



APA KHABAR

4th EDITION
OCTOBER 2005

The last 3 months have been very busy ones for the Malayan Volunteers Group, particularly the month of August, when members participated in the 60th Anniversary Services of V-J Day in Alrewas and in Kanchanaburi, Thailand, on 15th August, and at the Cenotaph in London on 21st August. These events were equally memorable, unforgettable and rewarding. Thank you very much to everyone who supported the MVG at these events. No doubt, much will be written about the commemorations from several different viewpoints, and it is difficult to write in detail and do justice to all the various facets of these celebrations. The following accounts will, of necessity, be personalized, and for that, please forgive any shortcomings in content.

SINGAPORE VOLUNTEER CORPS STANDARD.

Many of you may be wondering why there has been no mention of the SVC Standard, and why it was not paraded at Alrewas and in London. This is the one piece of sad news which must be reported. Despite the valiant efforts of all those people involved in the research into the exact details of the replica standard, particularly Audrey McCormick, whose brainchild this was, we were badly let down at the final hurdle by the flag maker.

The standard was ordered in good faith through a reputable U.K. flag maker. The flag details were provided to the required standard and within the time limit set by the manufacturer. We were assured that there would be no problem in producing the standard well before 15th August. There was no mention of where the standard was to be made, and we did not think to enquire, assuming that it was to be made in the U.K. At the beginning of August, a few phone calls were made to the flag manufacturer for an update on the progress of the flag, and assurances were made to both Audrey McCormick and myself that all was well. As time passed, and with only one week to go until V-J Day, our phone calls became more urgent, until we were finally told the truth about our order. The manufacture of our flag had been passed to a firm in Pakistan, and in the 2 weeks before V-J Day, the U.K. firm had been unable to contact the Pakistani maker by phone or e-mail. On Thursday, 11th August, during the last phone call with the U.K. flag maker, in which I was assured that everything had been done to find out what had happened to our order, the decision to cancel the order was finally made. The only fortunate thing to emerge from the whole sorry saga is that no money had been paid out, and the U.K. firm has waived any cancellation fees.

The donations, which MVG members have so generously given towards the cost of the standard, have now been added to the general funds. This money will be put towards other projects, unless members specifically request that we should re-order the SVC Standard through another flag manufacturer. PLEASE WOULD YOU LET ME KNOW IF YOU WISH THE MVG TO PURSUE THIS COURSE OF ACTION.

DEDICATION OF THE MEMORIAL STONE TABLET – ALREWAS, 15TH AUGUST.

August 15th dawned bright and clear, with a gentle breeze to prevent the heat from becoming overpowering. It turned out to be an amazing and quite extraordinary day — wonderfully rewarding to have the MVG stone tablet dedicated at last, and satisfying to witness the opening of a remarkable memorial museum to the FEPOWs.

The day was not without its hiccups, as those of you who had to park at some distance from the Arboretum and be bused in, know all too well. There were far too many people trying to get to the Arboretum for the 2 small minibuses to cope with. We arrived early, and having co-opted Thyra Godber (who came with us) to be my adopted mother for the day, we were able to use my real mother's disabled badge, and drive into the Arboretum itself. It worked very well, and Thyra was only too happy to oblige.

The plan was for my husband, Donald, to meet everyone arriving at the Lychgate, while I waited for the Rev. Geoffrey Mowat, John Hedley, the Piper and the Standard Bearers, at the Visitors' Entrance. In theory it should have been foolproof, but the gate into the FEPOW Plot, next to the new Museum, had been opened, and several people, including the Piper and Standard Bearers went through this gate and were missed. Meanwhile, people kept on coming by the bus load and car load, and it was obvious by 10a.m. that the estimated numbers would soon be greatly exceeded. Indeed, it is now thought that between 3000 and 3500 people visited the Arboretum that day.

At about 10.45, I had given up the idea of finding Mr. McGrory, the Piper, and the Standard Bearers, and walked down to the Lychgate. The scene which greeted me appeared to be one of chaos, although Donald assured me that it was well organized chaos. There were crowds of people milling around the new museum, just to the left of the Lychgate; crowds of people wandering along the pathways towards the COFEPOW marquee to the left of the NMBVA Plot, where we were due to parade; and crowds of people walking in and out of the FEPOW Plot through the Lychgate. Luckily, amongst the crowds were our Piper and Standard Bearers. Our two wonderful Veterans, Geoffrey and John had arrived earlier.



Above:- Rev. Geoffrey Mowat (Malacca Volunteer) dedicating the MVG Stone (centre) and John Hedley (JVE Volunteer) waiting (right) to unveil the Stone.

Below:- The Piper and the 3 Standard Bearers.



It was imperative to start our ceremony on time so that it would be finished before the COFEPOW events were due to start. Luckily the Piper and Standard Bearers had been well briefed as to their role, and once the Rev. Mowat was robed and his thoughtfully printed Service Sheets had been distributed, we were ready to start our procession. Richard McGrory, our Scottish Piper, did a superb job in forging his way through the crowds. Once he started piping, the 3 NMBVA Standard Bearers (kindly organized by Maurice Humphrey from the Doncaster and South Yorkshire Branch of the NMBVA) fell in behind him, followed by the Rev. Geoffrey Mowat, and the rest of us paraded behind them towards the NMBVA Plot. The crowds parted as if by magic as we all moved forward. On arrival at the plot, the Piper and Standard Bearers marched to the top of the plot, and arranged themselves above the outline of the white Malay Kris, bearing the MVG stone tablet, which was draped with the Union Jack. John Hedley and the Rev. Mowat took up their positions next to the stone, and the rest of us arranged ourselves in a semi-circle around the lower end of the Kris. It was estimated that between 100 and 120 people attended the ceremony.

The Service had been beautifully arranged by Geoffrey Mowat, a Malacca Volunteer, and we found it a very moving experience. During the Service, the stone was unveiled by John Hedley, a JVE Veteran, and it ended with the piper playing a lament.

The rest of the day was taken up with the COFEPOW events, starting with their Service of Remembrance in the marquee. It was filled to capacity, and many people had to stand outside. Unfortunately, the proximity of the food, drink and other stalls meant that it was difficult to hear what was going on in the marquee, unless seated inside. Also it was difficult, later on, to get near enough to the museum to hear the speeches given by John Barkshire (Chairman of the NMA) Carol Cooper (Chairman of COFEPOW) and Air Marshall Sir John Baird. We enjoyed watching the lone Mark 8 Spitfire fly over the Arboretum and Museum after the speeches, and the pilot gave a good display including the victory role, which made us all clap and cheer. After lunch, we were allowed into the museum in ticketed groups, at specified times. Even so, the large crowds present meant that it was only possible to have a fairly superficial look around, and it was difficult to read all the boards in detail. I did not see any mention of the Malayan Volunteers, which was disappointing because Jonathan Moffatt had been contacted about them in the planning stage of the museum by Dick Meadows, one of the designers. However, the overall impression of the museum was a good one. The building is light and airy, the information boards are suspended between thick "bamboo" poles, and arranged in sections forming rooms, through which one walks. At the end of the museum is a large half globe, showing the Far East countries which the Japanese invaded and occupied during WW11. It took up a great deal of space, which, in my view, could have been better used, and it was not entirely accurate in what it showed. Only 2 of the Java Windows were in place and on display. Next to the windows was a computer controlled device which enabled visitors to the museum to "dial up" their relations' names and project them onto a screen. It seemed a bit of a gimmick, and, in my view, cannot adequately replace the traditional method of displaying names on boards of wood or stone, although I understand that this was not possible with so many names and only a small space. Upstairs there is a small library and archive room, which we were unable to view. A second visit to the museum is a must, but on an occasion when one can view it at a leisurely pace and with time to spare.

As we left the Arboretum, we were filled with many emotions and a great deal of satisfaction on what had been a remarkable day in every way, including the weather

THE BURMA STAR SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE AT THE CENOTAPH, WHITEHALL. — 21ST AUGUST.

This was another extraordinary day, full of emotion and satisfaction at witnessing and participating in a national service to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of V-J Day. 8 members of the MVG attended this service, including 1 veteran, 4 daughters and 2 grandsons. Early arrivals were vetted at strict security controls in Whitehall, near the Horse Guards entrance, and then allowed to walk down towards the Cenotaph. Wreath Layers and Standard Bearers were asked to report to King Charles Street, where instructions were given on procedure. The Wreath Layers were divided into groups of 10, and a Grenadier RSM went through the 9 or so stages involved in wreath laying, which were then practiced across the street out of sight of the assembled crowd. The MVG Wreath was a simple poppy wreath, with the following inscription:-

In Remembrance of the
MALAYAN VOLUNTEERS
both Military and Civilian
who served in WW11
1941-1945

Before the service started, the Gurkha Band paraded on to Whitehall from King Charles Street, preceded by 2 Pipers, and followed by the Standard Bearers and Wreath Layers. Once we were all in position, just before 12 p.m. the official party, led by HRH The Prince of Wales, came out of the Foreign Office and took up their positions in front of the Cenotaph. The party included General Sir Michael Walker, Chief of the Defence Staff, the 3 Service Chiefs of Staff, representing the armed forces, and John Prescott, representing the Government. To the right of the official party was The Viscount Slim, President of the Burma Star Association, and The Earl Effingham, President of the Royal British Legion.

The service was taken by a Burma Star Chaplain, during which the Kohima Epitaph and the Exhortation were recited by The Viscount Slim and The Earl Effingham respectively, followed by a piper playing "The Heroes of Kohima" and Reveille. More than 30 wreaths were laid on behalf of many Far East Groups, and it was very rewarding to hear the Malayan Volunteers mentioned in the commentary on the BBC TV coverage of the service.

After the service, the ticketed guests of the Burma Star Association walked down Whitehall and through Parliament Square to Westminster Hall, to the applause of the crowds watching the ceremony. At the entrance to Westminster Hall, guests were



Above:- The MVG Wreath which was laid on the Cenotaph.

Below:- Rosemary Fell (centre) returning from laying the MVG Wreath.



greeted by The Viscount Slim and John Prescott. A marvellous buffet lunch had been laid on by the Burma Star Association, which was much appreciated after a very early start to the day. Despite the crowds gathered in the Hall, the MVG members managed to find each other, and had an enjoyable meeting. Prince Charles arrived later and mingled with the guests, talking to various people in the Hall, including Malayan Veteran Richard Yardley, and his grandson Oliver. Prince Charles ended his visit by making a speech, in which he praised the fortitude and courage of the Veterans who had taken part in the Far East Theatre of War.

As the assembled guests dispersed from Westminster Hall, to return to all parts of the United Kingdom, it does well to reflect on those valiant men who are Veterans of a largely forgotten, and little known about, theatre of war. It was a day on which those who are still alive were honoured, and those who did not return, but lie in the corner of a foreign land, were remembered with pride. The sun shone from a cloudless sky on this wonderful day, and there was a feeling that the Veterans and their families had been able to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of V-J Day publicly at the Cenotaph, in the presence of Royalty. Thank you to The Burma Star Association for organizing a truly memorable day.

V-J DAY COMMEMORATIONS IN KANCHANABURI, THAILAND.

The following report comes from Jonathan Moffatt, who attended the V-J Day services in Thailand, together with other members of the MVG.

Largely through e mail contact a disparate group of 15 persons from 5 nations came together, meeting at Kanchanaburi on August 13th. Their common interest was British Malaya and the Malayan Volunteers; some were members of the Malayan Volunteers Group and the group included a daughter and a widow of Singapore Volunteer POWs. Age range 15 to 83, we all got on terribly well.

On August 13th some of us visited the Thailand Burma Railway Centre - very impressive and deserving of our support. Much work still going on with the developing of the reading room/library/archive. From the first floor a panoramic view of the beautifully maintained cemetery. Particularly moving was a glass cabinet containing simple items like razors, cap badges and marmite jars found in the area of the POW camps. Rod Beattie and his staff were a mine of information and enthusiasm.

On August 14th we met Rod at Chungkai cemetery, placed our MVG wreath - not a poppy one but locally made with colourful tropical flowers - before visiting particular graves on behalf of friends and relatives. Rod then took us to his 'dig' in the area of the Chungkai cookhouse. By this time the rain was coming down and we got nicely muddy. From Chungkai we went on to Namtok for a brilliant lunch then to Hellfire Pass. Again a very impressive museum managed by Bill Slape. It was a very moving experience to walk through the Pass and here we placed our second wreath against the back of the controversial new memorial.

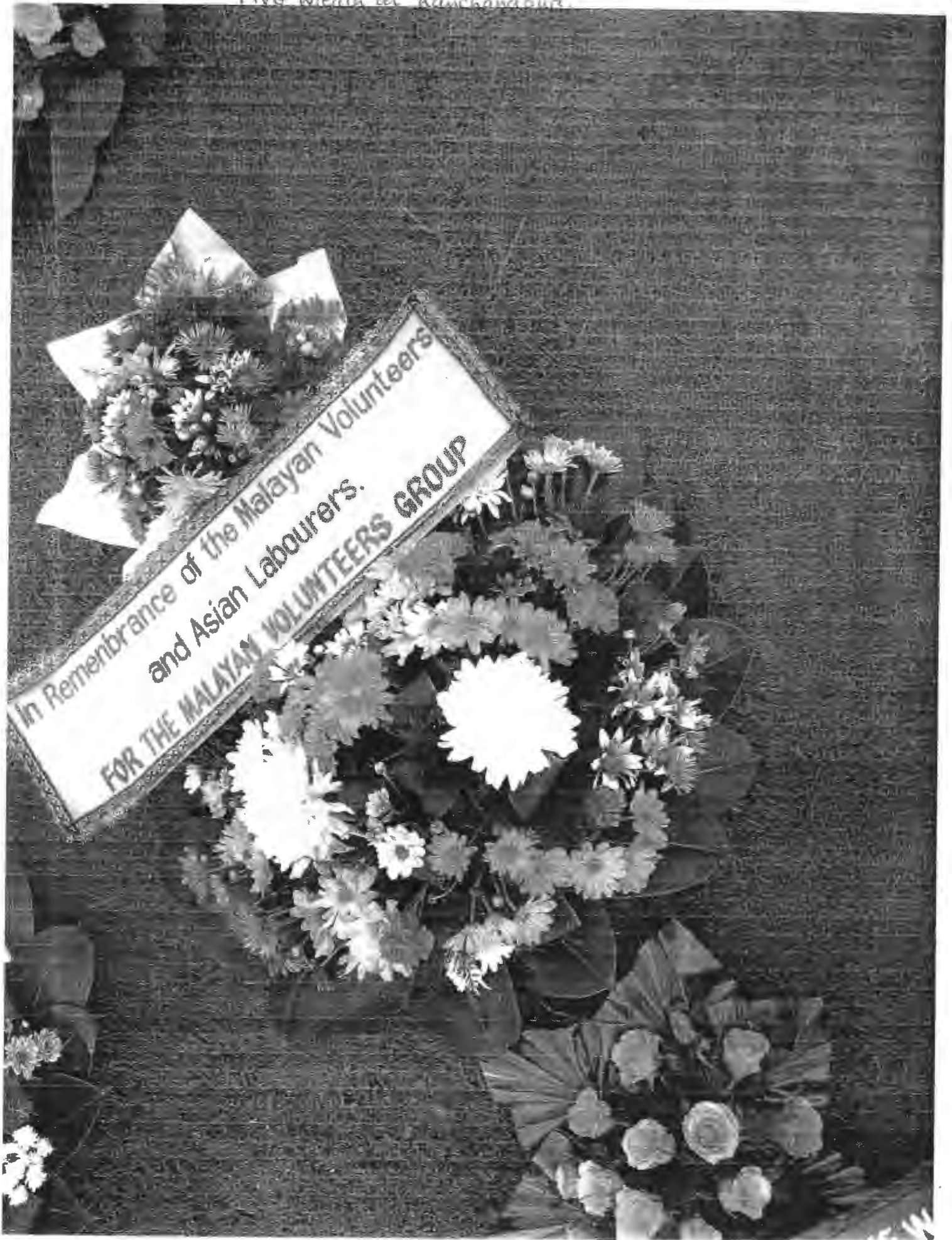
On August 15th we mustered at the TBRC for the 11.00 service in the cemetery. It was a bright, sunny day and chairs were placed around the Cross of Remembrance. 5 Australian veterans looked marvellous in their slouch hats and medals; one was a native Australian. There were also 2 Dutch veterans and a 'White Elephant' [Thai Special Forces, Force 136]. Members of Boon Pong's family were there and prominent included the British Ambassador and those of other nations as well as Thai Police and Army officers.

We were firmly brought to order for the start of the service by a young Royal Marine warrant officer on secondment to the British Embassy. A short and memorable service followed. Di Elliot gave a moving talk about her experiences as the child of an Australian FEPOW. The Last Post was played by two Thai Army buglers and we sang 'Abide with Me.' Numerous wreaths were presented including our third MVG one. The rain then came down; at first gently then a tropical downpour as the service ended.

We joined a reception at the TBRC before heading for the Wampo Viaduct. On the 16th we visited Chungkai Cutting and took a last look at the cemetery before heading our separate ways with a lot of memories.

I want to end by saying that we should do everything we can to preserve the history of these events and give both financial and moral support to the TBRC and its friendly staff - Rod, Terry, Hugh and Thai colleagues - many thanks!

MVG Wreath at Kamchanaburi.



DISBANDING OR NOT OF THE FMSVF.

Following a statement in the 3rd Edition of "Apa Khabar", which said that the FMSVF was disbanded, following the retreat of all military forces on to Singapore Island, several queries have been received, asking for clarification of this. Officially, in strict military terms, it would appear that the overall chain of command of the FMSVF ceased to exist, because their top officers were re-allocated to other forces on arrival in Singapore. Nevertheless, various fighting units remained intact as FMSVF units until the end, notably the MMG (Mobile Machine Gun Company) which was fighting on Blakan Mati, as one of our Veteran Members John Mackie, from New Zealand, has verified. He remained in the FMSVF during and after the war, only resigning his commission in 1949. Therefore it would seem to be a question of interpretation as to the total disbanding of the FMSVF prior to capitulation, as this obviously did not occur. In those difficult and chaotic days, with limited means of communication, it was inevitable that some units continued to function under the leadership of their local commanders.

On the same subject, Michael Pether, also from New Zealand writes:-

"Audrey McCormick is quite correct in the sense where she tells me that the FMSVF, which military records show as part of the 3rd Indian Corps in December 1941 and at its highest level ie. the entity comprising the 4 Battalions plus the Kedah and the Kelantan Volunteer Forces plus the Armoured Car Coy., the Volunteer Light Battalions, the Volunteer Field Ambulance, the Field Survey Coy etc. was "disbanded", with the re-allocation of its top officers upon arrival in Singapore. However, it is clear that some FMSVF Companies were reconstituted to make up for losses due to casualties and the loss of Malay soldiers who chose to remain in their home States.

The one I am most familiar with is the Mobile Machine Gun Company, described in detail by 2nd Lt. Charles Thornton, 2nd Selangor Btn. in his diary. As a platoon commander he describes his unit's experiences in Malaya and then their arrival in Singapore, where – in the same manner as John Mackie does in his biography – they "assembled/were quartered" at St. Patrick's School, East Coast Road with other Selangor, Perak and Negri Sembilan Battalion personnel.

The MMG Company appears to have been reconstituted with Selangor and Perak officers and men in its move on 24th January to Blakan Mati (where it relieved the Manchesters who left for Seletar). Interestingly, this view of it still being clearly viewed as a FMSVF Company is confirmed independently in the history of the 2nd Battalion, The Loyal Regiment, which says that on 1st February 1942 they "...crossed to Blakan Mati where Lt.Col. Elrington (Loyals) took over command of the Coast Artillery and a machine gun company of the FMSVF who were manning the island's beach defences..."

Thornton records he had a platoon of 57 men on Blakan Mati which manned up to 6 machine gun posts (machine gun posts are mentioned up to # 21 so I am not sure how many existed) – which indicates that there were probably at least 100-200 men in this FMSVF Company on Blakan Mati during late January until surrender. He talks of Coy HQ on the island many times in his diary and records the changes in their Commanding Officer on 29th January from Major Windsor to Major Smith, a Perak Volunteer.

So there you have it – not simple but a matter of semantics."

A final word on the subject also comes from Michael, who says in another e- mail:-

"T.J."Tommy" Thomson – Private, 2nd Selangor Btn., FMSVF who made an escape by prau from Blakan Mati after the fall of Singapore, was quite clear, when I spoke to him, that the Mobile Machine Gun Company of the Selangor Btn. was still in formation as such on Blakan Mati at the time of surrender,"

INFORMATION EXCHANGE.

John B. Mackie (Captain, 1st Perak Btn.,FMSVF [Selangor Btn. 1936-1939] who was in Changi, then in Batu Lintang, Kuching Borneo POW camps.) writes:-

"....In the 2nd issue (of "Apa Khabar") the name of Mark Kennaway came up, and I remember I had a photo taken at his Tanjong Malim bungalow, in 1939 I think. There are quite a lot of people in the photo – mostly local planters and their wives, some of whose names I recall. I am sending a copy of this photo as you might like to put it in an issue of "Apa Khabar", which might result in other names coming up.

In the back row, starting from the RIGHT are:- Jack Brown; Bownsn; I can't remember the next 5; then George Callard (a bit smudged); then Bird? Can't recall any of the rest in that row.

In the middle row, mostly ladies, 3rd from the RIGHT is Mark John Kennaway himself, about to retire I seem to recollect; other names escape me.

Front row, starting from the RIGHT, are Hadoke; Stonehewer; ?; then one of George Callard's nieces; then Joyce Brown (Jack's wife); then myself (I got hell later for being amongst all the women!); and that's about all I can recall.

I am also sending a photo of the FMSVF platoon I commanded (as a 2nd Lt.) in Kuala Kubu Bharu – Tanjong Malim area. Some of the same people are in it. The names of the ones I can remember are under the photo.

The 3rd attachment is of my record of service in the FMSVF....."

Editor's note: Apologies for the incomplete photos — this is how they printed out.



KUALA KUBU KHANU / LABON, KUEVA G. 1938



Back row: Brown, Bird, Hodges ? Abbot Murray? Note
 Middle " R. MacArthur, Stonehewer, ? ? Paxton-Harding, Bowman, ?
 Front: " ? * Mackie, Mummen, Osborn, Colastrens ?

Peter Gibson writes:-

My aunt, who died last year, was married to the Assistant on my father's oil palm estate at Kluang – Oil Palm Plantations Ltd. During our frequent telephone conversations she used to mention "Piper" Gray who was a planter in Johore. He was apparently called "Piper" because he used to play the bagpipes while marching around the Kluang Club on Old Year's Night. Could this be Peter Gray's father? I would be interested to know if he is the planter my aunt knew. Aunt Kay was in Johore during the 1930's before moving north to Temangan.

Karen Harney writes:-

I am the daughter of a Malayan Volunteer – not one of long duration, I think. He was a Penang Volunteer, but I think he was in the Local Defence Force, because when he got to Singapore he was told to put down his rifle and be taken as a civilian. That is what he did, and went to work with his firm, the Hongkong Bank until capture. I have a list of Penang & Kedah deceased written by my dad, if anyone is researching for a name.

Mason Nelson writes:-

Perhaps opportune to mention my mother, Alice Nelson's service, as a volunteer with the Navy in Singapore -1941/42. Recruited, after interview at the Naval Base, as a TWA – temporary woman assistant – and served on RN Degaussing Range on Pulau Blakang Mati – now Sentosa. Dangerous job as she and fellow volunteer (who I think was Gracia Lewis, wife of Max – long time MD of F&N) had to find their own way daily to & from the service launch at Jardine Steps in the docks, an area under almost constant bombing. This in itself involved one particularly narrow escape! The complement on the island's installation comprised an RN LT. I/C (a Canadian); one Petty Officer and a naval rating, assisted by the 2 TWAs. Among ships passed over the range, in mother's time, were the battleship Prince of Wales & battle cruiser Repulse, shortly before their disastrous last foray into the South China Sea. We have a voice tape made by my mother, then in her mid 80s, describing her work and also a visit to Alexandra Hospital soon after the sinkings and arrival there of the many badly wounded/ injured survivors picked up by the escorting destroyers.

This, perhaps, enough to go on with, except to mention that her final departure was on the epic voyage in the last convoy to leave, in the Empire Star. She and another lady escapee (unknown and unnamed) in the absence of any other tiny piece of deck space on that hugely crowded merchant ship, made the voyage in the corner of one wing of the ship's bridge, sitting on cushions the Captain himself brought from his cabin. Hence close witness to stirring events!

The point of this message is to underline the aspect that no recognition ever has been made, as far as I am aware, of the TWAs service. Not that my mother did so much as mention that subject; but it does interest me. Years ago, when living in England, I wrote to the appropriate quarter in the RN asking about Service Medals? The response was that as not serving in uniform, not entitled.

My father was the author of "The Story of Changi Singapore", first published, in the absence of any other interested party, by myself in 1974. It took a very long time to move a modest print run of what since has become regarded as an important work. In 2001, the rights were donated to The Changi Chapel and Museum, who then republished. In his determination to write a concise and accurate account of life in Changi, my father omitted much anecdotal material of the foregoing kind, which he considered as a distraction from his main theme.

Hence my own continuing attempts to see if any further light can be thrown on the subject of the TWAs.

Hannah Barker writes:-

My grandfather, Maurice Priest, died when I was 13 and my grandmother's memory is fading so the specific details of his POW experience are vague, apart from knowing he was captured and taken to Changi barracks. My grandfather had volunteered in the Straits Settlements Volunteer Force. He was sent to Thailand (Ban Pong) and worked on the Death Railway before being sent back to Singapore.

He was an Accountant for a rubber plantation and lived in Singapore and Kuala Lumpur – he loved Malaya. He was British and was born just outside London. He also worked in New York as a Stockbroker and was around in the 1929 Wall Street crash. In the mid 1930s he moved to Malaya. He often talked about the fact that he had to shoot his own prized polo ponies before the Japs took over complete control of Singapore, otherwise, he said, they would be killed for horse meat by them. He also had his property, land, private plane and jewel collection confiscated by the Japanese. In Dec/Jan 1941/42 he was engaged to a British ex-pat whose family lived in Singapore. His fiancée and her mother left Singapore to return to England, because they feared for their safety if Singapore should fall, following the events in the fall of Hong Kong. AS their boat left Singapore harbour, it , along with 2 other ships, were blown up by a Japanese aircraft. Apparently this is mentioned in a document in the Imperial War Museum.

My grandfather talked briefly about his experiences, and he was highly involved in the London FEPOW community. I was too young to remember most of his tales, most of which I know from my mum. He did say one thing I really remember about a Thai monk, who, at one camp, gave the prisoners eggs when he could. My Grandfather did survive, but most of those who moved from camp to camp with him, who were also Volunteers, died.

He came back to England in 1946 after spending a year in a hospital in Australia. He spent most of the rest of his life in and out of hospitals, suffering from the aftermath of many recurring tropical illnesses. When he was recovering from his ordeal in Roehampton Hospital in London, in 1947, he met my nan, a northern Irish nurse who was herself in India and Egypt in the second world war.

I feel very passionately about this subject, and hope to carry on my research after my BA degree dissertation, when I apply to do an MA degree.

Editor's note:- If any one can give Hannah any more information about her Grandfather, I can put you in touch with her.

Michael Pether has sent the following report:-

" Michael Pether, of Auckland, New Zealand is undertaking research on the disappearance of his uncle, a young FMSVF soldier, whilst escaping from the Island of Blakan Mati a day or two after the surrender of Singapore. He writes to enquire whether MVG members recognize and can provide contact details (or information from their diaries or memoirs) of the following FMSVF soldiers who – together with his uncle **Private J.W. "Jack" Clark, 2nd Selangor Btn., FMSVF** – were all listed in an official report in 1942 by a FMSVF soldier who had escaped to Australia as all "...being safe and well on Blakan Mati on 16 February 1942...."

- Sgt. C.J. K. Cooper
- Sgt. Peter Allcock (with Henry Waugh and whose wife's grandfather owned a distillery in Ipoh)
- Sgt. Limoe (a Danish person)
- Sgt. Williams (a dredgemaster from Taiping and who became a POW in Changi)
- L/Cpl Ingles (a tin miner from Taiping)
- Cpl. A.S. McNicol (a planter near Ipoh)
- Cpl. Howlett (a Federal Dispenser)
- Pte. Cooper
- Pte. Charles H. Fell (with Harper Gillfillan & Co. and listed as a member of the British Assn. of Malaysia and Singapore in 1973)
- Pte. H. Lee (an Australian)
- Pte. B.C. Henderson
- Pte. Madden (who was a POW in Changi)
- Pte. Murry or Murray (who was a POW in Changi)
- Pte. C.F. Smith
- Pte. E.S. Tiddeman (Taiping and a POW in Changi. Also listed as a member of the BAM&S in 1973)
- Pte. J. Taylor (who had a wife in Australia)
- Pte. Munro (a tin miner who had a mother and sister in Malaya in 1941)

Also Michael is keen to contact anyone who worked for ICI Malaya Ltd. during 1939-42 since his uncle was also a junior employee of that company during 1940-42.

He can be contacted by e-mail on mpether@xtra.co.nz or at:-
55, Te Pene Road, Maraetai, Auckland, New Zealand.
His phone/fax is New Zealand 09 5365490"

In another e-mail, Michael writes:-

"I was talking by phone in NZ yesterday with the son of Staff Sergeant C.R. Newton-King, 4th Pahang Battalion (he died about 5 years ago) who read me some of his father's memoirs covering his time in the FMSVF and the retreat through Malaya. To use C.R.N-K's words, he managed to experience the whole process through to the surrender "...without firing a shot in anger". It was interesting, however, because I have not come across much of the history of the Pahang Battalion."

Alison Mowat writes:-

"... I have not got round to joining the MVG because I was not absolutely sure my father, who is dead now, was a Malayan Volunteer. He did not talk about the war, and it is only recently that I have found his Prisoner-of-War letters to my mother. She was evacuated with us from Singapore to Perth in late January 1942, I was aged 3 and my sister Sue aged 1 and a ½. From reading letters sent to my grandfather in England, I know that he did volunteer to stay behind when they were given the option to go. He ended up in the position of acting Captain, although his letters in the war had the title of Lieutenant. Then when the army was disbanded, he tried, on 13th February, to join the Navy. But there we lose track of him, and he was taken to Changi and from there to Japan. Ricky Pennington (or possibly Brian to you) thought that he must be a Volunteer, as he volunteered to fight the Japanese and did not leave when given the option. My father's name is Geoffrey Harvey Caldicott. He was a civil engineer in the PWD."

In a later letter, Alison included an extract from a letter by J.S. Boissier, State Engineer PWD Malaya. She also gives a little more information about her evacuation with her mother and sister, as follows:-

"I never knew the name of the ship we went down on to Perth. I hunted out the little metal discs, which she gave me, when Blue Peter wanted metal from my children, but I felt this was part of my history and so did not part with them, although my

Extracts from a letter dated 28th July 1942 from
J.S.Boissier, State Engineer P.W.D.Malaya, now in England.

I can tell you as much of the later history of your son Geoffrey as anyone, for he acted as Staff Captain to me for the whole of the last month of the campaign....

In Johore I formed my own "circus" of P.W.D. men as they came back down the line and here picked up Geoffrey to act as my Adjutant, and we were together till the final week. There were perhaps a score of P.W.D. Engineers round Divn. H.Q. and entirely self contained. Our duties were primarily the construction or improvement of road communications, making defensive positions using 4,000 labourers a day, keeping essential services going, organising the orderly evacuation of the towns and villages and getting valuable material to the rear.

The P.W.D. remained behind doing this after the other authorities had gone, and Geoffrey and I remained behind after the P.W.D. had gone.... even driving back lorries and steam rollers ourselves.

I myself covered 4,000 miles in 7 weeks.... one had to travel about oneself to get things done.... and this is where Geoffrey was so useful, travelling himself or holding the job at H.Q. while I was away....

...Geoffrey and I had constantly to cover that straight bare stretch from Ayer Hitam to Labis with its warm corners at the cross roads and planes cruising up and down and having a crack at any target. For this reason one drove alone developing cock eyes and a pain in the neck from having to look in all directions at once, and a certain agility in evacuating the car for a roadside drain at the more unpleasant moments. Geoffrey was once foolish enough to stop at cross roads to enquire for me and had his car blown off him without damage to himself. I was a bit anxious about him and keeping an eye on roadside wrecks was glad to find him in a patch of jungle trying to mend 4 tyres.

Geoffrey was an excellent Aide, never spared himself, cheerful, efficient and generally looking for trouble, partly in the laudable desire to set an example amongst raw troops and partly to prove to himself (which incidentally was obvious to everyone) that he'd got guts. It is much more difficult to feel confidence alone (as we generally were) than in company....

We expected to hold the island and I established a new "circus" at 10th Mile B.Timah, with Geoffrey in attendance as before, in the area near the Aerodrome and Admiralty oil tanks which were constantly crumped and usually on fire. Things got more uncomfortable until on 8 Feb. the Japanese made their landing over running all our works.... It was now obvious that the P.W.D. could do nothing more to help the military.... I disbanded our "circus" and returned all officers to H.Q. including Geoffrey, who consulted me as to his position, I told him there was talk of getting the P.W.D. away in parties but he was still full of the offensive spirit and said he should rejoin in the R.N.V.R. who were organising Sea Commandos....

...These may have materialised though I doubt it as things were getting a bit chaotic by Friday 13 Feb. when I met him at P.W.D. H.Q. and told him to ask Nunn and Coales for advice that is the last I saw of him as we were moving off.

In most of these letters to relations I am able to assure them that the subject is alright. I cannot so pretend to you nor would you wish me to do so for Geoffrey is quite capable of being gallant. McConechy and the other man who preferred to stay behind had personal reasons, Geoffrey had none except gallantry and he was only carrying his previous principles to a logical conclusion if he considered it his duty to remain. There is no question of having resigned. If he chose to stop he was at liberty to do so. If he joined McConechy he will probably be alright, but if he went off with his Naval friends he will have been sure to have gone looking for trouble whether in Commando work or further evacuation in small boats.

I got to know him well and he was a topping boy.... He was a grand lad and you can be proud of him.

This all reads like an obituary notice but you can see that it is nothing of the sort. If one has more fears for him than for others it is only because he was adventurous and inspired by a sense of decency and duty. And there, unsatisfactory as it must be for you, it must be left until the lists come through which surely will not be so very long now.

Note Nunn was Director of Public Works.
Coales was Deputy Director of Public Works.
McConechy was State Engineer P.W.D.

Alison's account contd:-

did not want to see them again. She told me they were issued on board ship in case we were torpedoed, but there is no name of the ship, just my name and then c/o of PWD Spore, female English and Religion C.of E.

I know we left after 8th January which was the last time we saw my father. He had come down for my 3rd birthday. Then before my mother died, she told my cousin that we were really meant to come back to England, where our families were, and we were booked on this ship. But then she decided that my sister aged 1 and ½ needed more nappies, so she went to get some, and when she returned the ship had gone. I do not know the name of the ship, but tragically it went down with everyone. So after that no more ships went to England, and we left for Australia, I think before 30th January, as I read somewhere that my father returned to Singapore by 30th, and I know the last time we saw him was my birthday. If anyone knows the name of the ship that went down, I would like to know."

THE NATIONAL MALAYA AND BORNEO VETERANS ASSOCIATION.

We are very fortunate to have been welcomed so warmly by the NMBVA, and I would like to express our grateful thanks to Maurice Humphrey for all his help with the Stone Tablet Dedication at Alrewas on 15th August. Without his help, we would not have been able to site the Tablet in the Arboretum. Maurice is responsible for the maintenance of the NMBVA Plot, and the Kris, and he kindly provided us with our Standard Bearers from the Doncaster and South Yorkshire Branch of the NMBVA. The NMBVA have been persuaded by Maurice to re-make the Kris in a more permanent form, and he has opted to carry out the work involved as a favour to the organization. He has also kindly offered to include, not only the stone tablet in the new design, but also to incorporate our logo.

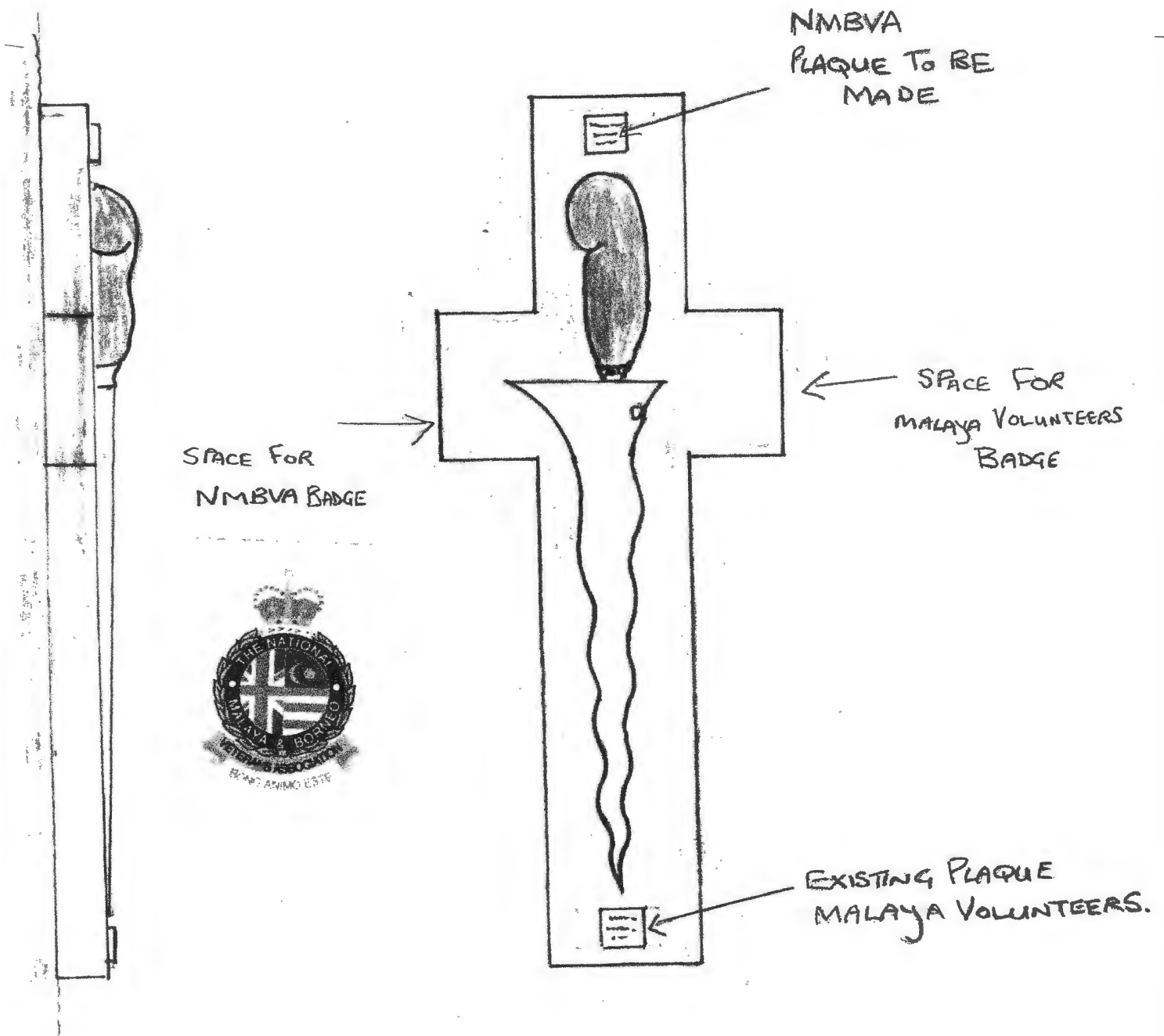
The new design is shown on the next page. I think it will be a great improvement on the present layout.

PROPOSED REPLACEMENT NMBVA MEMORIAL (NATIONAL ARBORETUM-ALREWAS)

- 1) CONSISTING A CONCRETE CROSS TO BE SEALED AND PAINTED IN WATERPROOF STONE COLOURED PAINT.
- 2) THE KRIS TO BE MOULDED CENTRAULY ON TOP ALSO IN CONCRETE AND SIMILARLY PAINTED TO SUIT.

TOTAL LENGTH 24 FT x 9 FT WIDE. x 4 FT.

(ALL EXISTING GRAVEL AND SURROUND REMOVED)



BOOKS.

"VOLUNTEER." By Paul Gibbs Pancheri, published by the author in 1995. ISBN 0 9526465 0 1
The Story of one Man's War in the East. A moving, occasionally humorous and at times exciting, account of the Author's adventures before, during and after the Malayan Campaign and as a Prisoner of War of the Japanese in Singapore and as a reluctant coolie on the Bangkok-Moulmein Railway.

"MY BRUSH WITH FORTUNE." By Ashley Jackson (FRCA). ISBN 0 436 22035 0
Ashley Jackson is a very talented and renowned Landscape Artist. He was born in Penang in 1940 and was evacuated to England via India as the Japanese invaded. His father was captured by the Japanese and interned at Labuan where he was murdered along with a number of Australian nurses as a spy.

"THE AMONOHASIDATE or THE GATE OF HEAVEN." By Richard Yardley, published privately by the author in 2003.
An account of life as a prisoner of war in the Far East coupled with some personal observations. 1942-1945.
Copies may be obtained from Richard Yardley.

"THE COLONEL OF TAMARKAN. Philip Toosey and the Bridge on the River Kwai." By Julie Summers. Published by Simon and Schuster 2005. ISBN 0 7432 6350 2
This book is reviewed by Jonathan Moffatt who writes:-

Anyone who has read Julie Summers 'Fearless on Everest,' a biography of Sandy Irvine, will know that Julie is an accomplished family historian and a compelling writer.

In 'The Colonel of Tamarkan' she turns her attention to her grandfather, LtColonel [later Brigadier] Philip Toosey, the real man behind 'the Bridge on the River Kwai'.

The book is a tremendous read. It will tell you much about Toosey's background and character; about the complexities of POW leadership; the construction of the Tamarkan bridges; the V-Scheme to obtain drugs and medical supplies for the sick POWs and the role of that brave Thai merchant, Boon Pong, as well as providing a detailed analysis of the epic David Lean movie that angered so many FEPOWs.

A number of recent publications about the Captivity have heavily relied on other publications or over used primary material. There is much that is fresh in this book, in the information, the interviews and the photos. The voice of Toosey himself runs through much of the text with material from his papers and taped interviews.

One is struck by the compassion, honesty and essential decency of Toosey as well as his courage, both in action on the retreat to Dunkirk and at Singapore, and in his greatest trial, the Captivity. His leadership by example, by no means typical in the POW camps, cost him many lashings from his captors, among them the curious figure of Saito who was not quite the 'decent Japanese NCO' that some have portrayed. Saito became a Christian post-war and claimed that Toosey changed the whole direction of his life. I was left feeling that Toosey let this man off lightly.

Toosey frequently acknowledged that he was fortunate not to have faced the horrors of camps up-country where 'nothing held the beast in check.' What is clear is that by assuming responsibility, maintaining discipline and exercising some influence over his captors, he saved numerous lives. In his own words: 'I felt I had a mission not only to save as many lives as possible but also to maintain human dignity in those ghastly circumstances.'

Julie Summers book is an important contribution to the history of the Captivity and highly recommended reading on the subject.

Jonathan Moffatt 2.9.05

ACCOUNTS.

The Malayan Volunteers Group accounts have been prepared by SJA Accountants Limited, 10, Rowan Close, Honiton, Devon. EX14 2YH, for the period from 13th October, 2003 (when the Volunteers' Bench Fund was set up) to 5th April, 2005. If anyone would like to have a full set of the accounts, please would you send a stamped addressed envelope to me and I will forward you a copy. The accounts have been prepared without cost to the MVG. The Accountant kindly donated her services, and I have written, on behalf of the MVG, to thank her.

A copy of the Income and Expenditure Sheet is printed below.

To date, our funds stand at £1360.97, but this includes the donations for the Standard. Unless otherwise requested, this money will be put towards a teak memorial plaque, inside the TBRC Museum in Kanchanaburi, Thailand. Details of this, and other projects will be produced in the next Newsletter.

The Malayan Volunteers Group
Income and expenditure account
For the period from 13th October, 2003 to 5th April, 2005

		£
Donations		1,294.10
Bank interest (paid net of tax)		0.32
		<hr/>
Total income in the period		1,294.42
Purchase of bench, plaque and tablet	1,229.13	
Printing, postage and stationery	<hr/> 62.18	(1,291.31)
Surplus income over expenditure		<hr/> 3.11 <hr/>
Financed by:		
Balance at bank on 5th April, 2005		294.42
Amounts outstanding for payment at 5th April, 2005:-		
A.G. Real & Son	229.13	
Axminster Printing Co. Ltd	34.04	
Post Office	9.45	
Post Office	<hr/> 18.69	(291.31)
Balance of funds in hand at 5th April, 2005		<hr/> 3.11 <hr/>

WEB SITES TO VISIT.

JULIE SUMMERS

<http://www.juliesummers.co.uk/>

BORNEO BUGLE

<http://www.ozgenealogy.info/borneo>

THE BORNEO BUGLE. The following message is from Allan Cresswell:-

"This is a publication of the Borneo POW Relatives Association of Western Australia Inc. Volume One was issued on October 1st 2002 and there have been 14 editions to date. Over 100 copies are forwarded to members and associates every second month. The "Bugle" contains various articles and photographs relating to Borneo POWs and the various commemorations held both in Australia, Sabah and Sarawak from 2002 until present. It includes articles and photographs of the annual Anzac Day pilgrimages to Sandakan, that depart from Perth and Sydney. Articles and comments from Bill Young and Lynette Silver also appear in the Newsletter.

The "Borneo Bugle" has been well received and it has been decided to put the Newsletter online. This enables a larger audience to access the publication and enables our members to view the photographs in colour. We are also seeking articles for inclusion in the newsletter that relate to all Borneo POWs and to the civilian/police residents of Sandakan, Jesselton and Kuching who assisted/ arranged in escape plans, and who, in many cases were executed or imprisoned for the help they provided to the Australian and British Servicemen. If you have any stories and/or photographs relating to those terrible days in Borneo, please do contact the undersigned.

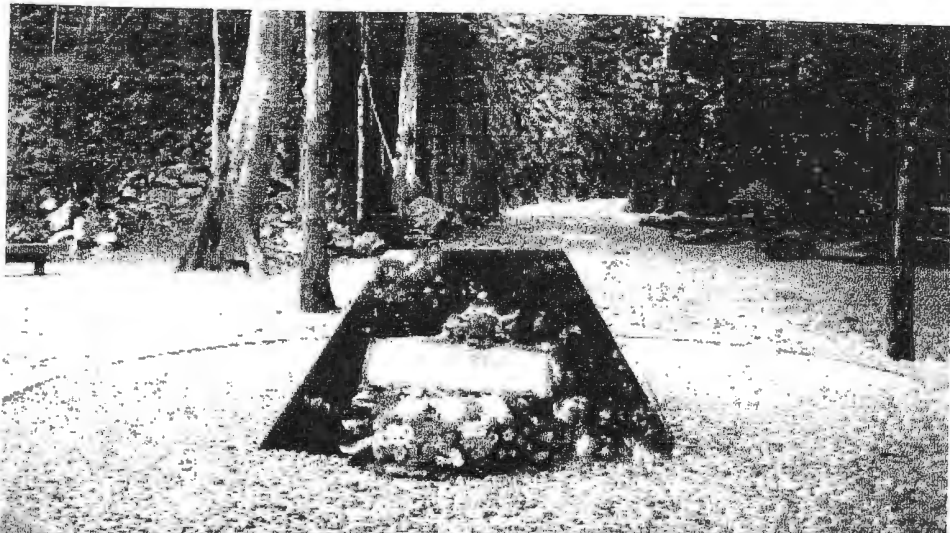
You are most welcome to pursue the various stories and articles online and to pass on the URL to anyone you wish. If you require hard copies of any of the published photographs please do e- mail me as I can then forward a higher resolution image for you to print.

The most recent edition includes an article relating to the Windows' Dedication Tour to Sandakan in April 2005. It includes photographs and drawings of the tour."

Allan Cresswell, President and Editor of "Borneo Bugle"

E-mail address:- cressie@bigpond.net.au

URL is:- www.ozgenealogy.info/borneo



MVG WREATH
at
HELL FIRE PASS.

MVG LONDON LUNCH AND REUNION.

A reminder to all of you about the London Lunch, which takes place on **SATURDAY, 8TH OCTOBER 2005, at THE NEW LAUGHING BUDDHA, MACCLESFIELD STREET, off Shaftesbury Avenue, London, starting at 12p.m.** Please let Sandy Lincoln know **BY 25th September** if you would like to go. Contact numbers below.

CONTACTS.

JONATHAN MOFFATT. For help with research on British Malaysians/Volunteer Forces/ Argylls and Royal Marines.

Address:- 49, Coombe Drive, Binley Woods, Coventry. CV3 2QU.

E-mail:- JonathanMoffatt@aol.com

Tel No:- 02476 545013

SANDY LINCOLN. For the MVG Lunch and contacts with other "Volunteer Children."

Address:- 19, Burke Street, Harrogate, North Yorkshire. HG1 4 NR.

E-mail:- anlu@globalnet.co.uk

Tel No:- 01423 500351

ROSEMARY FELL. Editor of Newsletter.

Address:- Millbrook House, Axminster, Devon. EX13 5EE.

E-mail:- dinraf-millbrook@tiscali.co.uk

Tel No:- 01297 33045