Through his wife's loving care and understanding, he started to visit the 'Care of Victims of Torture' Medical Foundation, which helped him to overcome his psychological problems. Later he was put in touch with Takashi Nagase, the interpreter with whom he most associated his ordeal. Despite his long held thoughts of revenge, Eric Lomax, finally chose reconciliation over retribution and made his peace with his former tormentor.

Eric Lomax was a Signals Officer, captured in Singapore in February 1942, and sent to Thailand. While in camp in Kanchanaburi, he was found with a radio receiver and a map of the Burma-Siam Railway. The torture which followed is well documented, but Lomax refused to confess to espionage, knowing full well that, despite threats of execution, his confession would have sealed his fate. His story has been adapted for a film starring Colin Firth.

Grp. Capt. BILL FARQUHARSON – Sept 1919 to September 2012

Son of Frank and Hilda Farquharson, Bill Farquharson was born in Malacca. His father was a Chief Inspector in the Straits Settlements Police & awarded the King's Medal in 1931. Bill completed his education in England, and in January 1941 enlisted in the RAF and trained as a pilot. He completed 63 operations in Bomber Command, first with Wellingtons and later in Stirlings, and was twice awarded the DFC. With 115 Squadron, he flew sorties dropping mines in the Kattegat, Baltic & off the French Biscay Coast. Known as "gardening" sorties, they "sowed their vegetables" along the main coastal shipping routes used by the Kriegsmarine, and at the entrances to the U-boat bases. All were highly effective operations which have received little attention. With other Squadrons, he bombed Germany, northern Italy and targets in the Ruhr. After the war, he dropped food to the starving population in the Netherlands and flew in Operation Exodus to pick up POWs from German camps. After the war he served as Chairman of the Bomber Command Association & was made honorary vice-President. In July 2012, with his ex-WAAF wife, he attended the unveiling of the Bomber Command Memorial in London by HM The Queen. His family remained in Singapore until its fall. A brother and sister left before the Japanese invaded in December 1941. His parents and a 10 year old brother left on the ill-fated 'SS Kuala' but survived the sinking. They were all captured by the Japanese in Padang, Sumatra. His father died in Bankinang Men's Camp in 1942 aged 55, but his mother and younger brother survived the war in Bankinang Women's Camp, Sumatra. Bill was reunited with them in Singapore in 1945.

MAJ-GEN. PATRICK DIGNAN - July 1920 to October 2012

After studying medicine, Patrick Dignan became a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland. In 1950, he was posted to Malaya during the Emergency to do his National Service, and found himself as the only surgeon in the 100-bed Kamunting Military Hospital in Taiping, dealing with men with gunshot wounds from a wide catchment area. He became experienced in the management of such wounds, and at the end of his tour was awarded the MBE.

Back in England, he rejoined the Army and worked in the BAOR for 6 years, before being posted to Singapore where he worked as a consultant surgeon at the British Military Hospital (now Alexandra Hospital) for another 3 years. In 1969, he returned to Singapore as consulting surgeon to the Far East Land Forces & observed (and was impressed by it) how war casualties were removed by helicopter from hazardous locations to field hospitals in Vietnam, courtesy of the Americans. He met his wife during his National Service in Malaya. She was a theatre sister with the QARANCs, and was involved in an ambush while returning from the Cameron Highlands to resume her duties in the operating theatre. She arrived late, to receive a severe reprimand for her tardiness, Patrick Dignan knowing nothing about the ambush at the time.

We are also sad to report the death of **James Thomas Dunk** who served with **3 Malayan Field Ambulance, FMSVF**, together with his father **Charles William Dunk**. They were both POWs in Singapore and were sent to Thailand with K Force medical personnel towards the end of June 1943, James aged only 21. He returned to Malaya with his family in 1946 and then went to Australia where he married and had 3 children. James died in September 2012. We send our condolences to his daughter, Suzanne MacKenzie, who informed us of her father's death, and other family members.

MVG member Marea Smith sent the following information about the death of **Sheila Ross**, in Queensland, Australia, in October 2012. Her book, "A Log Across the Road" was mentioned in the July 2012 A.K. (Edition 31) and recommended by **MVG member Neal Hobbs**, who also knew Sheila.

"Sheila was born in Malaya, the fourth generation on the female side to be in the East. Her father was a rubber planter, who was interned in Singapore during the war. She went to school in England and was on her summer holidays in Malaya when

war broke out in Europe in 1939. She got out of Singapore during the last days of the fighting and made her way via Java, India and South Africa to England where she joined the WAAF. She married in 1947, her husband being in the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders. He was posted to Singapore and in 1950 transferred to the Malayan Police. They did 2 tours in Malaya and in 1956 transferred to North Borneo where they held the record for serving on more remote stations than any other police family. In 1967, they retired early to Spain. They had 1 daughter also born in Malaya.

[Ed: If anyone knows Sheila's maiden name, please get in touch.]

Finally, it is with deep regret that we announce the death of **Ernest Walter Talalla**, a member of a prominent Malaysian family. Ernest was one of Malaya's "flying paymasters" during the Emergency. He had taken up flying as a hobby and was one of the pioneer pilots at the former Kuala Lumpur Flying Club in 1949. He flew as a volunteer, making paydrops for the thousands of plantation workers in the deep interiors of the Malayan jungles which were infested with communist terrorists. Born in Ceylon, Ernest moved to Malaya with his parents. His elder brother Hector was one of Malaya's first Sinhalese pilots.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

SUNDAY – 19TH MAY 2013. Annual service of Remembrance at the FEPOW Church in WYMONDHAM, Norfolk.

If anyone would like to attend this Service, please contact the secretary to book your seat and apply for a ticket. See their website: <http://www.fepow-memorial.org.uk> Within the Church is the specially designated FEPOW Chapel in which the Books of Remembrance are kept in a glass topped cabinet. The names of all FEPOWs and civilian internees who died in captivity are included, in 3 beautifully hand-written volumes. In 2000 an Addendum Book was added in which FEPOWs who survived captivity are named. The pages of the books are turned every day.

THURSDAY – 15TH AUGUST 2013. V-J Day Service in the MVG Memorial Garden at the NMA, Alrewas.

This year we plan to hire one of the Marquee Pods, so that in the event of wet weather, we can hold our service either in the FEPOW Building or in the Marquee. It will also enable us to enjoy our picnic lunch in more comfort with tea, coffee and soft drinks provided by the Arboretum. Please try to make this service, the 68th anniversary of V-J Day itself.

SATURDAY – 19TH OCTOBER 2013. Annual Reunion and Luncheon at the RAF Club, in Piccadilly, London.

This will take place in the Ballroom as usual. We thank **Hugh Chaplin** for organizing it again. More details later in the year.

SATURDAY – 26TH OCTOBER 2013. Vocal Orchestra Concert in Chichester – sponsored by MVG, with RFHG support.

See P.5 for details of this special concert which is being arranged by **Margie Caldicott**. It will be the first of its kind in this country and we hope that as many of you as possible will attend.

SUNDAY – 27TH OCTOBER 2013. Unveiling of a Repatriation Memorial in Southampton – organized by the RFH Grp.

Again see P.5 for details, sent by Chairman of the Researching FEPOW History Group, **Meg Parkes**. Those of you who attended the unveiling of the Memorial on Liverpool Pier Head will remember the moving occasion it was. Please try to come.

SUNDAY – 10TH NOVEMBER 2013. Remembrance Sunday Service and March Past at the Cenotaph in Whitehall.

We hope to keep up our record of a full complement of marchers this year.

FUTURE DATE TO BE NOTED

SINGAPORE – 12TH SEPTEMBER 2015 – 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SIGNING OF THE JAPANESE SURRENDER.

Please keep this date in your diaries. The MVG plans to attend the events being arranged by the Changi Museum and other Singapore organizations. It will be a very important occasion, and we hope as many of you as possible will be able to come.

A REMINDER – ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS FALL DUE IN APRIL

The rates remain the same for 2013-2014

U.K. Rate - £15 per family membership. Payable by cheque or standing order to **Mrs. R. Fell Malayan Volunteers Group.**

Australian Rate – AUS\$ 30 per family membership. Payable to **Mrs. Elizabeth Adamson** as requested

Malaysian Rate – RM\$75 per family membership. Payable to **Andrew Hwang** as requested.

Other countries should pay an amount in their own currency equivalent to £15 sterling to **Mrs. R. Fell MVG.**

Newsletters will be e-mailed unless printed copies have been requested.

REPORTED FROM JAPAN ON 2/1/2013 - Japan's new nationalistic Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has stated his intention to rethink the 1995 apology given on the 50th anniversary of the end of WW2 to the people of Asia for their suffering. In 2007 he provoked outrage when he said the so-called "comfort women" were not coerced into becoming sex slaves of the Japanese Army.

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