

APA KHABAR

Patron: Her Grace The Duchess of Norfolk

www.malayanvolunteersgroup.org.uk

34TH EDITION
APRIL 2013



“SINGING TO SURVIVE” THE VOCAL ORCHESTRA CONCERT TAKES SHAPE

COMMEMORATION EVENTS IN AUSTRALIA IN FEBRUARY

While many of our members in the Southern Hemisphere may be basking in sunshine, the un-seasonal wintry weather in Europe and the United Kingdom is still lingering into the first week of Spring and the start of Holy Week and Easter. The MVG is fortunate to have members in all parts of the world as well as in the U.K. who are committed to keeping the memory of the Volunteers alive. We are indebted to **Bill** and **Elizabeth Adamson** for arranging the Commemoration and Remembrance Service in the City of Stirling Memorial Gardens in Perth WA on **Saturday 16th February** at which two permanent cast bronze plaques were dedicated and unveiled. These replaced the temporary plaques which were dedicated last year, and which will be re-located to the MVG's Memorial Garden at the NMA in Staffordshire. The Service is to be an annual event, and will be included in the "Dates for your Diary" in future. See special separate report, and information on P.3. New Australian member, **Robert Gray**, attended the special annual commemoration service at the Point Walter Reserve on **14th February**, in memory of the Australian Nurses who were massacred by the Japanese on the beaches of Sumatra. He is a member of the "**Born to Sing Choir**" which sang at the ceremony. See P.4 for report.

Also enclosed with this newsletter is a flyer containing details about the **Vocal Orchestra Concert, "Singing to Survive"**, which takes place on **Saturday 26th October 2013**, in Chichester. The organizing committee has worked very hard to plan the event, and we are most grateful to them. Please apply early for your tickets, which can be booked through **Rosemary**. The twinning of the Chichester Concert with the unveiling and dedication of the **Repatriation Memorial** in Southampton on **Sunday, 27th October**, provides a great opportunity to attend two unique and one-off events, in which we remember not only the FEPOWs but also the women and children civilian internees, who themselves suffered great hardship and starvation. Further information about the **Concert** & the unveiling of the **Repatriation Memorial** in Southampton can be found on Ps.2-3. It was announced in the January edition of Apa Khabar that the MVG had approached the NMA about hiring a marquee pod for V-J Day this year, in case of inclement weather. However, when the 2013 rates were released earlier in March, not only was the cost of the pod £600 for the day, but also we are not permitted to take our own food into the marquee. It was felt that members would rather chance the weather, and enjoy the usual shared picnic lunch after the service, than pay for a buffet lunch provided by the Arboretum caterers in the marquee. We have, therefore, cancelled the marquee, and hope that this decision is acceptable to everyone who plans to attend the V-J Day Service in August.

The National Memorial Arboretum has arranged a Spring Meeting on **23rd April at 6p.m.** at which they will announce their latest plans for creating a world-class Centre for Remembrance. The briefing will include fundraising schemes, and the time scale for completion of the project. The new main car park has already been completed, and other work is due to start later in 2013. **Please let Rosemary know if anyone would like to attend this important meeting, and represent the MVG.**

Australian members may be interested to know that the **Australian Archives** has just begun referencing and digitizing the recently recovered Australian POW Index Cards, with some 4,000 already sorted so far. These include members of the Straits Settlements and FMSVF. To date, the following names have been identified:-

V.C. Bath [SSVF]; Stanley Mason [FMSVF]; Robert Brown Marriot [FMSVF]; Edwin Deakin [FMSVF]; Alexander Growder [SSVF]; Kenneth Gillespie [FMSVF]; Theodore Ralph Ingram [HKVDC]; Douglas Alwyn McPherson [SSVF]; Richard Brooke McVilly [FMSVF]. Our thanks go to **Di Elliot** in Australia for this information. To access the Archives - view by name searching on: recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/SearchScreens/BasicSearch.aspx

Just received from Malaysia is news of the inaugural 4-day tour of the Malayan Battlefields in Northern Malaysia from **9-13 May 2013**, arranged by **Malayan Battlefield Tours** and managed by **Holiday Tours**. MBT has been set up by a small group of enthusiasts offering high quality guided tours to key sites and locations of military and political significance from WW2 and the Emergency. The Tours will also allow time for visits to Malaysia's many scenic, historic, heritage & culinary attractions. For more details see: www.malayanbattlefieldtours.com Thanks to **Liz Moggie** for this information.

Former Perak families will be pleased to know that the 96-year-old Ipoh railway station – dubbed the '**Taj Mahal of Ipoh**' by locals – is to be gazetted as a national heritage building later this year. Designed by **Brig-Gen Arthur Benison Hubback** in 1917, it combines Moorish and Anglo-Indian architecture & is a sister station to the one in K.L. The restoration of the Station Hotel is also planned, and the project has the backing of **Sultan Azlan Shah of Perak**.

The third part of **Leslie James's** article about his journey, as guest lecturer, on the E & O Express "Fables of the Hills" Tour was published in the January-February 2013 edition of **Buletin Warisan**. The journey from Penang to Bangkok went via the River Kwai and Burma Railway, and took in visits to the CWGC cemeteries in Kanchanaburi & Chungkai & **Rod Beattie's** TBRC.

We thank **Maj (Hon) Tunku Zain Al-'Abidin ibni Tuanku Muhriz** for remembering the Malayan Volunteers in his keynote speech at the **Gemencheh Remembrance** on **8th March 2013**. The Battle of Gemencheh Bridge took place on **14th January 1942**, and was where the Australian **2/30th Battalion** ambushed the Japanese resulting in the most significant defeat of Japanese forces in the Malayan Campaign.

An interesting headline in The Daily Telegraph of **Thursday, 7th January, 1943** indicates that very little was known, at that time, about the fate and conditions of the Allied Prisoners of War of the Japanese in the Far East. The report said:

"10,000 ALLIED WAR PRISONERS IN JAPAN"

"Although information about prisoners of war in the Far East is still fragmentary, the War Office announced last night that the following statement is believed to give as fair a picture as circumstances allow:

It is understood that 10,000 prisoners are now interned in Japan, 5,000 in Korea and 5,000 in Formosa. It is believed about half of those are American and half from the UK, Canada and Australia.

The standard of living to which our prisoners have had to adapt is that of Japanese troops. The food consists largely of rice, though some bread is issued and fair quantities of vegetables and fish. The meat ration is small. Medical treatment is handicapped by lack of medicaments.

The majority of British and Australian prisoners of war are still in camps in Malaya, Siam and Indo-China. No visits by the Red Cross or by the Protecting Power have been permitted. Work in these areas is understood to be very severe. Rations appear to be just sufficient to maintain health."

Keeping the MVG website up-to-date with all the new information and enquiries, which are still coming forward, has become quite an onerous task. **Jonathan** and **Brian** do a wonderful job with the website. We are very grateful to them, and thank them very much for all their work on our behalf. However, we are looking for someone, with the relevant experience and skills in dealing with websites, to act as an **ASSISTANT** webmaster to help with the workload. We are seeking someone who is U.K. based, so that contact is more accessible. If anyone can help, or has a younger relative with time to spare and the relevant computer skills, please contact **Jonathan**.

Finally, may we remind members that annual subscriptions are due in April. Please would members return the enclosed tear-off slip with their cheques, or information about other forms of payment, to **Rosemary, Elizabeth or Andrew** asap.

[Editor: We hope you like the new booklet format – as suggested by **Elizabeth Adamson** Secretary of MVG Australia]

**"SINGING TO SURVIVE"
70TH Anniversary Concert**

Chichester women to perform Vocal Orchestra music
created in Far East Captivity during the Second World War

To mark the anniversary of a unique musical event that took place in 1943 in a Japanese-run civilian internment camp at Palembang, Sumatra, the specially-formed Chichester Women's Vocal Orchestra, conducted by Christopher Larley, will perform selected pieces from the original WW11 repertoire. The concert takes place at St. Paul's Church, Chichester, on Saturday 26th October 2013.

Many of the British women held at the Palembang camp were evacuees from Singapore. Over a year after being taken captive, British internee **Norah Chambers** (a music scholar) suggested forming a 'vocal orchestra'. Together with Presbyterian missionary, **Margaret Dryburgh**, **Norah** wrote up to 30 orchestral pieces from memory, works like **Dvorak's Largo** and **Ravel's Bolero**, re-arranging them into four-part voice scores, using only vowel sounds to overcome language difficulties.

Despite the women being forbidden to hold meetings, on 27th December 1943 in a blatant act of defiance, the women gave their first vocal orchestra concert. There were a few more concerts, but by April 1944 singers were too weak to perform, and the vocal orchestra ceased to exist. Out of 600 women in the camp only 300 survived.

This very special concert is a tribute to those remarkable women. Their story was told in the 1997 Hollywood film, *'Paradise Road'*. In 1982, the television producer **Lavinia Warner**, who had already created *Tenko*, subsequently wrote about the vocal orchestra in her book *'Women Beyond the Wire'*. She says: *"I shall be filming this very special concert as the centerpiece for a TV documentary. It is vital that we bring their inspirational story to a new generation, it has so much to teach us all."*

This concert is sponsored by the Malayan Volunteers Group.

"SINGING TO SURVIVE" – on Saturday 26th October 2013

Venue: St. Paul's Church, Churchside, Chichester, PO19 6FT. Time: 7 for 7.30p.m.

Tickets: £12 each (£6 for children under 16) including a commemorative programme – available 10th May from:

Rosemary Fell, Millbrook House, Stoney Lane, Axminster, Devon EX13 5EE dinraf-millbrook@tiscali.co.uk

and **St. Olav Trust Christian Bookshop**, North Street, Chichester PO19 1LKQ. Tel: 01243 782 790

If booking by post – please send a SAE & cheque, made out to **Mrs. R. Fell MVG Concert Account**, to Rosemary's address.

WORLD WAR TWO REPATRIATION MEMORIAL FOR SOUTHAMPTON

Remembering survivors of Far East Captivity

Southampton is to become home to a major new World War Two memorial. The Researching Far East Prisoners of War (FEPOW) History Group has been granted permission by Southampton City Council to create the Repatriation Memorial and has launched a national appeal to raise the £5,000 funds needed for the granite plaque. It will commemorate the arrival back in Britain during the autumn of 1945 of thousands of servicemen and civilians (including children) who had survived captivity under the Japanese. The first ship home, the *SS Corfu*, docked in Southampton on 7th October 1945 with 1,500 FEPOW on board.

The RFH Group launched their first appeal – for a plaque in Liverpool – when they realized there was no memorial to repatriated POWs and internees in either Liverpool or Southampton. The first Repatriation Memorial was unveiled on the Liverpool waterfront, the other main port of re-entry for FEPOWs and internees, in October 2011. The Repatriation Memorials pay tribute to the survivors of war and not solely the war dead. The Southampton Repatriation Memorial plaque is to be sited on a wall within the Town Quay Park which overlooks Southampton Water, just across the road from the Isle of Wight ferry terminal. This is one of the few places where there is a good view of the waterfront, and will overlook where the POWs arrived home. Over 50,000 British servicemen were captured by the Japanese in South East Asia and the Far East between 25th December 1941 and the end of March 1942. Approximately one in four of them died in captivity, mainly due to gross neglect by their captors. Incredibly about 37,500 of them survived and, together with several thousand civilians, returned home to Britain. More than 17,000 FEPOW and over 1,000 civilian internees disembarked in Southampton in the eight weeks from 8th October to 11th December, 1945. The Researching FEPOW History Group exists to share the history of the men, women and children who endured captivity in the Far East during World War Two.

For more details see: www.researchingfepowhistory.org.uk

UNVEILING OF REPATRIATION MEMORIAL – on Sunday 27th October

Venue: Southampton Town Quay Park. Time: 11 a.m.

Funds needed: £5,000

Donations to the Repatriation Memorial Appeal can be sent to:

Mike Parkes, 34, Queen's Road, Hoylake, Wirral CH47 2AJ. Cheques payable to: Researching FEPOW History and marked on the back Repatriation Memorial

For further information, or interviews with ex-POWs, internees or their families, please contact:

Meg Parkes (Chairman RFH Group) Tel: 0151 632 2017 e-mail: mm.parkes@talktalk.net

REPORTS FROM AUSTRALIA

The Commemoration Service in the City of Stirling Memorial Gardens on Saturday 16th February 2013.

The invitation to attend the second Commemoration Service came after the January newsletter went to print. Arranged by **Bill and Elizabeth Adamson**, the event was brilliantly thought out and organized. The temporary plaques, which had been unveiled in last year's service, have been replaced with permanent cast bronze plaques mounted in black marble. These mounts were a gift from the City of Stirling, and all payments for the marble and mounting work were waived. The Service was taken by Revd. Barry May OAM JP and arranged to commemorate the Fall of Singapore in 1942, and to remember the assistance given to evacuees from Singapore by WA families and the general Australian public between 1942 and 1945. The Service was attended by several dignitaries including **Mr. Graham Edwards AM**, President of the RSL of Australia WA Branch; **The Hon. Michael Mischin MLC**, Attorney General of WA; **The Hon. David Boothman**, Mayor of the City of Stirling, **Mr. Luke Simpkins MP**, Federal Member for Cowan, and representatives from the Malaysian Consul General WA, the Australian Malaysian WA Assoc., and the Singapore WA Network.

After the Service, an informal luncheon and refreshments were served in the Memorial Park.

Bill writes:

"I forward a copy of the Australian Asia Business Weekly for Thursday 21st February 2013. A little home reading for you all. Thank all of you who attended, 114 of you! Among those attending, I am proud to say, there were no less than 20 former Malaysians, or their immediate progeny in attendance.

A great start, and only our second official Commemoration. Next year, we will grow even bigger, with your assistance.

Warm regards to you all."

The newspaper report and photographs of the two new plaques are included with the newsletter on a separate sheet. N.B. The temporary plaques are to be placed in the MVG's Memorial Garden at the National Memorial Arboretum in the U.K. [Editor: We apologize to the MVG WA Branch and the MBV WA Inc for omitting to mention in the January edition of *Apa Khabar* [No: 33] the date for the unveiling of the cast bronze plaques in the City of Stirling Memorial Park and the second official Commemoration to honour the Australian members of the Malayan Volunteers, and thank the citizens of Australia for looking after the hundreds of evacuees arriving in Western Australia from Singapore.

This date will feature in our "Dates for your Diary" in future.]

Ceremony for SS Vyner Brooke Australian Army Nursing Sisters – 14th February 2013.

Robert Gray (member of the Born To Sing Choir) writes:

"The annual commemoration service at the Australian Army Nurses Memorial took place at the Point Walter Reserve in Perth WA on 14th February 2013. The ceremony was arranged by the Applecross sub-branch of the Returned and Services League (RSL) and wreaths were laid by the local member of the WA Parliament, as well as the Mayor of the City of Melville (amongst others). During the service, the "Born to Sing Choir" to which I belong, sang the following items:

The National Anthem, Largo (a cappella version as sung by the captives in camps on Bangka Island and Sumatra) and Amazing Grace. Both the Mayor and MP expressed their appreciation for the inclusion of music from the camps.

There was a good gathering of retired army nurses and family members of the SS Vyner Brooke Army Nurses, including daughters, granddaughters and nieces of Sister Iole Harper.

The Secretary of the RSL sub-branch e-mailed me after the service to say: '...I would like to thank you and the choir for attending the recent service held for the Australian Army Nursing Sisters. Your participation contributed a great deal to the ceremony and was enjoyed by all.....We hope you will be able to participate again next year'.



The Born To Sing Choir at the ceremony



Wreaths around the Memorial to the Nursing Sisters who lost their lives after their evacuation from Singapore on the SS Vyner Brooke

Robert sent the following background information to the fate of the Vyner Brooke Nursing Sisters:

The nurses stayed at their posts in Singapore in chaotic conditions, through heavy bombing and fighting, leaving on 12th February, just two days before the surrender, having declined to leave earlier.

On 14th February 1942 (hence the annual ceremony date), their evacuation ship, the SS Vyner Brooke, was attacked and sunk by Japanese fighter bombers near the Indonesian Island of Bangka.

Of the 65 nurses on the Vyner Brooke 12, including their Matron, were lost at sea, and of the 53 who were able to swim or float ashore, 21 were shot and killed by Japanese soldiers in a massacre on Radji Beach, and 32 were taken prisoner.

Of those taken prisoner, one in four died of starvation and tropical diseases over the next three and a half years spent in a succession of squalid camps.

Also in these camps for women were many civilian captives, as well as a number of children – either British women evacuated from Singapore or Dutch women who had been living in Indonesia.

Despite their own weak and emaciated condition, the nurses lived up to the highest traditions of their profession by providing nursing care – with almost no access to medications or dressings – to the sick and dying civilian women and children who were imprisoned with them.

Two musically talented civilian women, Margaret Dryburgh and Norah Chambers (a graduate of the Royal College of Music in London) transposed orchestral music from memory and formed a vocal orchestra to boost the morale of women captives.

Largo, which the Born To Sing Choir sang at the memorial ceremony on 14th February 2013, was one of the pieces of music sung by that captive choir.

WEBSITES TO VISIT

<http://anilnetto.com/society/malaysian-history/sybil-kathigasu-malaysias-forgotten-heroine/> - the forgotten history of Sybil Kathigasu. Watch the short video at this link. An incredibly brave woman.

<http://www.colonialfilm.org.uk/archives> - Colonial Film website. Key Malaya or Singapore in the search for old films newsreels.

<http://www.britishpathe.com/video/meet-the-cambridge-crew/query/Mason> - an interesting old newsreel showing Padre Noel Duckworth as a young man when he was cox in the Cambridge Boat in the Boat Race.

<http://resilientlittlemuscle.blogspot.com.au/2011/03/three-came-home-1950.html> - the WW2 Movie "Three Came Home" based on the 1947 memoirs of Agnes Newton Keith, who was interned by the Japanese at Berhala Island near Sandakan & then at Batu Lintang Camp, Kuching. Now in the public domain and available free online.

<http://www.britishpathe.com/video/camera-cavalcade/query/Repatriation+Far+East+POW> - Arrival of SS Corfu into Southampton at the end of a film called *Camera Cavalcade* at 4:06 mins.

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF ELIZABETH ALEXANDER contd.

By her daughter Mary Harris

New Zealand 1940

They flew down to Sydney, which then took 3 days, and crossed to Auckland by sea to spend time with **Norman's** parents on their farm at Mangapiko. After a few weeks there, they visited Auckland where they met **Norman's** university friends and introduced **Elizabeth** to Anawhata, while the children stayed with **Norman's** parents to undergo initial training of all NZ farm children.

At his old physics department, **Norman** found that they were short of staff because **Professor Burbidge** was heavily involved in New Zealand's new Defence Scientific Advisory Committee. This was a small, honorary committee of scientists chaired by **Ernest Marsden** whose members also included **Fred White**. It had neither staff nor funding and no powers to act, but its terms of references were broadly to advise on scientific questions brought to it by the Defence Services. The committee interpreted its brief very widely, so that any member of the armed forces of any rank could approach any committee member for advice. **Norman** took the idea back to Singapore and proposed it to the head of the armed forces, but it was far too democratic an idea for them. He was offered the post of Scientific Advisor to the Singapore Armed Forces instead. In his notes, **Norman** wrote that he and **Elizabeth** had met **Marsden** on the boat from Sydney where they had talked shop and **Marsden** had told them about his recent trip to England to hear about the new technology of radar, to be kept hidden under the name of Radio Direction Finding. This was what **Taffy Bowen** had been doing while he used their flat when they were first married. I have been unable to match the dates of the **Alexander's** trip from Sydney with the movements of **Marsden** as stated in the Radar Narrative, but it is likely to the point of certainty that, if they did not hear about radar from him, they would have done so in **Burbidge's** physics department where every member of staff was contractually obliged to take up some research in aid of defence. New Zealand, with the experience of installing their own radar on **HMNZS Achilles** after the 1939 Battle of the River Plate, were ahead of the field in practical applications of radar, and when **Norman** found himself doing small research jobs on Rangitoto and Motutapu Islands, he could not have failed to see the aerials. If there were no speculative conversations over coffee in the department, then it was unlike any other physics department anywhere.

In the event **Norman** was recalled early to Singapore for reasons that related to increased Japanese activity, because he, like nearly all Raffles College staff, was a member of the Volunteers. Auckland were short staffed again and the College Council deducted £15 from his pay. We flew back on the recently opened Trans Tasman flying boat service and it could have been on that trip that they met **Marsden**. There would have been plenty of time to talk. According to the official history of Qantas, Auckland to Rose Bay took 9 hours and 15 minutes. In Sydney, on the way home **Norman** bought **Elizabeth** a pair of opal ear-rings.

Singapore. The End.

Back in Singapore, further geology for **Elizabeth** was out of the question. Most of the island had, by now, been taken over by the military, and the Volunteers were building defences along the coasts except, notoriously, those in the north. Troops from the nearby barracks were training on the playing fields of Raffles College, and the build-up of troops everywhere, and the incorporation of the flying clubs into the Volunteer Air Force Reserves added to the false sense of security. So confident were people in their belief in the propaganda which was constantly fed to them that many European families brought their children back from their schools in England to get them away from the war. One family to arrive was that of the newly appointed Professor of Chemistry at Raffles College, **Donald Purdie**, who had brought his family from Cambridge to escape the bombing.

Both **Alexanders** were now working at the Naval Base, **Norman** in his capacity as Scientific Advisor to the Armed Forces, in addition to his teaching load. Two officers with particular significance for both Singapore and New Zealand had arrived while they were on leave.

Lt. Commander E.K.H. St. Aubyn had been Staff Officer (Intelligence) in New Zealand, but had been called to Singapore by the Commander in Chief of the China Station, moved there from Hong Kong. **St. Aubyn's** departure left New Zealand with no trained staff officers, and it was **Captain Parry** as new Chief of Naval Staff and Commodore Commanding the NZ Squadron of the Royal Navy, while still commanding **Achilles**, who suggested that **St. Aubyn** could be temporarily replaced by **Lt. Cdr. E.A. Nicholson**, also of **Achilles**, until the Admiralty found

a replacement. **St. Aubyn** of course knew the details of New Zealand's radar and radio direction finding network under whose name radar was still hiding. **Norman** was to work with him almost to the end. He went down in the Battle of the South Java Sea in March 1942, and it was probably through the Navy, and on the false assumption that **Norman** would still have been with the Naval Intelligence people when they finally abandoned Singapore, that **Elizabeth** was told that **Norman** had been killed.

Auckland had been supplying Y information to the Bureau in Hong Kong since 1938 and when **Captain F.J. Wylie**, its head, found himself in Singapore, he made sure that he strengthened the link. During his own visit to New Zealand in January 1941, he had visited the small Y room at Navy Office in Wellington where he had found Warrant Telegraphist **Halsion Philpott** and 3 telegraphist ratings doing DF warship plotting very similar to that in the Bureau. A few months later, **Philpott** as Wireless Intelligence Officer and **Nicholson** as Station Signal Officer Navy Office, visited Singapore for a detailed look at the Bureau for themselves. At the same time, 2 New Zealander wireless experts were attached to the intercept station at Kranji. **Philpott** had visited the Singapore Base while **Norman** and **Elizabeth** were on leave in New Zealand at about the time that Bletchley Park established its Special Liaison Unit there. **Nicholson** and **Philpott** were key people in the rapid development of NZ's Y services and were happy to note how much Singapore relied on them. By then, too, NZ's Security Intelligence Bureau, under British MI5, was organizing a Radio Monitoring Service to be run by their enterprising long-distance radio amateurs. We were to become very grateful to the network's **Arthur Cushen** later.

The other newcomer at the Singapore Base, who became a close colleague, was **Lieutenant Commander Geoff Whitaker** recently recalled from his retirement from submarines at China Station between the wars. He had sharpened up the whole business of error analysis in direction finding while **Elizabeth** was on leave in New Zealand, and it was **St. Aubyn** who sent him to New Zealand and Australia to negotiate the buying of their radars for installation at the Singapore Base. In addition to the sets, it was arranged that he should be provided with five complete sets of prints or drawings, and that construction drawings peculiar to ship work and assembly were to be prepared by Naval staff for him too. **Norman** developed a high opinion of **Geoff's** ability and sent him to Sydney where **Fred White** was by then at the Radio Physics Lab and running radio-physics courses.

At home, the **Alexanders** bought an extra fridge and kept it full of beer while their existing one was full of food, as they tried to replicate at least the philosophy of NZ's Defence Scientific Advisory Committee, by opening their house to all ranks of the armed forces. It was evidently a reasonably well-used service, but their aim to seat commissioned and non-commissioned ranks of all three services at the same meal failed. The Navy and RAF were relaxed about the idea, but the Army flatly refused.

Norman found himself doing a number of interesting jobs, one of which was to give training lectures in radar to Air Force Officers, but without using the word, because it was still so secret. So, using an acoustic parallel, he set up a pulsed loudspeaker and a board reflecting the sound to a microphone as a model for what both he and his audience knew perfectly well. One of the operators, **Toby Carter**, took up the **Alexander's** invitation to a meal, but in the confusion of extreme but very patchy secrecy and chaotic incompetence in Singapore at the time, he spent an entire evening with them, neither he nor **Norman** having any idea that they had both done their PhDs at the Cavendish, though a couple of years apart, and that **Toby** had come to Singapore straight from Orford where he had been working with **Taffy Bowen**. I was able to tell **Toby** this recently. He said that he had believed at the time that **Norman** was working for the Singapore government, by then held in universal contempt, and was trying to extract secret information from the RAF.

Norman went on to finish the plotting method which he and **Elizabeth** were devising before their leave, and its ground glass disc, set in a mahogany frame with brass fittings, was made up in the workshops at the Base, but **Norman** said they never understood the theory of what came to be known as Alexander's Football and did not use it. But it was understood in New Zealand when **Elizabeth** started her refugee life there and her description of how it worked was passed on to Washington, who duly acknowledged it.

Elizabeth gave birth to my sister at the beginning of September 1941, three months before war came to Singapore. As everyone knows, the Japanese advance down the Malay Peninsula was very rapid, and it seems clear to me now that **Elizabeth** was probably ordered out by the navy to take her children to the safety of **Norman's** family and return with some of the radars that **Geoff** had ordered. By the time we left, Raffles College

was a hospital, set up to take survivors from the Prince of Wales and Repulse. The students, a majority of whom came from Malaya not Singapore, had left on the day bombing began to be with their families who were getting the worst of it. Academic staff in the Volunteers had been called up anyway. Most of the remaining students, who had not already done so, joined the student Volunteer Medical Auxiliary Service run from the Medical College. They were the first on the scene when the first bombs on Singapore hit Chinatown and caused so many deaths. The enemy had already reached the edge of Kuala Lumpur by the time we flew out on 5th January 1942, under fire from enemy guns on islands below. By chance, it was the day on which the Navy despatched the remaining bulk of the Far East Combined Bureau, and those decoders and other staff who had not been recruited locally, to Colombo, where some of New Zealand's radars eventually came to be fitted. Our travel was slow, and we were held up by my three days in hospital in Sydney. **Elizabeth** had messages from the Singapore base for **Geoff**, and she also met **Fred White** and other friends. I recently found a Royal Navy archive in which it was recorded that **Geoff** actually went back to Singapore soon before The Fall, to destroy records in the drawing office that should not fall into the hands of the enemy. I have no doubt that at least some of these were the drawings provided by New Zealand when he ordered the radars. We ourselves had to cross to Wellington by sea, because by then the flying boats of the Trans Tasman Service had been requisitioned for war use.

In Wellington, **Fred White's** mother and sisters provided refuge and a meal, and located the people whom **Elizabeth** recorded as the *two navy blokes* to whom she had to carry messages from **Geoff**. These would almost certainly have been **Nicholson** and **Philpott**, and the messages would have been about the condition of the Navy in Singapore, the fate of the radio stations and the destination of the radars in the now imminent event of the Singapore Naval Base being abandoned. **Fred's** sister found us a taxi, and loaded us on the overnight Up Limited to Te Awamutu to **Norman's** brother's farm.

New Zealand 1942 – 1946

Norman's family in Te Awamutu, who gave us warm refuge, remembered **Elizabeth** arriving with not much more for herself than the clothes she wore, but with a suitcase of children's clothes. Refugees from the Fall of Singapore presented a dilemma to the people of Australia and New Zealand who took us in. On one hand, we were representatives of the inexcusable betrayal both in the loss of their northern defence, in which they had invested heavily, and in the deception that had led up to the loss. On the other hand, we were a bedraggled collection of traumatized women and young children, who arrived at the end of horrendous journeys, with only what we could carry, and all women in those circumstances put their children's needs first. **Elizabeth's** one personal possession was the pair of ear-rings which she and **Norman** had bought in 1940.

With no news of **Norman**, no income, and a fierce determination not to be a burden to anyone, **Elizabeth** set about trying to find work which paid enough for her to raise her children. Obvious contacts were **Fred White** and **Geoff Whitaker** in Sydney, but there was no possibility there of a living wage. But in Wellington, **Owen Pulley** was head of the new Radio Development Lab under **Ernest Marsden**, who had told **Norman** and **Elizabeth** about radar two years before. It was **Owen** who persuaded **Marsden** to offer **Elizabeth** a job. **Owen's** justification for an Operational Research Section at the Lab, recorded in the Radar narrative, reads like a job description for what he already knew of **Elizabeth's** experience and abilities. **Elizabeth** responded at once, left the children with the family in Te Awamutu, and accepted the hospitality of the **Pulley** family while she started work, found a house to rent and some daily help with the children.

Her diary for April 1942 records that she *Started work. I found myself in a hive of industry where young men wrestled with horribly complex creatures of wires and valves. I was given a book of words to read and left to my own devices ... I wrestled with the place for the rest of the month trying to find my level. A month later she adds ... I decided that I'd better make a go of statistics and see what I could do about the performance of the gear and so became the small seed of the first 'Operational Research Section' in New Zealand devoted to Radar, Radio Location to you, or may be Radio Direction Finding.*

The first year, however, was very difficult personally. Her first rented house in Kelburn was dirty and had rats; the second in Oriental Bay was dark, its chimneys damaged by the quakes of the time so she could not light fires, we were all cold and the children were never quite well. Her diary records that she could not spend another winter there. **Marsden**, who was often away and who was not the most active administrator, had left the matter of a

permanent job for her unconfirmed for so long, that **Fred** intervened and offered her a job at Canterbury. By then, **Owen** had returned to Australia and **Charles Watson-Munro** was head of the Radio Development Lab. He sent a covering letter to **Marsden** with **Elizabeth's** letter of resignation, the result of which was the offer of a permanent post for her, for the duration of the war, on the grounds that by then, as **Elizabeth** put it, she was *pretty useful about the lab*. At about the same time, she received a better allowance as the wife of a missing gunner, and later half of **Norman's** salary. Things were looking up. She could afford a better house and live-in help in the form of **Mrs. Few**, who came for a week and stayed for 4 years. The new house was at the foot of Mount Victoria within walking distance of the lab, and easy distance from her radio station on its summit. Work itself had been difficult in the beginning for, to quote **Burbidge** ... *there was neither the scope ... for operational research, nor was there the interest among the Services – the idea was too new and it had not been blessed abroad – so after an unsuccessful attempt to secure data from operational stations, Dr. Alexander's efforts were concentrated on calibrating the gunnery radar sets of coastal defence and checking the performance of the coast watching ones ...* But soon after she began she was given the assistance of **Bob Unwin**, who was later to take over, after the war, the international Canterbury Project for which **Elizabeth** was to do all the preliminary work, scientific and political. **Elizabeth** would disappear for a few days, sometimes with **Bob** in tow as they checked out radar installations. They stayed with **Norman's** friends if they were near Auckland or Christchurch or put up in military barracks, once the services had got over the discovery that **Doc**, as she was always known, was a woman ... *Never mind ... she would say ... I'm quite docile.*

Two years after she started work she told **Norman** in her diary a little about how her work had developed ... *The job has got much bigger and the conditions are not the same ... I can manage one set fairly well. Well enough anyway to keep it on the air. You would laugh to see me soothing a large monster full of volts and ruddy amps and keeping it on air when all it wants to do is die quietly and be left in peace. I have a whole radar station all of my own with six operators and a mech. I've spent nights in all sorts of weathers operating the set, having taught myself the job and made myself the local authority on some aspects of operations ... there was no-one else to learn and then teach others some of the operational points ... We've all had to learn the hard way. It has been intensely interesting watching the thing develop from inside.*

The whole radar station of my own to which she referred was ES1 on Mt. Victoria, and that is where she did the thorough testing of the New Zealand microwave set towards the end of 1943. I remember her drawing the maps with whales in the sea so that you could see what was sea and what was land. I still have her enormously detailed report in which she records that the site was ... *scenically impressive, but operationally impossible ...* but it added evidence to what **Burbidge** described, that the wavelengths in question ... *were susceptible to weather conditions, the transmission varying with temperature, humidity and so on in a puzzling way, and ... the operators encountered peculiar phenomena, on the one hand very long distance echoes, and on the other blockage of echoes from known objects near at hand ...* The necessity for research on these anomalies was now being pushed by Washington, by what, by then, was called the Telecommunications Research Establishment at Slough, and by **Fred** and the CSIRO people in Sydney. The Pacific War was going reasonably well, and more efficient radars were needed for the proposed invasion of the South China Coast which could use the phenomenon that, under certain conditions, radar could see over the horizon. The particular phenomenon was ducting, or super-refraction, where the interfaces between layers of air at different temperatures, pressures and humidity effectively trap radar energy so that it follows the curvature of the earth – there is no horizon. The east coast of the South Island with its reasonably predictable and reasonably steady warm, dry north-westerlies, formerly Fohn winds, provided the ideal conditions for the research. At the end of April 1944, the diary records that ... *Fred White was here from Australia and we had a whole lot of work to discuss and a lot of beer to drink in between whiles ... We hatched a whole lot of plots but goodness knows whether anything will come of it ...* Four months later she wrote ... *Lab politics and other things have rather complicated matters at our end but Fred is going to go through with it and there is every chance of me being sent to Australia on a mission as a representative of the Lab. The idea tickles both our senses of humour!! ...* But only one month after that, September 1944 she writes ... *I have pretty well got the expedition organized. It's quite tough. This time next week I shall be in the South with all the gear, five bodies and two trucks, D.V. and W.P. ... [To be concluded in July 2013].*

WAR GRAVES RECORDS

by Jonathan Moffatt

From time to time I receive enquiries that involve me looking at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission Register and at conflicting stories regarding what happened to individuals caught up in the Malayan Campaign. I've come to realize that:

1. There are errors on some CWGC entries and some military personnel are missing altogether from them.
2. The Civilian Register has literally hundreds of 'Malaya' entries missing although most appear elsewhere, e.g. National Probate Register/Colonial Deaths Register/Pether-Kenneison Research.

One example which illustrates both: **James Henry Barrie Fairley**, an executive engineer in the PWD in Johore, is recorded on the Changi Bureau of Records & Enquiry [Nelson] Johore Volunteer Engineers roll as Sapper 792 JVE. He was lost at sea on the *Giang Bee* on 13th February, 1942 and his wife **Marie Suzanne** lost at sea on the *Vyner Brooke* two days later. Both are recorded on the Colonial Office War Deaths Register; she in the National Probate Register but neither on the CWGC Register. He should be on the CWGC military register and she on the civilian register.

Regarding war graves, there are the graves of three 'British Special Forces', Captains **Rod Gordon** [son of **John Gordon** of Tronoh Mines], **Wright** and **Regan** at Kanchanaburi War Cemetery. I believe that the **Regan** buried at Kanchanaburi is, in fact, the **Daniel Regan** whose name also appears on the Singapore Memorial:

REGAN E. Rank: Captain Date of Death: 16/12/1941 Regiment/Service: British Special Forces Special List

Grave Reference: Coll. Grave 10 Ps. 5-9 Cemetery: KANCHANABURI – is this man:-

REGAN Daniel. Rank: Private Date of Death: 12/12/1941 Age: 30 Regiment/Service: Federated Malaya States Volunteer Force Panel Reference: Column 392 Memorial: SINGAPORE MEMORIAL

Daniel Regan [1911 – 1941] from Schull, County Cork served in the RN Police, Singapore Naval Base 1937 – 1938 then became an engineer with Malayan Tin Dredging, Batu Gajah then Petaling Tin, Taiping. He briefly served in the FMSVF but is not on the December 1941 FMSVF roll, no doubt because we know he was sent on an SOE training course in Penang, then sent under cover [Operation Dickens] to Tongkah Tin Dredging across the Thai border. He went missing with **Rod Gordon**, **Herbert Wright** and three others in the Tungsong/Katang area on 10/12/41. **Regan, Gordon & Wright** are believed to have been executed by the Japanese at Singora on 16/12/41 – see below. Remains were recovered after the war and interred at Kanchanaburi.

THE EVIDENCE:

1. **'CONCERNING ALLIED PERSONNEL MISSING'**. A September 1945 report by surviving mining engineer/SOE agent **R.L. Orton** who was interned in Bangkok: **Orton** was i/c Operation Dickens. This stated: Ronpibon, South Siam. "Situation 4 a.m. 9th Dec. 1941: All personnel engaged in above operation had been under guard by Siamese Police and home guard at Orton's bungalow, Ronpibon. Six members of the party are now MISSING. Rod Gordon, D. Regan, Wright F, Bird W, Billinghamurst, W. Powell broke out to the north west through jungle...Rod Gordon reported executed by Japs at Yala. Others – several thought to be killed in running fight at Tungsong. No definite information from any source."
2. Reports and photos in the Far East Intelligence files HS/111 and 112 at Kew: photo of Regan in Intelligence files Clearly the same man as photo of Daniel Regan a few years earlier with RN Police, Singapore.
3. Report regarding executions at Singora in WO325/75 at NA Kew does not give Regan's initial so where does the "E" in the CWGC records come from?

EXECUTION OF 3 EUROPEANS (ROD GORDON, REGAN AND WRIGHT?) ON SINGORA BEACH SHORTLY AFTER THE JAPANESE INVASION.

1. Reference statement, Siamese Police Cpl. THEPA, says that he escorted three European prisoners from Chinko towards Singora. On the way he was met by Dr. SETO and 30/40 soldiers. Seto insisted on taking over these prisoners. The following morning at 10.00 hours he saw the execution of three men. He recognized the last man as one of the prisoners he had escorted from Chinko
2. NAI CHALERM SON CHIT states that he saw three Europeans being executed by the Japanese shortly after the Japanese invasion at 10.00 a.m. and describes the execution similar to Cpl. THEPA. He said that the Europeans were brought from Wat Kanoon.
3. NAI BEOW SUVAN-RATANA states that he saw three European prisoners executed by the Japanese. Description of the execution corroborated statements 1 & 2 fully. The date given by him however is June-July 1945. He is a very simple man and may have been mistaken in the date. He said that he could identify the officer i/c of the execution party.
4. NAI CHOM YARNAHARN states that he witnessed three Europeans being brought down from Chinko and that he saw these being taken out by the Japs to be executed, that later he heard that three Europeans and two Indians had been executed. He saw Dr. SETO go into the jail twice on the morning of the same day on which five men were executed.
5. CHAOOM states he saw three European civilians being executed by the Japanese.
6. According to Capt. KEMP, who was detained in Singora prison, on the 16th Dec. 1941 ROD GORDON (Australian) and four other Australian civilians were taken out of the jail, their hands tied behind them. He has heard since that they were executed.

[The above report is courtesy of the Thailand-Burma Railway Centre Archive].

A digitalized report in the National Archives of Australia "**Internees – Australians Abroad. Far East: Gordon R., H.C. Wright, & D. Regan**" repeats the error that all these men were Australian. Only Rod Gordon was Australian but born in New Zealand. **Jonathan adds:-** "I've not found evidence for the rank on the three graves at Kanchanaburi of "Captain, Special Forces" – they are not in the London Gazette – but may exist.

There is an interesting website dedicated to resolving such cases – see IN FROM THE COLD website at:

<http://www.infromthecold.org/index.asp>

I'm in touch with one of their research team, **Chris Harley**. I am pleased to say that he has recently submitted the names of 4 Malayan Volunteers and 70+ civilians for inclusion in CWGC Registers. Many more will no doubt follow.

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IN ORIENTE PRIMUS – Updated Report by Roderick Suddaby on the IWM's Documents and Sound Section.

Roderick has updated the list of individual papers held in the IWM's Documents and Sound Section to include all those with entries in "In Oriente Primus" [By Jonathan Moffatt and Paul Riches]. He has also extensively revised the guidance notes:-

- Where a name is followed by a number (e.g. 3710) and not a box reference (e.g.65/15/1) you should go to <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/search> on the web and type that person's surname into the 'keywords' box. Once you have been given every reference to that surname across all the Museum's collections, click on the category box on the left of the screen and select 'private papers'. A more refined search, showing just the documents collections under (e.g. Baillies) or containing (e.g. Reynolds) that surname, will appear and you will more easily be able to locate our catalogue entry for the individual on the list given in Edition 24 of Apa Khabar October 2010. All the collections followed by a number can be readily retrieved for a researcher to consult.
- Where a name is followed by a box number (such as 65/15/1), there is as yet no catalogue entry, but the collection can be readily retrieved for a researcher to consult.
- In the cases where nothing follows a name, the collection has either (i) not yet been allocated a box number and remains without a catalogue entry or (ii) has not had its status and/or accessibility within the Documents Section resolved.
- I am afraid that I still cannot guarantee that I have identified all the Malayan Volunteers in your book whose papers are held in the Department of Documents, but for the present there is only one addition (J.G. Newman) to the list, which is intended eventually to be comprehensive, and so includes some collections (Hadley, Henman and Inder for instance) that consist of nothing more than a handful of prisoner of war postcards, a single letter or an extremely brief memoir, whereas others (Mackintosh, Wells) include substantial diaries.

[Editor: The list of names is included – and is an update to the list which was printed in Edition 24 in October 2010]

A STORY OF HUMAN KINDNESS FROM THE EVACUATION OF SINGAPORE

By Robert Gray

There is a heart-warming story behind the Emergency Certificate issued to my sister **Nola** during the evacuation of Singapore. The precise facts are uncertain, as my parents passed away many years ago and my sister three years ago, but this is the story as I recall it:

Guthrie & Co., the oldest East India merchant company, had forbidden its staff to take leave in the U.K. due to the European War situation. So, in approximately August 1941, my father and mother decided to go on leave to Australia with me, a two-year old, leaving my older half-sister **Nola** at Tanglin School in the Cameron Highlands for the period they expected to be away. In choosing Australia, my father was probably influenced by his friends and fellow Guthries planters **Boris Hembry** and his wife **Jean**, who had just been on holiday there, and **Bob Chrystal** and his wife **Babs** who was an Australian. **Boris** wrote an excellent autobiography entitled "Malayan Spymaster", only recently published by Monsoon Books (monsoonbooks.com.sg) through the efforts of his family. It's a fascinating read for those of us who have any connections with Malaya of the era 1930-1960. After we headed off for our Australian holiday, concerns began to increase about the possibility of war spreading from China to the East Indies. The Japanese Imperial Army had invaded China in 1937, and the unease had started then. However, the British authorities in Malaya and Singapore, up to the 11th hour, led the local population to believe that the Japanese wouldn't dare attack Malaya or Singapore and would easily be repulsed if they did. "Right up to, and beyond Pearl Harbour, it was taken for granted that the dispatch of a few Royal Navy warships would send the Japanese scuttling back to Tokyo Bay", as **J.G. Ballard** wrote in his equally fascinating autobiography of growing up in Shanghai. (Miracles of Life, 2008) Before going on leave, it is likely that my father **Donald** asked Johore friends **Allan** and **Freda Proctor** to act as local guardians for my sister **Nola** while we were in Australia: **Allan Proctor** and my father were Sappers together in the Johore Volunteer Engineers, which was part of the Malayan Volunteer Forces, and their son **Allan Jnr.** also boarded at another school near **Nola's** school in the Cameron Highlands.

We are not exactly sure of what happened to **Nola** after the Japs landed on the East Coast of Malaya, but her recollection was that she was put on an evacuation train from the north to Singapore with teachers and other students from schools in the Cameron Highlands, and was met at one of the stations in Johore by **Allan** and **Freda Proctor** who then took her to their home.

In December 1941, **Mr. Proctor** took **Mrs. Proctor, Nola, Allan Jnr.** and his 9 month old sister **Hilary** to an emergency centre, located in a dormitory within a converted school in Singapore. **Allan Jnr.** recalls that his father turned and waved as he went through the door at the end of the dormitory to return to his post in Johore with the Volunteer Forces. Singapore was being bombed daily by this time and **Mrs. Proctor** took considerable risks, over many days, doing the rounds of the authorities to obtain an Emergency Certificate for **Nola** to travel, and then to various shipping offices to try to get them all on a ship to New Zealand, where the **Proctors** had relatives. While **Mrs. Proctor** was out all day making these arrangements, the children were looked after by the **Proctor's** wonderful amah who insisted on staying with them despite the frequent bombing attacks.

After many days' efforts, **Mrs. Proctor** was successful in obtaining places for herself and the children on the P & O liner **Orion** for the passage to Australia. **Mrs. Proctor's** objective was to deliver **Nola** to my parents in Sydney en route to New Zealand, but unfortunately communications between Australia and Malaya had become very difficult at this late stage, and the **Proctors** did not have a current address for my parents, who were travelling in Tasmania, to let them know of the plans. **Mr. Proctor** was by this time fighting with the Malayan Volunteer Forces and was not able to get to the ship to personally say goodbye to his wife and children. Sadly, **Allan Jnr's** earlier farewell to his father in the emergency centre dormitory turned out to be a final farewell, because **Mr. Allan Proctor** was subsequently very seriously wounded in action and passed away within a day or so from his injuries. Tragically, it was not until much later that **Mrs. Proctor** learned of her husband's fate. The **Orion** made its way safely to Australia where **Mrs. Proctor** left **Nola** with the Red Cross refugee tracing section in Sydney, who placed **Nola** with a local family while efforts were made to trace my parents **Donald** and **Betty**. Fortunately they were soon traced, and **Donald** sailed from Tasmania to Sydney to collect **Nola** and take her back with him to Tasmania where we lived until war's end.

My father **Donald**, who spoke fluent Malay and Tamil, was recruited in 1943 from Tasmania to train in guerrilla warfare in Ceylon and India. He was posted to a covert MI6 section, which had the cover name of Inter Services Liaison Department (ISLD), where my father came under the command of his old friend **Boris Hembry**. **Boris** had been in the Malayan Volunteer Forces and his group became stranded behind enemy lines in the Jap advance down the Malayan peninsular. **Boris**, after many adventures which you can read about in his book, had managed to reach India.

Donald was then parachuted by ISLD into enemy-held Malaya in January 1945 with a small group of agents. They were successful, until war's end, in radioing valuable intelligence on Jap troop and shipping movements to **Mountbatten's** Far East headquarters, for which he was Mentioned in Despatches for gallantry. He and **Betty** returned to Malaya after the war and he retired from Guthries in 1959.

I would like to pay tribute here to the extreme kindness, selflessness and bravery of both **Mr.** and **Mrs. Proctor** for taking young **Nola** under their wings in very difficult and dangerous circumstances, and to **Mrs. Proctor** in particular for caring for my sister **Nola** and delivering her to safe haven in Australia. As mentioned above, **Mr. Allan Proctor** was an heroic member of the Malayan Volunteer Forces, who gave his life fighting against impossible odds, as the Japanese war machine bore down relentlessly on Singapore.

Mrs. Freda Proctor, along with son **Allan** and daughter **Hilary**, stayed in New Zealand until late 1944 when they were able to get a passage to England via Panama, New York and a convoy across the Atlantic. The danger from U boats was heightened by the fact that their ship, the **MV Port Alma**, was transporting high explosives! On this journey, **Mrs. Proctor** was hoping to meet with **Mr. Allan Proctor's** younger brother who had been training pilots in Canada: unfortunately they missed him as he was posted to Burma where he had a bad crash. However, he did survive the crash and **Freda** married him after the war. After re-marrying, **Freda** and her husband moved back to NZ with **Allan Jnr.** and **Hilary** to live from 1947 to 1951, when they returned again to the U.K. ... except for **Allan Jnr.** who stayed on in NZ as an apprentice boat builder until 1957. **Mrs. Proctor** passed away quite young in 1970, but **Allan Jnr.** and **Hilary**, thankfully, are retired and living in the U.K. at the present time.

Notes by Robert Gray (with thanks to Allan Proctor for information about his family), Perth, W. Australia. March 2013

INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Mohd Yusof bin Hitam PSM, DIMP, JMN, PPM, MCS/JPM writes:

I am looking for any information about **Hitam bin Ja'afar 4/FMSVF [Pahang Battalion] Private 11069**

In December 1941 **Hitam bin Ja'afar** left home for training in Kuala Kubu Bharu. I understand he was in the transport company. Just before the Japanese landed in Kota Baru, Kelantan, the following year the Battalion was moved in a convoy through Gua Musang to Kota Baru to intercept the Japanese. He was said to have driven a truck of soldiers; but before they reached Kota Baru the Japanese had landed and the Battalion was commanded to return south and go to Singapore which was already under Japanese attack. By the time the Forces arrived in Bahau in Negeri Sembilan, the Japanese had taken over Singapore and the British Forces were about to surrender. The Battalion at Bahau was de-mobbed, and the Volunteers were ordered to return to their home towns on their resources. They were allowed to take their weapons with them for their protection. **Hitam bin Ja'afar** with his company, said to be lead by **Hamid Bidin**, went into the jungle towards Rompin and Pekan. The company split into small groups. **Hitam bin Ja'afar** and his group joined forces in the jungle fighting the Japanese. He did not reach home in Mentekab, Pahang, until weeks after the surrender of the Japanese and the return of the British in Pahang in 1946. He never related to any member of his family as to what happened to him between the time he was called to Kuala Kubu Bharu in 1941 and his return to Mentekab in 1946. He was given the Pacific Medals which he quietly discarded soon after receiving them. He passed away in 1998. I would appreciate it very much if any of his friends or superiors would be able to shed some light on those dark days in the life of **Haji Hitam bin Ja'afar**.



EMERGENCY CERTIFICATE

No 225



This is to Certify that *M. de*
Feona Baron

has stated to me that ^{he}she is a* *British Subject*.

and that I have no reason to doubt ^{his}her statement.

This Certificate is valid only for the journey to†
Australia via Netherland Indies

leaving‡

.....
Signature of Bearer

for‡ *Australia*, and must be surrendered to the Immigration Officer at the place of arrival.§

Signed *M. Fleming*

Date *23 DEC 1941*

Summary of the statements made by the holder in proof of ^{his}her British nationality:—

Born at Hull, England.
on 22.09. September 1935

* Insert status.

† Insert British territory of destination.

‡ If the Certificate is issued by a Consul at an inland post where the information as to the name of vessel, date of sailing, etc. is not available, it is desirable, in order to avoid possible inconvenience to the traveller on arrival, that the particulars should be added by the British Consular Officer at the port of embarkation and attested by his consular seal.

LETTERS

A. From Padre Noel Duckworth to Charles Edwards AIF.

Charles Edwards sent this letter with the following explanation:

"Among the ten mess orderlies in Pudu was Pte. Peter Beakley, Cambridgeshire Regiment. Peter was a tall, dark and very handsome man. He was Padre Duckworth's companion and assistant. He wore a black surplus as did the Padre at his services. He was devoted to the Padre and always referred to him as my 'goovener'. Peter always led the hymn singing with his deep bass voice. Quite a strong mateship developed between Peter and myself. I suppose because of this I had a closer relationship with the Padre.

On 30th September 1942 the Australians were the first to be moved to Singapore. When I had said my goodbyes to Peter and the Padre, he said to me, "If we ever get out of this mess, write to me and tell me what happened to you."

When I had settled back to normal life on my return to Australia I did write to him. Here is his reply. I have always regarded it as a personal letter and have never shown it to anyone, but after reading the Padre Duckworth biography, I think it is time to make it public, mainly because it adds to the poignancy of the death of Peter, and also the death of Alan Kirk, who was secretary of the Pudu Fellowship."

[Editor: We feel very privileged to be the first people to read this very private letter. Our thanks go to Charles Edwards. My apologies for not printing a copy of the original letter – due to the faint type and constraints of the newsletter. I have reproduced it as near to the original as possible, and hope this will not detract from the essence of the letter.]

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Tel
CAMBRIDGE 5052

From Rev. J. N. DUCKWORTH
CHAPLAIN OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE

ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE,
CAMBRIDGE.

8TH November, 1946.

My Dear Charlie,

It was a wonderful joy to receive your letter this morning. I have been thinking of you a great deal since I got back home but like you have been inundated with an enormous number of letters from all over the world which have demanded a great amount of time and thought in their answering. First let me say how pleased I am that you are fit and well, and that you are back at work, and that you have your brother with you. It is a matter of very great pride also to know that you served in a unit who have won such great distinction and honour in battle and as prisoners of war.

Many stories about me were circulated up and down the Camps but with the utmost regret I have to tell you that one half of the stories is true. My beloved companion and undying friend Peter died in my arms in August 1943 at No.2 Camp, Songkurai, Thailand. You knew him as I did, to be one of the finest specimens of humanity that had even lived and I knew him to be one who worshipped the ground I trod on, and would readily have died for me. Such a relationship makes the parting all the more hard and I am constantly inspired by his memory as much as I am grieved by his loss. At present I am engaged in seeing about a memorial statue to him to be put on the outside wall of the Church where he worshipped as a boy. An equally bitter blow was the loss of Alan Kirk. I can think of the zeal of his witness and the upright bearing of his life, his glorious robust faith which led him to bring many to the feet of the Master. I have written to his mother and his sister and have been able to comfort them in their distress.

Your letter was full of interesting news and I rejoice that your path was kept open and safe for you and that you are now safely through the jungle of despair, of sorrow, and of death. It would take a very long time to tell you of my experiences but I hope to be able to record them in a book fairly soon now and so you will get the gist of them in more detail. After having been in the jungle for over a year we came back to Singapore where we settled around Changi Jail. There, together with Padre Jones, I had charge of the combined Australian and British Church of St. Andrew and St. Luke. I looked after the sick in hospital and had some very wonderful experiences extending over a period of sixteen months. When the Japanese gave in we left Singapore on September 29th and made our way via Ceylon, Egypt, Gibraltar and the Bay of Biscay back to this country. It was a terrible change to come out of the overwhelming heat of the tropics to the cold North. Everywhere we were treated with kindness and consideration and our welcome home in Liverpool at the end of October was equal to that of conquerors.

I had not a great while to recuperate but started a tour of East Anglia visiting bereaved relatives and giving talks and addresses to those who had suffered most. This took me until March of this year and I was then appointed to this College. Here we have 530 undergraduates mostly ex-servicemen and including one or two from the Far East. The work is interesting though naturally difficult, as one has to face

disillusionment and doubt, coupled with the complete breakup of the moral code. I am glad to be able to tell you that things are going well and that I am just as busy as ever. It was very good to know that Reg. Newton came up on top. I always did believe that he had an enormous amount of good in him and that belief has been justified. I fear that the party who escaped were shot at K.L. and we know nothing more about them. What a dreadful time you must have had on board a rotten little tramp steamer in a typhoon. I suppose you must have felt that at any moment your end had come.

Things are not too good in this country now owing to shortage of food and coal and we are all very much living on our nerves and strained tempers. We have received tremendous kindnesses from you all in Australia and the various food parcels which have arrived have been more than welcome and more than appreciated. I close with the warmest remembrances of all that you were and are. I shall ever recall your wonderful loyalty and friendship and your sturdy witness in very difficult times. I see that you have sent me some account of where your interests still lie. To you and all yours I send my warmest affectionate greetings.

Yours sincerely,
Noel Duckworth.

.....
B. Two letters about Forbes Wallace, father of Diana Ruffell.

The letters were sent to the MVG on behalf of Diana by her husband Donald, who writes: Amongst Diana's father's papers which we brought up from the Biarritz apartment, I found a copy of a letter dated 14th August 1943 from the Colonial Office in London to Diana's paternal grandfather, enclosing one from a Captain H.R. Hayes who is described as "the Malayan Representative in India, formerly a Volunteer in Malaya and now serving with the Indian Army."

[Editor: We thank Diana for allowing us to print these letters.]

COPY

**COLONIAL OFFICE,
Palace Chambers,
Bridge Street,
LONDON S. W. 1
14th August 1943**

Ref. 37256 C.R.

Sir,

I am directed by Colonel Oliver Stanley to enclose a copy of a letter which has been received by the Malayan Representative in India from Captain H.R. Hayes, formerly a Volunteer in Malaya and now serving with the Indian Army, regarding the gallant conduct of your son, Mr. Forbes Wallace, during the fighting in Malaya.

2. Colonel Stanley wishes me to add that he has read this account of the fine example set by your son with very great pleasure and appreciation.

I am,
Sir,
Your obedient servant,
(Sgd) F. R. Fairclough.

MAJOR F. T. WALLACE, O. B. E.

COPY

**40B, Residency Road,
Bangalore.**

13th April 1943.

Dear Mr. Stark,

Some time ago, I mentioned to you the very gallant behaviour of Forbes Wallace of the Malay States Police and you asked me to put in writing what I knew. I fear I have been very dilatory in doing so but I know that my neglect in no way detracts from what Forbes Wallace did.

I have written to his wife in Durban already but I also send her a copy of this letter as I may give details that I failed to do before.

Forbes Wallace was already attached to the 53rd Brigade on the Pontian Besar-Batu Pahat Road before the F.M.S.V.F. Officers arrived to join as Intelligence Officers on the 24th January. There were in all four police officers there and they were:-

Parkes, Beverly, Madoc and Forbes. The last named had given himself (or perhaps had been detailed) to bring back troops that had been cut off by the Japanese advance after they had swept through Muar. He appears to have done this most successfully.

We heard that he had been able to bring back about a thousand men. It is very hard to check such a fact and what little hope there was of doing so is, I fear, shattered by the fall of Singapore. However we personally saw him on two occasions bringing back parties of fifty to sixty men.

Personally, I did not recognize him on the first occasion we met though I knew (him) quite well before the "party" started. He came in one evening, dead beat, with about fifty men, including Australians who had been cut off at Muar. Brigade HQs were then at Ulu Benut and he had lead these men round the Japanese between the coast (Batu Pahat) road and the main (Rengam) road. He had a drink, some food and went back, as far as I know alone, to another party he had ordered to wait for him. This party he brought back again to return north. I never heard what happened to him. The other police officers were ordered to return to Singapore from Gunong Pulai where the Volunteer officers too left the Brigade.

Many facts would come to light if questions could be put to the right people but that is impossible. Some of my facts may be incorrect but we gathered from the Brigade that Forbes Wallace had been doing a wonderful job of work in leading back the shattered remains of the 53rd Brigade and other troops further north.

Some of the Volunteer officers who were with me have also got away and they will, I am sure, corroborate my statements. The ones I know to have escaped are:-
E.L. Kennedy formerly of Kelantan now a lieutenant in the Indian Engineers whose address is c/o Mercantile Bank of India, Bombay.
J. Dickens formerly of John Little's, Kuala Lumpur, now a lieutenant in the I.A.O.C., whose present address is unknown to me.

Buie, a planter somewhere in Negri Sembilan who went home from Colombo in March 1942.

The 53rd Brigade was an East Anglian one and I know they were severely mauled again on Singapore Island and I do not think that any of them are likely to have got away. The information I give here has no military value for we can be confident that the Japanese know by now what Brigades and Divisions we had in Malaya.

Even if nothing ever comes of this, I am glad to have put on record to the best of my ability the fine example set by a grand man.

Yours sincerely,
(Sgd) H. R. Hayes.

THE STOKES-HUGHES ESCAPE PLAN

[In the 3rd edition of Apa Khabar on P.14, mention was made in T.R.W. Allin's letters to his wife, Anne of an escape plan. This is the confidential report in the Public Records Office of that escape].

(Report No. 18)

CONFIDENTIAL.

MALAYAN RESEARCH BUREAU.

REPORT OF MAJOR STOKES-HUGHES., att. A.I.F. Australia

Front Line as I knew it on Sunday afternoon 15th Feb., 1942 at the time of surrender:-

Buona Vista - Gap - along Holland Road and ran between Holland and Farrer Road to Bukit Timah Road - down Bukit Timah Road around bottom of the Race Course up to North point of McRitchie reservoir, thence down to Siglap (about 2 miles East of Sea View Hotel).

On Sunday 15th February at 1610 hours Capt. Lilly brought in a message from Brigade H.Q. which read -

"The cease-fire will be given at 1600 hours to-day, should a party of Japanese approach the Senior Officer present will wave a white cloth and offer no resistance, this message will be burnt when read".

It was signed by a Brigadier, but I don't know his name. When we read this it was decided to collect all ammunition and to retain our arms - while this was being done, Lt. Col. McLeod, O.C., 2nd Btn. S.S.V.F. (who came under Fortress Command and not like us under Malaya Command) said he had not received this order and was going to carry on until he had, so I volunteered to go to Fortress and ask for instructions, Capt. Lilly came too. At Fortress they gave me a long message, which I cannot remember, but was to the effect that this previous order was discounted and that the cease-fire would be at 20.30 hrs. (8.30 p.m.). Anyhow capitulation was the intention of the G.O.C. - Lt. Gen. Percival.

The order was signed by Major-General Keith-Simmons (or a double-barrel name) for the G.O.C.

I took back this order (copied) and signed as a true copy by myself, all acted on it.

Before dark Major Hayward (the Brig. Major) came to us and said Brig. Moir had laid on an escape for those who wanted to try, but only gave us a 10 -1 chance of ever leaving Singapore and a much thinner one of 25-1 against our ever reaching Sumatra. As no Senior Officer wanted to take the risk I called for those who wanted to, to fall in on the road (Stamford Rd. - Chinese Girls' High School) fell them in, in threes and marched off about 21.00 hrs. (9 p.m.) having had a good meal and collected tinned food and water - in our water bottles, we marched to Jardine Steps past the Cathedral, cricket club and over the bridge, along the water front and past the Railway Stn. All main buildings were standing and had not been affected by gun fire and bombs, only native shops and dwellings were smashed - overhead wire near the station and along the road leading past the wharves were hanging down on to the road like jungle vines and interfered with our marching - the Railway Stn. was in good order, but warehouses on the docks were burnt out, the Power Stn. was not hit, Sentries (our own) stopped us at intervals on the way, the last being at the Stn. On arrival at Jardine Steps I divided the party into groups to look for a boat, after about 2 ½ hours one was found, the "TONG KANG" stuck on the mud up a backwater nearby, this was got off and pushed round to a more convenient bend where we boarded her - at about this time 02.30 hrs. (2.30 a.m.) Monday 16th Feb. Brig Moir arrived by car, called us aside and said that as he thought his wife might hinder the party (being the only woman) he was not prepared to take the risk, shook my hand and wished us good luck. We found that we were once more on the mud, so all went overboard to push it off. After some delay we got her going at about 0300 hrs. (3 a.m.) wind was most favourable. The Southern Cross stood out and the burning islands off S'pore all helped us to go in the right direction. At about 0500 hrs. (5 a.m.), we ran aground on rocks and managed to push her off at 0600 hrs. (6 a.m.). We ran on to a small island where we laid up for the day watching Jap planes from concealment - nobody molested us. This small island was the home of a Chinese fishing family who after some persuasion and \$200 promised to the husband should he land us safely on Sumatra, he piloted us some of the way back to S'pore, then out to sea and away that night - again wind, stars and the blazing islands helped us, but of course we didn't know where we were, but landed again on an island where we paid off the Chinese giving him the boat.

We marched across this island and got sampans to another island close by. Major Hayward and 18 of the party went across this island in a bus, I and the rear party marched about 4 miles when the bus returned for us and picked us up. We were told the Japs were just behind us (this later turned out to be wrong). From the other side of the island we got three boats to the mainland, sailing all night with a stiff breeze which freshened and capsized one boat, Doyle and Vile being drowned, one boat with Hayward in it returned and went down coast to the Indraghiri River and up to Tembilahan and Rengat - my boat managed to get through - we picked up the balance from the capsized boat, who had been rescued by some Australians in a small Motor Boat and went up river to a spot described to us by an English Lt. Colonel.

From here we marched through swamp and jungle to another river, where we spent the night - everybody was dead beat, next day Malays rowed us in sampans up this river to a native village where we spent another night. The following day we rowed for 16 hours, arriving at Tembilahan and on to Rengat by launch, - where we slept on the wharf. Next day we went by lorry (arranged by the Dutch) to Ayer Molek where we stayed for four days.

I was O.C. camp consisting of about 200 men and 30 women (the latter stayed in the rest house) in turn we went in parties by lorry to Sawoharento (bad spelling) (sic) where we spent one night then on by train to Padang, where we went to different camps - some hundreds of men and women went through here some of them to Java and others to Colombo.

The Dutch were wonderful - their hospitality and the natives very pro British all the way across Sumatra - all those who left S'Pore between Tuesday 10th Feb. up to 16th Feb. made for Padang. Some got only as far as Sinkep Island, (Padang), off the East Coast of Sumatra.

Lt. Col. Coates of the A.I.F. Medical Staff began a casualty ward at Rengat and stayed there to look after casualties from the Islands. The Navy turned on cutters to bring them to Rengat. It was estimated that some 700 people were on these islands.

(Signed) H. Stokes-Hughes.

BOOKS

"CAPTURED: The Forgotten Men of Guam." By Roger Mansell. Edited by Linda Goetz Holmes. [Naval Institute Press, Annapolis]. 255 pages plus photos. ISBN 978 161 2511 146 E book edition also available.

This extremely well written, very readable book follows through the story of some 800 Americans, 414 of them military, captured on the little paradise island of Guam in December 1941 and transported to Japan, the POWs to be used as slave labour.

The full brutality of the swift seizure of Guam and the shocking treatment of the POWs is described as is their suffering on arrivals at Zentsuji camp in the Japanese winter with ice, snow and inadequate clothing and food. Later the prisoners are dispersed, the civilians to Kobe where a few are fortunate enough to be repatriated on the Asama Maru to Lourenco Marques then the MS Gripsholm to New York - the only such exchange of the war. The POWs experience Osaka area camps.

Those of us who knew Roger will not be surprised at the depth of knowledge and research that has gone into this book which contains personal testimony by many of the Guam POWs. The geographical knowledge of each region

described is excellent and I have never seen such a clear and detailed description of the work undertaken by the POWs in Japan. The wartime Japanese mentality of both civilians and military is described including the enormous shock caused by the remarkable Doolittle Raid in April 1942.

Some 36,000 Americans were captured by the Japanese; 38% of these died. By concentrating on a small group of them and following through their story, the author keeps the reader interested. Curiously, only 3% of the Guam POWs died yet their experience was brutal and harsh in extreme.

If, like me, you have little comparative knowledge of the American captivity experience don't be put off this very worthwhile read. A fitting tribute to the work of Roger Mansell!

Reviewed by Jonathan Moffatt.

"SINGAPORE 1942. BATTLE STORY." By Chris Brown. ISBN 978-0-7524-7956-9 Price: 9.99 sterling
Chris Brown grew up in Singapore and his experiences of the city have given him a fantastic insight into the history of the battle. He has written extensively on historical and defence issues and has also designed and delivered numerous history and war studies courses at Edinburgh University. In addition, he has contributed to several television and radio programmes, and has travelled extensively studying battlefields. He lives in Shetland.

"PENANG PERSPECTIVE. My Island in the Sun. Vol.2." By Khor Cheang Kee. ISBN 983-905-447-3 Southbound.
Khor Cheang Kee worked for more than 50 years on the *Pinang Gazette* (the oldest English language newspaper East of Suez), the pre-war *Straits Echo*, the post-war *Straits Times* and *New Straits Times* and *The Star*.
These Penang perspectives first saw print more than 30 years ago, but they still retain their pristine appeal. Taken together, they are one man's sentimental journey along the happy highways of his beloved Penang.

He was a humorous raconteur who could keep his listeners spellbound. He was a humanitarian, a teacher and an educator. There was always a lesson in what he said, yet a lesson conveyed gently and without dogma. He was well known as much for his lively and impish wit as for the depth and breadth of his knowledge on public issues, customs, historical events, and education.

"THE PENANG ADVENTURE. A History of the Pearl of the Orient." By Raymond Flower. ISBN 978-981-261-886-3 Marshall Cavendish.

This charming introduction to the Pearl of the Orient includes narratives of colonial intrigue drawn from the notes of Sjovald Cunyngham-Brown, the penultimate British Governor of Penang.

OBITUARIES

MARY CHRISTINA PEEL-YATES nee MILES - 8th July 1918 to 23rd February 2013.

Mary Miles was born in Melbourne, Australia on 8th July 1918. Her parents were living in Malaya at the time. Her father Arthur H. W. Miles was a tin dredger and company director. Her Australian grandfather, Captain E.T. Miles had pioneered tin dredging in Phuket, Thailand in 1909 and Mary's father was following in his footsteps.

Aged 7, Mary her brother Allan, aged 5, and their mother Chris came to England for the children's education. Several years later Mary became a boarder at the Holy Child Convent, Mayfield, Sussex & Head Girl in 1935. Allan went to Ampleforth. After finishing school she completed a secretarial training in London before joining her parents in Penang in 1938. She married E.J. (John) Peel-Yates, an Englishman born in Essex, on 31st December 1941 in the Cathedral of the Good Shepherd in Singapore. John had been in Johannesburg, South Africa, starting-up Crittall Metal Windows when war was declared and returned to Colchester to sign up with the East Surreys. He was sent to Malaya where the war seemed very distant. However, the Japanese came and Singapore fell.

Mary and her mother were first evacuated from Penang to Singapore at very short notice, leaving their possessions behind, and then left Singapore on 30th January 1942 aboard the *Empress of Japan*.

John and Mary's father became POWs. Throughout the remainder of the war Mary believed she was a widow as John was posted missing, presumed killed. Her brother Allan was also reported missing presumed killed but, unlike John, never returned at the end of the war having been shot down over the North Sea in 1941 as a member of the RAF.

Arriving in England with her mother, after working for a short time for the Red Cross, Mary joined the WRNS and was eventually sent to Washington USA as a WRN Officer.

After the war she was reunited with John in London and he took her out to South Africa where her daughter Tina (Padbury) was born in 1947, and Patsy (Allan) in 1949. After a couple of years in Johannesburg the family moved to Salisbury, Rhodesia where they remained for ten years.

In 1959 the family returned to England when John became a Director of Crittalls in Braintree, Essex and Tina and Patsy became boarders at the same Holy Child Convent. Home was in Earls Colne where Mary took great interest in the garden and played a lot of bridge. In 1969 the family returned to South Africa after Crittalls was taken over by Slater Walker.

John died in 1982 & she returned to England two years later & made a home in Colchester. Mary was a widow for over 30 yrs. We are sorry to announce the death of **HUGH COPE** who lived in Thailand and worked with Rod Beattie to set up the TBRC.

THE WARTIME ESCAPE OF COLONEL JOHN NICHOLSON O.B.E. FROM SINGAPORE
by kind permission of his son Michael Nicholson

[Note by Col. J.L. Nicholson: This was not written as a story but to remind me of what occurred. It was written while I was in hospital and not at all well, and the great emphasis laid upon food throughout these pages was due to the fact that when I wrote it I was hungry. That it reads like a story in B.O.P. is not my fault, it just happened like that.]

Singapore fell on 15th February, 1942.

That day I had been entangled in the battle with the R.E. battalion fighting between River Valley and Depots Road, in the Alexandra district.

During the afternoon I had been with H.Q. 4th Indian Infantry Brigade acting as Liaison Officer for the R.E. Battalion which was on the Brigade's left. The R.E. Battalion had been formed from one British Fortress Company and three Sappers and (?) Companies and was under the command of Lt. Col. Taylor. The Brigade received the cease fire message about 6.00 p.m. I returned to Colonel Taylor and since he had no further need for me I went down to the docks.

Early in the day I had been given permission to leave with a party of R.E. Officers and N.C.Os in a steam-tug called the "Phyllis". She was intended to sail at 7.00 p.m. but when I arrived at the docks at 6.30 she had already gone. In the docks, some sappers were trying to start a motor-tug but as it was uncertain if this boat could leave even if it would start, because it was normally used to supply the islands on the south side of the harbour, I went to Fort Canning to find out.

By this time it was dark and my car ran into a mass of tram cables which were down across the street. They wound round the axles and stopped the car. A Chinaman gave me a lift to Fort Canning, where Brigadier Lucas told me he would let me know at 8.30 if the tug could go. He also informed the officer at the Docks. After a short wait, the Brigadier came in and said, "Come on. I have got you a passage." I followed him down into the barrel headquarters of Singapore Fortress. Here it was explained to me that there were no communications with Pulau Brani and Blakang Mati, the two fortified islands on the south side of Keppel Harbour; no one knew what was happening there and so three parties of two officers each were being sent to the islands to deliver the surrender message. I was to go with Geoff Hallows, A.D.C. to General Keith-Simmons. Besides the surrender message, we were given a message to an officer, ordering him to give us a boat and a chart of the area, we were also told that we need not return. We left Fort Canning about 9.15 and drove down to the Yacht Club. Our engine stalled and we had to walk the last part of the way. We abandoned our kit, keeping only arms, money, compasses and food. Between us we had S\$160, of which only S\$20 was mine, two tins of bully and some biscuits.

We reached the Yacht Club to find that the Volunteers manning the battery there had no orders and were all wondering what had happened. The O.C. gave us two men to help us get a boat, and we went to find one. First we tried two sampans, but although we got one launched over the triple Dannert barbed wire fence with which the harbour was surrounded we found it was holed. The other was too heavy to move. We could find no more boats and the two Volunteers drifted away.

It was then about 10.30 p.m. and there were a large number of officers and men looking for boats. None was to be found in the Yacht Club Basin. Eventually a number of pram dinghies were found in one of the godowns but only sufficient sails and gear to equip one of them. Everyone was very jumpy and jittery and while we were launching these we were suddenly scared that the Japanese were landing. A number of hulks had been set loose from their moorings by the bombing of the harbour and as they drifted by in the uncertain light from the fires in the town, it looked as if they were landing craft approaching the shore. After a little while that scare died down and in spite of other minor alarms, we launched our dinghy and started paddling. Two gunners had come with us, having helped to launch the pram; besides two paddles we only had a spar and a sail with which we hoped to make a kind of temporary rig.

We had no difficulty in passing the boom at the east end of Keppel Harbour nor in reaching Blakang Mati Pier. There was a guard on the pier who told us that all the troops had withdrawn into Fort Connaught, so we had to walk 2 ½ miles to deliver our message. Two of the guards escorted us to the Fort. It was a very eerie walk in contrasting silence to the unending bombardment of the last week, and with frequent sudden challenges from invisible sentries. We delivered the message and got back to the boat about 3.30 a.m. The two Gunners decided to remain on Blakang Mati until the next day and so Geoff and I started alone. As we walked back we discussed what to do. South of Singapore there is a jumble of small islands. Then there is a Strait about 5 miles wide and then the Rhio Archipelago which were Dutch islands. We felt that among the islands we would be comparatively safe and that the crossing of the strait was dangerous since we might easily be picked up by a patrol boat. We decided to tie up on Peak Island just north of the straits during the day and cross to the Rhio Archipelago the following night. In order to get to Peak, we had to get out of

Keppel Harbour, which meant passing through the gate of either the eastern or western boom defending the harbour. We decided to go through the eastern boom because we knew where the gate in that boom was and we also knew the channel through the minefield down to Peak Island. We were afraid that we would miss the gate in the western boom and be swept against it.

The current was running strongly from east to west and we made very slow progress. We reached Pulau Brani pagar below the old R.E. officers' mess about 5.00 and agreed to rest for 5 minutes. We both fell asleep, but Geoff woke up at 5.30 and, as the current had slackened, we succeeded in paddling through the boom at 6.00 a.m.

Singapore was a most impressive sight from the sea. There were about ten separate fires in the godowns and there seemed to be five enormous ones in the town itself besides innumerable smaller ones.

We paddled steadily towards Peak Island, but were carried through the reefs by the current on to St. John's Island, which we reached about 8.30. We were completely exhausted and very dirty, for the water in the harbour had been covered in oil. So we were not very pleased when one of the European officials from the quarantine station told us that we couldn't stay but must go on, or their position would be affected. We paid very little attention to him since we were too tired to move and had broken one of our two paddles in the tide-rips off the island.

While we sat resting, four soldiers came up and asked if we could help since their boat had sunk just off the island. Six in a dinghy was a lot, and as a large sampan with very few men in it approached the island, we asked them to take two, but they shoved off without replying. The soldiers had two oars and when another official came down to say that the Japanese were going to land that morning we decided to go on. The current took us round the north end of the island and down the west coast. We landed again near the southern end of the island because we saw a party of troops and a motor-boat there and hoped for a tow. The motor-boat was out of action, so we set out to row across the Straits.

There was a strong current running down the Straits from east to west and a strong wind from the same direction. We rowed straight across and were set several miles down the Straits, reaching a small island with a Malay kampong on it about half-past one. The last hour of rowing had been heavy work against the current which has set out from the islands and in a choppy sea. Steering was not easy because the rudder had been broken on a coral rock during the last landing on St. John's, but the remaining paddle served quite well.

The Malays were friendly but had very little food to sell. Their rice supply came from Singapore and they had been afraid to go and collect any fresh supplies during the previous weeks. They sold us some mangoes and coconuts and after dark one man gave us some rice and coffee. Presumably he did not want his neighbours to know that he had any!! We slept during the afternoon.

A large party of officers and soldiers of all units arrived during the afternoon and then decided to split up into smaller groups. The officers bought a yacht from the Malays. She was called 'Columbine' and had been an 'E' class boat belonging to the Singapore Yacht Club. She was about 22' long and in good condition. The main-sail had a roller-reefing device and the only serious difficulty was that the gear for raising the centre board had been damaged beyond repair, so that it could only be raised by brute force.

We asked the officers to give us a tow. They agreed and arranged to start at dawn. All through the islands are a number of larger kampongs which are trading centres for the islands in their neighbourhood. Most Malays have rarely been further than their nearest trading kampong. To these kampongs come Chinese junks and trading vessels from the parts of Sumatra and Java. We intended to sail to the nearest which was called Morro and hoped to find a junk there to take us to Java several hundred miles away. We also decided to sail through the islands and avoid the Straits so as to lessen the chances of being picked up by a Japanese patrol-boat. The first day's sailing was fairly successful, but although we started at dawn, it was obvious that we were going to have trouble because no one really knew how to sail. Eventually, as the days passed, I was forced to take over the control of both the party and of the sailing instead of merely being towed as a favour and shirking my responsibilities, but both time and space were wasted on the first day, and this loss was to have serious consequences. As my own knowledge of sailing was confined to a little dinghy sailing on the Medway, a few days sailing on the Solent and a very occasional weekend at Singapore, and only 2 of the remaining 15 had been in a sailing-boat before, the aggregate inexperience of the crew was frightening; but most of them were too ignorant to realize it.

The chief difficulties were purely sailing ones. There were very strong currents and tide-rips round all the islands and a large number of coral reefs. These reefs were a serious nuisance and such a danger at night that I intended never to sail by night but mis-management prevented this intention being fulfilled. Most of the islands had a smoothly-sloping beach and then a flat reef running out for two or three hundred yards. The edge of the reef then dropped steeply to the sea bottom but formed a lip slightly higher than the rest of the reef. The lip of the reefs were exposed about 2' at low water; at high tide there was always a risk of anchoring on top of the lip or in the deeper water inside the reef, and, therefore, being stranded a low tide or having great difficulty in getting off. If we anchored outside the reef, the anchor rope was so short that it was almost vertical and the anchor would not hold in a strong wind or current.

The helmsman's task was complicated by the lack of a burgee, which had not been rigged initially and for which we never succeeded in getting a halliard; by the inexperience of the crew; by the crowdedness of the yacht which prevented him from getting any view for'ard on the leeward side under the mainsail boom; and by the fact that the lookout never learnt that a sailing-boat could not be steered like a motor-boat and would only sail in the direction in which the wind would allow it to go.

However, neither Geoff, nor the four soldiers, nor I saw any difficulties ahead as we carried our dinghy out over the reef and tied it to the stern of Columbine on the morning of the 17th. As soon as it was light we started and ran into trouble at once, for the wind was light and the current strong. The first helmsman failed to make any progress and within twenty minutes I found myself trying to sail the boat. I made a little progress but both wind and tide were against us and after two hours of futile endeavour to follow the course to Morro described by the Malays, it was decided to run before the wind and current. Since the tide was rising, we took up the centre-board and posted two look outs to watch for reefs. Progress was good and the wind improved. The Columbine was moving very fast, when an unfortunate decision was taken to land at a kampong for a meal. The decision was taken when I was asleep in the dinghy and the efforts of the other helmsman to tack round the island wasted over an hour and when we eventually reached the kampong, it was nearly high tide.

The Malays were very friendly, sold us a good deal of clothing and cooked us a very good meal; we bought the rice from a Chinese kedai (small shop) and paid the Malays for cooking the meal, which consisted of chicken and eggs cooked in coconut oil. This diet of rice and chicken and eggs was to be our food during all the time we were in the islands and at the kampongs. The only disadvantages to eating at kampongs were, firstly, the time wasted (but after this first day we never stopped again in the middle of the day) and, secondly, the taste of the coconut oil with which the Malays cooked and which tended to become increasingly disagreeable.

After spending three and a half hours in the kampong and getting fresh directions for reaching Morro, we returned to the boat to find that we had anchored on top of a reef inside the lip. There was sufficient water under keel to float but insufficient to put the centre-board down, and since both the wind and current were against us, we had great difficulty in getting off. We could pole to the edge of the reef, but there it became too deep to pole and the boat was swept back on to the reef again before she could get under way.

Eventually after wasting an hour and a half, we got clear and were immediately involved in a series of tide-races, which caused us great anxiety because we mistook them for submerged reefs.

We passed through them about 6.00 p.m. and seeing a large junk at anchor near an island, we decided to run to it and tie up for the night. But our troubles with the rip-tides had carried us too far away to reach it before dark. Although I had got its direction and thought I had succeeded in gauging the effect of wind and current so as to bring the Columbine upstream of it, we were in fact 200 yards downstream when the look-out shouted, 'Rocks'. Fortunately both wind and tide were in the same direction and parallel to the reef, and the Columbine came up into the wind and lost way immediately, but she was so close to the rocks that one could touch them by leaning over the side. We took down the sail and kedged the anchor out in the dinghy just getting room to swing from the anchor and clear the reef.

During the night we visited the junk and found it full of troops and being sailed by a Captain Crawley. One of the soldiers with us remained behind on the junk. The night was very unpleasant. Fortunately the anchor held but the wind shifted and blew hard; a lot of spray came over the boat and very few of us got much sleep. At dawn we found that in the dark we had sailed through a narrow gap between some rocks and that our anchorage was almost entirely surrounded by rocks. However, we got out of the circle without much trouble and started for Morro with both a following wind and current. After an hour's sailing the sea became rough and the dinghy started planing on the breaking wave and travelling faster than the Columbine. As a result it pulled the Columbine about and made her nearly uncontrollable. It nearly caused a gybe once by rushing into the stern and several times pulled her across the seas. The three soldiers who through sheer thoughtlessness, had been left in the dinghy, completely lost their heads and, instead of lengthening the tow-rope and steering with an oar as they were told to do, pulled on the tow-rope so as to get as close to the Columbine as possible, which only made matters worse. Eventually we got into calmer water. Geoff transferred into the dinghy, lengthened the rope and found an oar to use as a rudder. But this incident had made me nervous of heavy following seas, a fear that was to have a disastrous consequence next day.

A Malay in a kolek (canoe) offered to guide us to Morro, and about 11.30 we tied up to the mangrove on an island near there while we waited for the tide to turn. During this wait we rowed up to Morro in the dinghy. It was a very large kampong, and for the only time during my wanderings, the inhabitants were definitely hostile. They had only a little food and a few days earlier certain soldiers had threatened the natives with arms and had stolen food. We got an inadequate meal from a Chinese food shop and learnt that there was a food dump and a camp of escapees on the east end of a large island named Pulau Morro Besar. This camp was about 4 miles from the town across a strait. There were a fair number of troops in Morro who had got lifts in koleks and sampans or who had rowed down (the seas appeared to be covered in small boats with

soldiers rowing or sailing to freedom) and who were now going on to the dump in their own boats or were chaffering for a lift from the Malays.

While we were in Morro, we were told that the Japanese had landed at Palembang on the south end of Sumatra which appeared to cut us off from Java. We, therefore, decided to visit the food dump and find out if there was any help there.

We returned to the Columbine and as the wind had died down, drifted round the island to a kampong where we decided to stay the night. There was a coffee shop which sold excellent coffee and sweet pastry biscuits and cooked a first rate meal for us of the inevitable curried chicken, eggs and rice. There was also a well which meant a bath in decent fresh water. In fact, all the amenities.

We spent a very pleasant afternoon and evening, and sang cheerfully, until some lights began flickering up and down the straits and someone started the scare of Japanese patrol boats.

On the morning of the 19th, there was no wind, so two of us with our Malay guide paddled over to the food dump. There were about 100 troops there camping in the woods and waiting for a launch to come and collect them and take them to Sumatra. The food was packed in 4 gallon petrol tins, each tin containing food for 6 men for 2 days. The item of real interest to us, was a bottle of whisky, but unfortunately someone had raided the dump a few days earlier and opened the tins and taken out most of the bottles. We took two tins from the officer who was in charge and fortunately one of them had a bottle intact. At the dump there were sailing instructions directing boats to Perigi Rajah at the mouth of the Indragiri River.

The tide turned about 12.30 and as a breeze sprang up we had a midday meal, gave our Malay guide a present and started about 1.30 to sail to the Sumatran coast, intending to tie up for the night to a fishing pagar along the coast. As we passed the food dump Crawley's junk anchored off it. The wind dropped soon afterwards and the Columbine made very little headway. We started rowing and met a ship's whaler full of Northumberland Fusiliers under Major Leech and told them of the dump. They apparently had started off down the Rhio Strait intending to reach Banka (sic) but had turned west when they heard the news of the fall of Palembang. They continued to row to the west and once the wind improved we started south towards Sumatra. There were three small islands about half-way between the Sumatran Coast and Pulau Morro Besar and, as it was impossible to reach the coast before dark, we decided to anchor to leeward of the second island. But as we neared the group we saw a steamship anchored off the most southerly. It was a very small boat of about 500 tons, apparently with steam up but lying at anchor. This was very disturbing for there had been a large number of Japanese aircraft over us all the four days since we had left Singapore. These aircraft were all bombers and were in formations of between four and twelve. It seemed very unlikely that this boat could be friendly to us with so many enemy aircraft overhead. We had nearly decided it was derelict, when a small boat was seen putting off from the island towards it. That finally decided us that the boat was not a derelict, and as we had no wish to get near to it, we turned west and ran down towards Pulau Sanglar. Meanwhile the small boat passed the steamer and proved that it was in fact derelict or friendly, since no Malay kolek would have passed a Japanese boat. But it was too late to return to the islands and we continued towards Sanglar. Our intention was to run round the south of Pulau Sanglar and anchor on the leeward side, the wind having veered to the north. There was a strong current running round the island against us and a strong following wind, which combined to make a very steep, sharp sea and was most unpleasant to sail in. Although we had the dinghy on a long tow-rope and a reliable crew in it, when an apparently sheltered bay on the east side of the island with a sandy beach was pointed out to me, I decided to anchor there instead of going on and getting into the really difficult sea which I could see in the tide race round the tip of the island.

It was almost dark when we anchored; the dinghy went into the shore but the crew reported that they couldn't land as the sea was breaking too heavily on the reef. As soon as it was dark, the wind got up and the anchor started to drag. We got under way without any difficulty and sailed up the coast. The Columbine was sailing beautifully and when we ran into a very rough sea, presumably caused by the meeting of two currents, she went through it like a bird. Unfortunately, that patch of rough sea caused the dinghy to ship a lot of water, terrified our ignorant crew and knocked the drain plugs out of the bottom of the Columbine. The plugs were eventually found and put back and the boat baled dry. But while there was still a quantity of water in her, the look-out shouted, 'Rough water ahead', and I put about. We seemed to be tacking in a smooth patch of water between two rough ones, so I decided to see if we could anchor again and ran down towards the coast. The look-out was calling out the estimated distance to the shore and had just called '200 yards to go' when suddenly someone else cried, "We are on the rocks". The Columbine went about instantly and we started sailing away from the rocks, when she seemed to stick and drifted broadside on to them. We got out and held her off, got her head to wind and again started sailing away, only to be checked and pulled back. She was badly knocked about before we could get her off again, so we collected what kit and food we could and dumped it ashore.

It was not until the next day that I realized that the dinghy which was on a long tow-rope had been swept past us and tossed up on the reef, so that when the Columbine started sailing away the dinghy held us and pulled us back. All that was needed was to cut the tow-rope, but in the noise and confusion and effort of

holding the Columbine off slippery, coral rocks against a heavy breaking sea, this occurred to no one, certainly not to me. Even if we had cut the tow-rope we would still have had a problem collecting the officers out of the dinghy.

We found ourselves ashore on the flat top of a coral reef and between us and the island was a mangrove swamp. Actually the total distance was less than 100 yards, but in the darkness we could see no sign of solid land. We floundered through knee-deep mud and water and each time one put a foot down, trod on a sharp root. Near the shore it was a thick tangle of trees and roots and the relief with which I reached dry land was immeasurable. I got ashore just as some Malays came down to the beach with torches. They heard us shouting, for in the dark we had thought that a bush floating past the reef was a boat and had hailed it, and they had come to see what was happening. There was a break in the mangrove near where we had landed, and they went and collected our kit and brought it ashore. They gave us some hot tea, built a fire for us to dry ourselves and gave us a house to sleep in.

Next day we collected some more kit from the boat, but as most of mine had been in the dinghy, I had little left. A pair of trousers, half a Sam Browne belt, a prismatic compass was all my army kit, besides which I had two sarongs and a Malay woman's baju. The Malays told us that the penghulu (headman of the village) of a big kampong was coming to see us, but when at midday there was no sign of him it was decided that "Mohammed must go to the mountain", and three of us set off to walk to the kampong.

The Malays have no idea of time or distance. If asked how far it is to a certain place. They will reply 'Seven hours if the wind is good' when you are sailing or paddling; if on land, the reply will be equally non-committal. As they themselves never sail unless the wind is exactly right, it makes no difference to them, but an impatient Westerner gets no idea of distance to encourage him when he is trying to beat against the wind. These Malays told us that it was only a mile and a half and an easy walk to the kampong. It turned out to be 3 ½ miles and over one or two sharp ridges. The ridges were covered in small, sharp pebbles and where the path ran along the flat, it was covered with leaves which concealed broken rubber nuts. It was not a pleasant walk without shoes!

The Penghulu was sitting in some state, drinking beer and gave us some. It was one of the most welcome drinks of my life. We explained our position to him and he summoned a Chinaman who owned a junk. The Chinaman refused at first to take us anywhere, and there followed an interesting scene in which the Malays bullied an obviously frightened Chinaman into taking us to Sumatra. He finally agreed to take us to Kateman Island and charged a very high price to do so. Although none of the Malays had ever been to the Indragiri, they confidently asserted that it was near Kateman; as usual they had no idea how far Kateman was, so we had no means of checking their information. But it was agreed that the Chinaman should take us to Kateman for S\$150, of which half was to be paid to him on starting and the other half at the other end, the trip taking two days. The Penghulu said that the charge was excessive and advised us not to pay him the second half! The remainder of the party were paddled round the island by the Malays, and we left about 5.00 p.m. We brought some food in the kampong and had quite a stock on board the boat, some of it 'on the hoof' in the form of chickens. At about 11 p.m. the Chinese serang suddenly anchored and waited for the dawn. We spent an uneasy night rolling slightly and wondering why we had anchored, since there was no land near us. At dawn we found ourselves about 3 miles off the Sumatran coast and we sailed southwards along it. The man sailing the boat was obviously handling it badly, and when at about 9.00 a.m. he ran us on a sandbank quite unnecessarily, we cross-questioned him and found that he was normally crew, the serang having stayed behind. There was nothing to be done about it, so we ate some of the chickens and waited for the tide to rise. Unfortunately, some of the party got very badly sunburnt.

The tide turned and we reached a kampong opposite Pulau Burong about 3.00 p.m.; there, the Malays said that Kateman was another 3 hours' sail, if the wind was good. We had had enough of the junk; we felt we had been cheated both by the serang remaining behind and over the distance involved, and as the finances of the party were running low, I had few scruples in withholding the S\$75.

The Malays agreed to take us to a place called Kariman Mandat which, they said, was up the Kateman River and from there we could get more sampans to reach the Indragiri. They said that we would have a short walk through the jungle. After the usual meal, we slept on the pier until the tide changed and the Malays insisted on starting although it was the middle of the night.

The trip to Kateman Island or Sungli Guntang took only 1½ hours, and not the four hours previously estimated. At Sungli Guntang we met Major Leech again with his party and found they were going the same route as ourselves. The Dutch Controleur (District Officer) had left Sungli Guntang, but the hospital services were still working and we had the various cuts and scratches caused by the coral when the Columbine sank, cleaned and dressed.

The Malays paddled us up the river for 6 hours without a rest except for one short stop at a coffee shop. Each sampan had two paddlers who rowed standing and facing forward. It was a hot day and a fairly strong current was running against us, but they did not seem in the least distressed. The river was very dull with muddy mangrove swamps on both sides and only a few mud fish flopping and running about.

[To be continued in July].

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

DATES FOR 2013

TUESDAY – 23RD APRIL. Spring Meeting at the National Memorial Arboretum.

As mentioned in the Editorial, this meeting at 6 p.m. has been arranged for all Stakeholders. The NMA's plans for creating a world-class Centre for Remembrance are to be unveiled at this meeting. Building work is due to start later this year on the extension of the Visitor Centre.

The NMA needs to know how many people are likely to attend. If any MVG members would like to go to represent the Group, please let **Rosemary** know as soon as possible.

TUESDAY – 7TH MAY. Gardening get-together in the MVG's Memorial Garden Plot.

Several members have already said that they will help to give the Garden its usual spring clean. This involves rubbing down the benches & cleaning the brass plaques; weeding the dry stone wall and paved area; weeding the areas surrounding the trees and bamboo bushes & mulching them; cleaning the memorial stone and plaques; flattening the molehills in the grass areas (if they are still apparent). We also have a lot of fun while we are working, and if the weather is good, we make time to sit down and enjoy the day.

We will be there from about 10.30 a.m. onwards, for a general get-together, and a little gardening thrown in! If you would like to come just for a day out at the NMA, where there is plenty to look at, we would be delighted to see you. Please let **Jonathan** or **Rosemary** know.

SUNDAY – 19TH MAY. 16th Annual Service of Remembrance at the FEPOW Church in Wymondham, Norfolk.

The Church of Our Lady and St. Thomas of Canterbury, which was built by Father Malcolm Cowan, (himself a former FEPOW) contains within it the special FEPOW Chapel, in which the 3 hand-written Books of Remembrance are housed in a glass topped cabinet, together with the Addendum Book which was added in the Millennium. The original 3 books contain the names of FEPOWs of all nationalities who died in the prison camps of the Far East. The Addendum Book contains the names of all other FEPOWs who survived the camps & returned home. The books are on view & the pages turned every day. If you would like to attend this service, please contact the Secretary of the FEPOW Church to apply for a ticket and book your seat. For details of the Service time and how to book, see their website: <http://www.fepow-memorial.org.uk> Space is fairly limited and it is advisable to book your seat early.

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

It was reported in January that the MVG planned to hire one of the Marquee Pods at the Arboretum for V-J Day, so that, in the event of wet weather, we would be able to have our Service and picnic luncheon in the dry. However, not only did the cost turn out to be prohibitive (600 GBP), but also we would not have been allowed to take our picnic lunch into the Marquee. Only food purchased from the Arboretum may be consumed there. This would have meant ordering a buffet lunch at a cost of about 15GBP per person, or for members to queue up and buy food from the Arbour Restaurant. It was felt that under these circumstances, we would take a chance with the weather and hope that it will be fine this year. We hope that this meets with members' approval.

We hope that as many of you as possible will try to attend this important event in the MVG's calendar – the 68th anniversary of V-J Day.

A DATE FOR AUSTRALIAN DIARIES.

SATURDAY – 31ST AUGUST. MERDEKA DAY SERVICE IN KINGS PARK, PERTH W.A.

Organized by the MBV WA inc., details of this service will be given in the next newsletter by our Australian secretary Elizabeth Adamson.

SATURDAY – 19TH OCTOBER. Annual Reunion and Luncheon at the RAF Club, Piccadilly, London – 12 to 4 p.m.

Hugh has been in touch with the RAF Club, and he is waiting for new menus to be brought out. The cost of the luncheon this year will be no more than 36GBP per person for two courses with tea or coffee and petit fours served afterwards. As usual, there will be a pay bar where drinks and wine can be obtained. More details about the speaker will be given in July.

For new members who may not have been to the luncheon before – there is plenty of time for having a drink and meeting old and new friends before the start of the lunch, which is a sit down meal with silver service. We also hold a raffle after the lunch, with the proceeds going in to Group funds. Raffle prizes are gratefully received. If you would like to come, please let **Hugh Chaplin** know, with the number of guests you may wish to bring. Bookings can be provisional, with confirmation and payment made later, by the end of SEPTEMBER to **Rosemary Fell**, with cheques made out as for subscriptions.

We thank **Hugh** very much for arranging the luncheon again.

SATURDAY – 26TH OCTOBER. Vocal Orchestra Concert "Singing to Survive", in Chichester – sponsored by the MVG.

Details about the concert can be found on P.2 and on the flyer which is included with this newsletter. Please try to attend this unique concert. Tickets can be obtained from the Bookshop in Chichester, or from **Rosemary Fell**. Please note that cheques should be made out to **Mrs. R. Fell MVG Concert Account**. We are very grateful to the organizing committee, under their Chairman, Dr. Bernice Archer, for all their hard work in setting up this concert and making all the arrangements.

SUNDAY – 27TH OCTOBER. Unveiling Ceremony of the Repatriation Memorial in Southampton – arranged by the RFH
Meg Parkes, Chairman of the Researching FEPOW History Group, has given the details for this ceremony on P.3 of the newsletter. If you are able to attend both the Vocal Orchestra Concert and this unveiling ceremony, it will make a very fitting week-end of remembrance. Funds are still needed for the 5,000GBP cost of the memorial. Details of where to send your donation and how to make out the cheque can also be found on P.3.

SUNDAY – 10TH NOVEMBER. Remembrance Sunday Service and March Past at the Cenotaph in Whitehall.
Please let **Rosemary** know if you would like to join the group of marchers this year. We are only allocated 12 tickets and we do have a regular group of marchers. However, there are usually a couple of spare places, so do get in touch early.

DATES FOR 2014

AUSTRALIAN DATES

FRIDAY – 14TH FEBRUARY. Service at Point Walter Reserve, Perth W.A.
The annual service at the Australian Army Nurses Memorial takes place next year on 14th February, the date on which the SS Vyner Brooke was sunk by the Japanese with the appalling loss of life. Please contact **Robert Gray** in Perth for more details if you wish to attend next year.

SATURDAY – 15TH FEBRUARY. Service in the City of Stirling, Memorial Gardens.
In due course, details about the 3rd commemoration service next February in Perth W.A. will be available and announced in *Apa Khabar*.

DATES FOR 2015

SINGAPORE – 12TH SEPTEMBER 2015. 70TH Anniversary of the signing of the Japanese surrender on 12th Sept 1945.
We plan to arrange a series of events along the lines of those which took place in February 2012 – a tour, a lunch at the Bark Café in the Changi Museum, as well as attending the Service in Kranji Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery. These events may take place over the week before and after the 12th September which falls on a Saturday.

ASSISTANT WEBMASTER SOUGHT

We are looking for someone with experience of dealing with entering data on websites, with a little time to spare to help **Jonathan** and **Brian** with the MVG website. We would prefer someone who lives in the U.K. for ease of contact, but the distance is not important. If you think you can help, please contact **Jonathan** by e-mail – address below.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE NOW DUE FOR PAYMENT.

Details are given on the enclosed payment sheet. Please return the tear off slip with your cheque or notification of another form of payment.

In the U.K. newsletters will be posted to you unless e-mailed copies have been requested. In other parts of the world, except Australia, newsletters will be e-mailed unless you have asked for printed copies to be sent. In Australia, Elizabeth will send out printed copies to all members.

Receipts are no longer posted, but I will do my best to e-mail you to let you know I have received your payment, and thank you for any donation added to your subscription.

If you have already sent your subscription, thank you very much for your prompt payment. Please ignore returning the tear-off section.

NEW FORMAT FOR THE NEWSLETTER

We hope you will like the “new look” of the newsletter. As mentioned in the editorial, the idea of a booklet was suggested by our Australian Secretary, Elizabeth Adamson. We think it makes the newsletter easier to read, and if there are no objections, we will add a cover in July.

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