

# APA KHABAR

Patron: Her Grace The Duchess of Norfolk

[www.malayanvolunteersgroup.org.uk](http://www.malayanvolunteersgroup.org.uk)



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JANUARY 2024**



At the MVG annual luncheon at the RAF Club in Piccadilly, Patron Georgina Duchess of Norfolk presented Life President Rosemary Fell, BEM with a silver salver for her years of dedication and work since founding the MVG.

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## MEMORIALS FOR MALAYAN VOLUNTEERS

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Colin Hygate

During the autumn of every year, we reflect upon the service of our regular and volunteer armed forces as well as voluntary organisations which enables us to enjoy the freedoms for which they all fought, and many died. It always seems appropriate, particularly in the northern hemisphere, that this occurs as the leaves fall from the trees and the nights draw in. Our thoughts and memories focus on the eleventh day of the eleventh month celebrating the Armistice that ended what was then considered The Great War, but which sadly became the First World War. Since the ending of the Second World War there had been hopes that the lessons of such terrible conflicts would be learned, and that peace would prevail. Sadly, our world has been regularly marked with conflicts where opposing views and beliefs erupt into conflict. As such, the need for memorials for those who have made the ultimate sacrifice on behalf of us all, whether in battle or as prisoners, becomes ever more important as a reminder to successive generations that their dedication and service is to be honoured and remembered. Memorials stand as a constant reminder of this.

I am reminded that such memorials are less of a feature in Asian cultures and, consequently, memorials in the Far East are sometimes viewed more as a reminder of past colonialism than of the dedicated service of those memorialised on them. However, the economic benefit of tourism is now emerging where memorials play their part as a focus point for the military history of that area or region. In a broader sense they are now playing a role in geopolitics with the unveiling of the memorial to HMS *Prince of Wales* and HMS *Repulse* in Kuantan on the 82nd anniversary of their sinking. This, in part, is a response to two known events of desecration to these war graves by metal salvagers. The memorial is the auxiliary anchor from one of the warships. Their sinking took place shortly after the Japanese invaded Malaya and struck a demoralising blow to those defending Malaya.

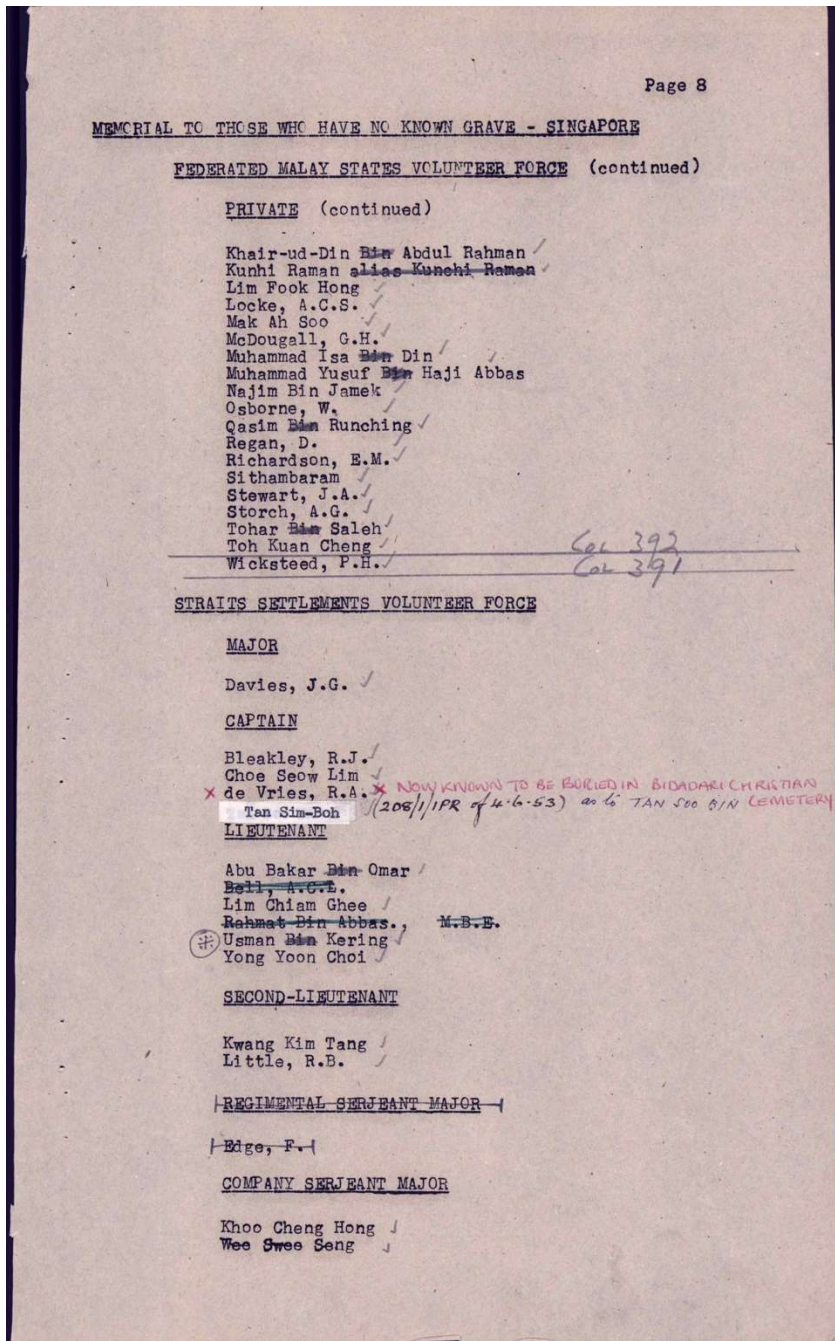


The Singapore Memorial at Kranji provides the most comprehensive of memorials for the Volunteers and for those who died but have no known grave. The most striking impression when viewing the columns on which the Volunteer names are engraved is the significant number of non-European names, which reminds us of the sacrifice given by those indigenous members serving in the Volunteer Forces. A typical list from the CWGC archive of those on the memorial demonstrates this.

Discovering the stories behind those names is a major feature of the activities with which our Group can assist and encourage, as well as providing a growing depth of historical information that will last for generations to come. Our Honorary Life Member Jeya Ayadurai, MBE, explained at the recent Liverpool Conference (AK July 2023), that recognising this history is an important focus for tourism development. Memorials provide a factual location of people and events but not the stories behind them. I was struck by the new interactive facility at the Changi Prison Museum where on their large touchscreen display you can read individual stories of people who were prisoners there. In addition to the new displays, the story of the Fall of Singapore and the deprivations suffered by not only the PoWs but also the local population are most eloquently displayed. On the outside wall of the Museum our Sime Road POW and Internment Camp Memorial Plaque remains prominently displayed close to the new cafe.



I know we are all seeking to understand more about our relatives and contacts with their histories and back stories which provide the context to the facts of history. Many of these stories have already been lost, particularly those that originally prompted the creation of the memorials after the First World War. In a time when communication was difficult and information not as readily available as it is today, a means of recording and honouring those who did not return provided that information to a particular locality. Rediscovering those stories will be greatly assisted by, for example, Liz Moggie's recent efforts to help restore the memorial created by Planters at Kuala Selangor. We hope the restoration will be in time for the centenary of the original unveiling and will be assisted by a donation from Anthony Cooper's stepfather as well as MVG Funds in Malaysia. However, the most important part of this is to uncover the stories of those memorialised there and to engage with the families of the local descendants. There are many others that are relevant to MVG, and both Liz and Jonathan have identified a number of these in Malaysia, including the following:



- Kedah Volunteer Force Memorial at Sungei Patani which is well maintained but does not contain any names.
- The Federated Malay States War Memorial in Kuala Lumpur, built in the 1920s in granite with bronze plaques containing WW1 names.
- The Ipoh Cenotaph built in the 1920s.
- The Penang War Memorial built on the Esplanade in 1929.
- Teluk Anson (now Intan) in Lower Perak has a War Memorial built in 1926 outside the courthouse but has no names.
- The Malacca War Memorials for both World Wars at Christ Church contain names of Volunteers.
- The Singapore Cenotaph which was completed in 1922 has 124 WW1 names that were originally engraved on bronze plaques, but we are unsure if the WW2 names were ever added, the SVC ones went into a Memorial Book now held by Singapore National Museum.
- A Memorial on the Padang at Kota Bharu may contain names.
- A Memorial at Kuala Kangsar, near the town mosque.
- A small Memorial stone in the Lake Gardens in Taiping.
- A large memorial in Seremban near the Lake Gardens records the conflicts but without any names.
- A Memorial Stone at the Forest Research Institute just outside Kuala Lumpur commemorates foresters who lost their lives in WW2.

We are all aware of those significant memorials in Borneo, Indonesia, and Thailand as well as those in the UK, Australia, and North America, however there may well be others of which we are not aware. More importantly, there may well be members who have links with those not mentioned and we would welcome information regarding not only the memorial but also the stories associated with those people memorialised. If so we would welcome their stories, however brief, that can be included in future editions of Apa Khabar. We look forward to receiving them and sharing them with the membership.

## **ANNUAL REUNION AND LUNCHEON – RAF CLUB PICCADILLY LONDON**

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Colin Hygate



On Saturday 14th October fifty-two members attended the Group's Reunion in the Sovereign's Room at the RAF Club. With the bar open we shared an hour of chatting, catching up, meeting old acquaintances, and making new ones. A number of regular attendees were unable to attend through ill health but had sent their best wishes. This was a particularly good opportunity for our new members as well as those attending for the first time to enjoy the shared experiences of Volunteers and their quests for more information about their Far Eastern experiences. Rosemary had brought some lovely yellow roses with which she decorated each table. Liz Moggie had

volunteered her cousin, Nick Johansen, and his partner, Stella McKernan, to greet members at reception again this year, which was a great help, as it is a function we have to provide if our party reaches more than 50 attendees. Name badges were placed on the table outside the Sovereign's Room where members were greeted by Rosemary, Colin, and Roger as they made final arrangements with the Club staff including the most important action of opening the bar early.

Our speaker this year, Michael Yardley and his wife Alison arrived with his father's memorabilia presented on eight boards that were placed on side tables for everyone to view as they wished. Our Patron, Her Grace Georgina, Duchess of Norfolk took the opportunity of chatting to many members, learning of their own histories and stories of their relatives. Her maternal grandfather, Charles Mounsey, had served as a 2nd Lt. in the 2FMSVF. He was captured in Singapore and survived the Alexandra Hospital massacre before being transferred to the railway in Thailand. He was married in Penang and worked as a rubber estate agent in Kuala Lumpur before the war, briefly returning there post war. Members conversations were discovering that there were many 'small world' experiences, one of which, in conversation with John Moody, my wife Sue had been at school with his sister as we shared a number of other Gloucestershire experiences. Other discussions around which relative had served with another abounded, bringing painstaking research to life with the experiences of others.

Unfortunately, at the last-minute Anne Read had contracted Covid and was unable to attend. She and her sister, Lucy Smith, had previously offered to assist with the sale of Raffle Tickets but had managed to substitute her brother-in-law, Gordon in her absence. They were busy selling raffle tickets greatly assisted by

the wonderful array of interesting and delightful donations for the Raffle. Amongst these were some Nelson / Trafalgar Bicentennial Commemorative Silver Medals that Michael Thompson and his wife Susie had donated. After a discussion with Michael, it was agreed that these should be auctioned rather than simply won as a raffle prize. This added to the impending excitement of the 'Windsor Castle Visit and Luncheon' auction donated and hosted by John Moody and his wife Annie. John is a serving Knight of Windsor and consequently has access to areas of the Castle to which he can escort guests which are not normally accessible to the visiting public, in addition to a sumptuous lunch in regal surroundings.

At one o'clock Colin called the guests to their tables for the **Annual General Meeting**. Colin explained that in order to create a bank account for the Group it had been necessary to produce a Constitution to meet the compliance requirements of the UK Banking Regulations. The Constitution is available to any member on request to Colin. **The Minutes of this meeting are included in this edition of Apa Khabar**. He briefly gave his Annual Review expressing concern that the VJ Day Service was not well attended but confirming that one of the benches at the NMA was beyond repair and will be replaced as well as an annual contract to refurbish and maintain the MVG Plot was being established. He also noted that there was only one other member with him at the Cenotaph Parade for Remembrance Sunday. Membership remained stable, welcoming a number of new members attending the luncheon today. As a result of his visit to Kuching and Labuan earlier in the year and with the help of Jonathan Moffatt they had identified a total of 91 Volunteers interred at the CWGC Cemetery on Labuan. He proposed that a memorial should be established there. There were only two substantive items, the first that Sally Jennings as editor of Apa Khabar had agreed to join the Group's Management Committee comprising Rosemary Fell, Jonathan Moffatt, Roger Willbourn and Colin Hygate. The second was an item of 'Any Other Business'.



At this point Colin asked Rosemary if she would join him and Georgina when she was presented with an engraved silver salver on behalf of the whole membership to mark Rosemary's unstinting service to all the members since the Group's inception in 2004. Georgina spoke of her experience and pleasure in working with Rosemary on behalf of the Group noting that it was Rosemary's and her late husband Donald's dedication that had ensured the Group had flourished over the years. Rosemary's delight is evident from the photograph, particularly as it had come as a complete surprise, thanking everyone for the kind and memorable gesture. She has subsequently confirmed that the salver has

taken pride of place in her dining room with her dog painting.

Our luncheon comprised of melon with a raspberry jus, steak, mushroom, and ale pie followed by sherry trifle. Before coffee was served Colin Proposed the loyal toast to the King and The Volunteers. Michael Yardley then gave his talk 'The Amonohasidate' or 'The Gate of Heaven' based on his father, Richard Yardley's book of that name. A number of copies of his book were available and sold for the benefit of the Group. Michael took us





through his father's early career, as a Marconi company communications engineer, his transfer to Malaya and embodiment in FMSVF and his eventual capture in Singapore his experiences and recollections as a prisoner in Thailand and subsequently in Japan in an area near Honshu known as 'The Amonohasidate', hence the title of his book. He was repatriated through the USA arriving in Southampton on the Queen Mary. Michael gave a most compelling presentation which resonated with many members and their recollection of similar experiences of their relatives. Colin gave a vote of thanks and suggested that members view Richard's memorabilia with a renewed depth of understanding.

Roger Willbourn then took to the stand and began a most entertaining and animated **auction** starting with Michael Thompson's Nelson / Trafalgar Bicentennial Commemorative Silver Medals that were bought by Peter Innes-Ker for £40. Then Roger enthusiastically described the wonderful experience that Peter and Jane Cook had enjoyed as guests of John and Annie Moody having won last year's auction. As with all successful auctions, not only is an engaging auctioneer essential but also two or more determined bidders. A number of early bidders dropped out and to gasps of surprise last year's bid was exceeded as three members, Anthony Cooper, Hugh Chaplin, and Lucy Smith (on behalf of her sister, Anne Read) continued to outbid each other until with a final bid of £530 Hugh Chaplin and Dr. Lucy Elphinstone secured the visit. The Raffle continued with Roger and Colin calling out the numbers and a steady flow of most excellent gifts left the table. With the proceedings of the day now completed, members continued their conversations before gradually leaving for the journey home. Everyone expressed delight at a most memorable day, committing to meeting again next year. Members' participation in the auction, raffle and book sales raised a total of £939 for the Group.



MVG Annual Luncheon, Piccadilly 2023

## HONORARY PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

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Rosemary Fell

I am delighted to have been asked to write a column under my new hat of Honorary Life President of the Malayan Volunteers Group.

First of all, I would like to thank **Colin Hygate** for taking over the running of the MVG in April this year and **Roger Willbourn** for handling the financial side of the Group by collecting the subscriptions and registering new members. My thanks also go to **Jonathan Moffatt** for his support and guidance since the MVG began, and for his comprehensive knowledge of not only the Volunteer Forces but also pre-war British Malaysians. Without the help of our regional secretaries, it would have been difficult to keep in touch with our members worldwide. For their help and support, I am very grateful to **Elizabeth Adamson** who, with her late husband **Bill**, has looked after our members in Australia very efficiently for many years and continues to do so; to **Sallie Hammond** who has so successfully made contact with and kept in touch with our members in Canada and the USA, and given them a focus after many years without a secretary; and to **Richard Parry** who has taken on the role of secretary in Malaysia and Singapore from his home in Penang, and represented the MVG at services there and on the mainland. A big thank you to you all.

### *Kuala Selangor War Memorial*

After the location of the Kuala Selangor War Memorial was discovered by **Andrew Hwang**, former secretary in Malaysia, some years ago now, we are very grateful to **Liz Moggie** for bringing the somewhat neglected state of the Memorial to the attention of Padat. Her research into the names of the Malays who died during the Malayan Campaign of WWII has been very helpful in raising awareness of the state of the Memorial so that their names and those of the local Europeans who died in both World Wars can be restored, after the brass plaques were illegally removed. **Liz** has written a two-part report on the state of the Memorial which has been printed in "The Planter" magazine. It is hoped that the names will be engraved on granite plaques and displayed on the Memorial by next July (2024) in time for the 100th anniversary of its unveiling on 10th July 1924, by **Sir George Maxwell**, Chief Secretary of the Federated Malay States.

### *Annual Reunion and Luncheon*

At our annual reunion and lunch at the RAF Club in London in October, I was quite overwhelmed to be presented with a beautiful silver salver by our Patron, **Georgina, Duchess of Norfolk**, in recognition of founding and running the MVG for 20 years. For this wonderful presentation, I later discovered that I have **Colin Hygate** to thank for arranging it, and I am very grateful to him for such a lovely present. It is now sitting in pride of place on my dining room sideboard. However, I do have to say that you may have to put up with me for a bit longer with this column and my new hat!

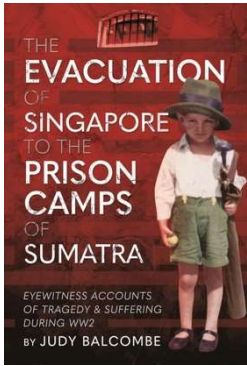
### *Remembrance Sunday*

On the 60th anniversary of V-J Day in 2005, a group of 12 MVG members attended the service on Remembrance Sunday in London and marched for the first time at the Cenotaph. This tradition has continued every year since then except for two years – the Covid year and once when we were offered only two tickets instead of the twelve requested. I have marched every year with the MVG contingent, but this November due to a knee problem, I joined the RBL Service here in Axminster. Despite the wet weather, the service was held on the Minster Green at the War Memorial in a sunny interlude between rainstorms and I laid a wreath on behalf of the Volunteers together with about twenty other wreath layers representing various charities and



town organisations. A wreath was also laid at the Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday thanks to **Colin Hygate** and **Sandy Lincoln** who represented the MVG. We hope a few more of our younger members may be persuaded to march next year. It is a great experience to be part of such a huge parade of people marching in Remembrance. Listening to the massed bands playing as one marches past the Cenotaph is thrilling; the applause of the watching public is very moving; and the salute at the end of the parade by a member of the Royal Family makes the long morning's wait and march worthwhile.

### **Book Launch**

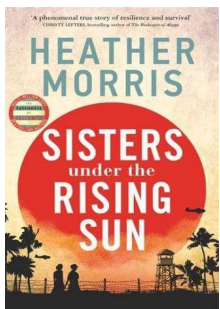


On Monday 20th November, I felt privileged to have been invited to attend the private launch of **Judy Balcombe's** book, *"The Evacuation of Singapore to the Prison Camps of Sumatra."* Held in one of the hospitality rooms at St. Martin-in-the-Fields Church in London, there were about twenty of us, including MVG members and others whose relatives had been interned as civilians in Sumatra in WW2. The book is about the life of her grandfather, his capture and internment as a civilian in the prison camps on Bangka Island and in Palembang. The history of the hundreds of civilians, captured by the Japanese when their ships were bombed and sunk, is still not well known – except through the TV series "Tenko". These men, women and children were interned in cramped, squalid conditions, starved, and ill-treated. **Lavinia Warner** who produced the "Tenko" series was also there. Sadly, **Judy's** grandfather died during internment and is buried in Muntok.

We all owe a huge debt of gratitude to **Judy** whose untiring efforts almost single-handedly brought the plight of these men, women, and children to the attention of the world. Her effort has resulted in the building of the Peace Museum on Bangka Island. **Judy** has presented, at her own expense, four plaques in Muntok and Palembang in memory of those who were imprisoned and died. She has raised funds to buy an ambulance for the Muntok Red Cross and, together with the Nurses Union in Melbourne, bought a bench for the War Cemetery in Jakarta. The MVG has contributed to these projects, but **Judy** has been the main fund raiser. Royalties from the sales of her book are being donated to the Muntok Red Cross, so please buy as many copies as you can and encourage your friends to do so as well.

It was an enormous honour to have been asked to write the foreword to **Judy's** book – something I have never done before. The Chinese proverb quoted at the end of the foreword seems more relevant today than ever before.

### **Controversy Surrounding The Heather Morris Novel**



In the October newsletter a book by **Heather Morris** called "Sisters under the Rising Sun" was advertised in the book section. It has been brought to our attention that this book is, in fact, an **"historical novel" based on real life people**, and that it includes some factual inconsistencies. **Morris** has used the names of real-life people – Norah, Ena, Nesta, Betty, Margaret, Mrs Hinch, and others who were in the camps, including **Margie Caldicott's** mother and grandmother, whom she has credited, but their story is re-invented in the novel. Norah Chambers' grandson, Sean, describes the portrayal of his mother in the book as "Norah's story *reimagined.*" The book states that Norah Chambers wrote the music to "The Captives' Hymn" (which we have always sung at our V-J Day Services) when, in fact, it was composed and written by Margaret Dryburgh. This kind of error is, I feel, unacceptable, and using the names of real people in a novel seems rather tasteless.

On **Heather Morris's** website, however, it does correctly state that Margaret Dryburgh composed and wrote The Captives' Hymn. The website also states that **Laura Carmichael** "will narrate 'Sisters Under the Sun', the phenomenal new novel of resilience and survival ..."

**And:** "Additionally, Morris will personally read her Author's note and Afterwords, a testament to the connection she feels with the novel and the special relationships she has established with the families of the women featured in the book." [It turns out only two families].

**Judy Balcombe** asks, "How can the novel state that Norah wrote the music to The Captives' Hymn but the audio book information states (correctly) that the music was written by Margaret Dryburgh (who was always addressed as Miss Dryburgh in camp, not 'Margaret')?"

*The Captives' Hymn is such a very precious piece of music that gave hope not only to the women in the camps but gives inspiration to so many around the world today. It needs to be properly attributed.*

*I will meet with **Heather Morris** in January but wonder what else can be done in the meantime? "The Tattooist of Auschwitz" is being made into a TV series, so maybe this story will follow, especially after the interest in the Vyner Brooke Nurses in Australia, when Vivien Bullwinkel's statue was placed outside the Australian War Memorial in Canberra in June."*

The MVG also hopes that something can be done. Should we be critical of authors who "reimagine" the lives of real people and events in their novels, use their names, but then get things wrong due to shoddy research?

### **Malaysian Newspaper Articles**

Thanks to **Richard Parry** and **Liz Moggie** for sending us relevant articles from Malaysian newspapers on topics which are not usually to be found in British newspapers.



In August in the lead up to V-J Day, a thought-provoking article in **The Star** newspaper by MVG member **Tunku Zain Al-'Abidin** discussed the morality of developing and using the atomic bomb against Japan. The debate has been re-ignited by the release of the film, "**Oppenheimer**". **Tunku Abidin** argued that had the war been prolonged, the post-war situation could have been radically different from today's political scene. It is interesting to note that since the bombs were dropped with such devastating consequences, South East Asia is still a Nuclear Weapon Free Zone and currently, no Asian country generates nuclear power. This should now be considered, say some energy experts, as part of a strategy of going green.

Few know that several Malaysians died as a result of the bombs because they had been sent by the Japanese, after their invasion on 8th December 1941, to study in Japan under Japan's Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Programme.



"Amateur historians help document nation's wartime history" claimed the headlines in an article in **The Star** in September. The article described the story of finding the wreckage of an RADF B24 Liberator KL654 aircraft in a remote forest area in Negri Sembilan. With a crew of eight, this aircraft was carrying war supplies from the Cocos Islands off Australia when the Mayday! Mayday! call was heard on 23rd August 1945, just after the war had ended. The remains were found in 1996 and moved to the Cheras CWG cemetery in KL in 2012 thanks to the efforts of the

members of the Malaya Historical Group (MHG) of which MVG member **Shaharom Ahmad** is president. The MHG has worked tirelessly to bring other wartime sites and wreckage to the attention of schools, colleges, and

universities in Malaysia by appealing to relevant authorities to Gazette wartime battle sites as heritage sites before they are destroyed by housing developments.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4FMqdzwMs4g>

<http://ww2talk.com/index.php?threads/kl654-the-search-for-the-seremban-liberator.6258/>

Thank you to **Richard** and **Liz** for two more important articles in **The Star** and **New Straits Times** newspapers, marking the 82nd anniversary of the sinking of the British warships, HMS *Prince of Wales* and HMS *Repulse* on 10th December 1941, with the unveiling by the King of Malaysia, of a Memorial dedicated to those who lost their lives that day.

Headed “*War memorial with a lesson for today,*” the article in **The Star** tells the story of **Henrietta Wood** (née Leach) whose grandfather, **Captain John Leach**, was the Commanding Officer of HMS *Prince of Wales*. He was among the 840 sailors who perished after both warships were sunk by Japanese bombers. In 1941, Henrietta’s father, later **Admiral Sir Henry Leach**, was an 18-year-old midshipman living in Singapore and working as a temporary plotter based in the war room while waiting to rejoin his ship HMS *Mauritius*. Luckily, he survived the war.

The Memorial, overlooking the South China Sea at Teluk Cempedak in Kuantan, was unveiled by the King **Yang di-Pertuan Agong Al-Sultan Abdullah Re’ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah** on Sunday 10th December 2023. It features an auxiliary anchor, believed to be from the Prince of Wales which was seized from illegal salvages in 2016.

Read the full story on The Star website:

<https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2023/12/12/war-memorial-with-a-lesson-for-today>

**The New Straits Times** report says that the anchor was previously displayed at the Army Museum in Port Dickson. It has now been incorporated into the Memorial Stone with the support of the British High Commission and the British Royal Navy. The unveiling was attended by **Ailsa Terry**, British High Commissioner to Malaysia and **Rear Admiral Andrew Betton**, director of Joint Warfare at the UK Strategic Command. The report went on to say that over recent years the war grave sites of the two warships have been subjected to illegal salvage in 2015 and again in May this year. Both shipwrecks have been badly damaged by the removal of high-grade aluminium and brass fixtures.

### ***Annual Service of Commemoration for the Prince of Wales and Repulse***

MVG member Bob Hall has attended the service every year, which takes place on 10th December at the National Memorial Arboretum, in memory of those 840 sailors who lost their lives on HMS *Prince of Wales* and HMS *Repulse*. We thank him for representing the MVG on this important anniversary. Bob’s father was a Royal Marine serving on the Prince of Wales. He survived the sinking of his ship, and later took part in the fight for Singapore. He was given permission to escape at the Fall and, with others, followed the established escape route across Sumatra only to be captured by the Japanese. He spent the rest of the war as a FEPOW interned in the filthy prison camps in Palembang.

*Wishing you all a very happy New Year,  
Rosemary Fell  
December 2023*

## **THE WORLD WAR II PLAQUE ON THE KUALA SELANGOR WAR MEMORIAL – PART I**

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Elizabeth Moggie

*This article is printed with the permission of the Incorporated Society of Planters, Malaysia.*

The stone War Memorial erected in memory of those “men of the district” who lost their lives in World War I still stands in Medan Perwira (formerly Bellamy Square, Kuala Selangor). It originally incorporated a brass plaque which commemorated 11 names, all European planters who had died on the Western Front. Ten of these men were of United Kingdom origin, one was French F. E. Posth. The memorial was unveiled on the 10th of July 1924 by Sir George Maxwell, Chief Secretary of the Federated Malay States, and there is much newspaper coverage of this event. The initiative for this memorial came from the planters of the district but the care and upkeep of it was handed over to the Kuala Selangor Town Board by the mid 1920s.

After World War II another brass plaque was added on the opposite side of the memorial. This commemorated 23 names, all being “men of the district” who had lost their lives between 1941 and 1945. Both these brass plaques disappeared sometime in the 1990s, but the names of the men inscribed on them are known.

In contrast to the World War I unveiling, an extensive search of newspapers in the Singapore National Library and in the records at Arkib Negara Malaysia have revealed absolutely no mention of the World War II unveiling.

Unfortunately, nearly all records of Kuala Selangor, including the official diaries of the District Officer, the British Advisor Selangor, the State Secretary, the minutes of the Town Board etc. are missing for the years 1945 to 1952. What little there is, makes no mention of the memorial.

The only evidence that such an event took place at all is in a letter that was sent to the widow of one of the European men whose name was inscribed on the plaque. From this we can postulate that the unveiling took place on or about the 15th of February 1951, but we have no indication who carried out the unveiling. It is likely that SOCFIN Company may have played a large role, and the answer may lie in the SOCFIN staff bulletins of the time but so far those of 1950/51 have not been found. Perhaps someone may have copies hidden away in a cupboard?

The World War II plaque is of great interest. Of the 23 names inscribed, the 16 Europeans were nearly all planters, but seven names are Malays. Quite a bit is known about the Europeans but very little about the Malays. Three of these were Malay Regiment men: Corporal Napi bin Ahmed (husband of Sapiah binti Kulop) was killed at Buloh Kasap, Johore on the 7th or 8th of January 1942. Privates Sulong bin Sudin (husband of Wok binti Mohammad Taib) and Imail bin Mat (son of Jem’ah binti Momin) were almost certainly killed in the very last days of the fighting on Pasir Panjang Ridge in Singapore in February 1942. Of the other four, Abdul Rani bin Malhmudin, Busu Haji Kussin, and Idrus bin Mohd Yunus are known to have been volunteers of the Federated Malay States Volunteer Force (FM SVF) second (Selangor) battalion and Zakaria bin Mat Yuda is presumed to have been as well. There are two comprehensive accounts of how Sergeant Idris bin Mohd Yunus (husband of Che Nuteh binti Saleh) was mortally wounded in the retreat from the Bukit Raja Estate area towards Batu Tiga on the 10th of January 1942, but nothing is known of the other three.

Mr. D. A. Borrie was District Officer Kuala Selangor 1949 to 1953 and according to an article by George Peet in the June 1949 No. 31 edition of the *Malayan Pictorial Observer*, Borrie can be presumed to have been instrumental in arranging for the World War II brass plaque to be attached to the World War I memorial. Apart from this article and the letter to the widow, no other evidence has been found. The Armed Forces Museum at Port Dickson has the names of the three Malay Regiment men inscribed on a memorial there but was unable to provide any other information.



I therefore appeal to readers of *The Planter* for information either of the unveiling ceremony of the World War II memorial plaque or of the families of the Malays whose names are commemorated on it. Although over 70 years have passed it is possible that members of their families or their neighbours are able to provide some information. Does anyone recall the unveiling of the World War II brass plaque?



Kuala Selangor Memorial

Toronto



**REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY SERVICE  
AT THE CENOTAPH, WHITEHALL, LONDON  
12th November 2023**

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Colin Hygate

Despite email and Apa Khabar reminders, our allocation of 12 places at this year's Parade was only taken up by Sandy Lincoln, Jan Beránek and me. In the event and due to work commitments Jan exchanged his visit to the UK to attend our Reunion Luncheon so only two of us representing MVG were "On Parade" at Horse Guards on a chilly and overcast morning. As this was my first opportunity to attend I was, as I told one of my oldest friends, achieving the ambition of a lifetime in honouring all those Volunteers at Britain's premier Remembrance Service. I have attended many local Remembrance Services from my earliest days in the Cubs and Scouts, with my father when he was both British Legion Secretary of the local Branch and also as a lay preacher when he took the service. Now, for the first time I was to experience what it was, not only to actually be there but especially to present a wreath at the Cenotaph in memory of so many of his comrades.

Arriving shortly after 8.30 a.m. I cleared the security check without any delay and found the tent where the lapel badges were issued before making my way to Column D and finding our D17 position Board on the ground waiting for me. The RBL organisation was exemplary as they had guided me from arrival to correct location any trepidation disappeared.



Sandy had asked me to ensure I held the Board aloft as we had never met. This worked as she soon joined me to share some early family background conversations. We also shared conversations with the St. Nazaire Society members establishing that one of them, with his son, was honouring his uncle who had been awarded the V.C. for his actions on that raid. The Aden Veterans included two in wheelchairs, and we chatted with them to learn that they had received injuries from land mines when serving in Aden. Our RBL Column commander gave clear instructions of how to proceed as we set off in step to reassemble in Whitehall. Crowds greeted us as we passed through the arch into Whitehall to the most encouraging and almost continuous applause of the crowds. The marching brought some feeling back into cold feet! Assembled with the other columns, and with large screens easily visible the Parade is brought to attention as the Royal Party arrived a few minutes before 11 a.m., assembling solemnly before the Cenotaph. The Queen and Princess of Wales looked on from the

balcony of the Foreign Office. As Big Ben struck 11 and the single gun salute from the King's Troop, Royal Horse Artillery, a remarkable and complete silence fell across the City, broken only by the odd bird song and wing beat. We all made our own Remembrances before a further gun salute and the Last Post was played by

the Royal Marine Buglers. We continued to watch in silence as the Royal Party laid their wreaths followed by the Commanding Officers of the various Services, politicians, ambassadors, and other dignitaries. The Bishop of London then led us all in a short Service of Remembrance in which the whole Parade took part, having been issued with Orders of Service. The Guards Division Band led us in the hymn 'O God our help in ages past' and the service was completed when the Buglers played The Rouse followed by the National Anthem which was sung by the whole Parade and surrounding crowd. The Royal Party returned through the entrance to the Foreign Office.



The bands struck up a series of marches and well-known music from both World Wars as the Royal British Legion Parade of Veterans, Reservists, Cadets, other Services, and organisations similar to MVG started to march past the Cenotaph. I had often wondered when watching the Parade how the commentator, this year David Dimbleby, managed to identify each group as they approached the Cenotaph. However, one of our conversations had established that the lapel badge worn by the member on each side of the first row with the column and section designation (D17 being ours) has a poppy on it and you can feel this is slightly raised. Apparently this contains a chip which the camera can read so that the Group's name is displayed on the commentator's monitor. Jonathan Moffatt managed to catch a screenshot that showed Sandy and me partially hidden behind another in front. I presume the caption is the one dedicated by the camera from the lapel badges of those in front of us.



Having handed the MVG wreath to those at the Cenotaph we continued to march returning to Horse Guards where, in front of the Guards Memorial the **Princess Royal** took the parade salute. Returning to Horse Guards Parade in formation where the parade disbursed with farewells to those we had shared conversations with, we made our way back into Trafalgar Square where Sandy and I parted company for our homeward journeys. The warmth of the Underground system reflecting the inner warmth of my most memorable day's experiences.





*Bataan Legacy*  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY



**Save the date – Saturday April 13th, 2024, at 10 a.m.  
82nd anniversary commemoration of the  
Bataan Death March at San Francisco National Cemetery  
[www.bataanlegacy.org](http://www.bataanlegacy.org)**

Eighty-two years ago on December 7th, 1941, Hawaii, the Philippines, Guam, Wake Island, Midway Island, Malaya, Singapore, and Hong Kong were attacked by the Imperial Japanese Navy Air Force and World War II in the Pacific began. It was a long and bloody war which lasted until September 2nd, 1945, killing thousands of Filipino and American soldiers and approximately one million Filipino civilians. Millions also perished in other Asian countries. But its implications continue to reverberate today across several generations. It is a story that needs to be told especially in light of current world events.

Your support enables us to continue our programs. Please help us to continue the legacy!  
(Bataan Legacy Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) organization and your donation can be tax deductible in accordance with the law. It is an all-volunteer organization.)





# MONUMENT DEDICATED IN MALAYSIA TO THE PRINCE OF WALES AND REPULSE TRAGEDY

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11th December 2023



*An anchor recovered from those who desecrated one of the Navy's most hallowed sites was unveiled at the heart of a new memorial dedicated in Kuantan, the state capital of the province of Pahang and the city closest to their wrecks.*

The battleship and battlecruiser were sunk by Japanese bombers on December 10th, 1941, some 61 nautical miles east of Kuantan.

Some 840 souls were lost – 513 from battle-cruiser HMS *Repulse*, 327 from HMS *Prince of Wales* — while the tragedy ushered in a series of defeats for Commonwealth Forces at the hands of Tokyo, culminating in the Fall of Singapore.

Eight decades after the tragedy the Agong (King) of Malaysia, Yang Di-Pertuan Agong Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah, commissioned a memorial to the sailors and marines who tried to prevent the invasion of their land.

Paid for by private donations and installed at Teluk Cempedak beach, it features a kedge (or secondary) anchor from *Repulse*, which was seized by the Malaysian authorities following illegal salvage from the wrecks.

Aside from the Malay King and Queen, the dedication service – 82 years to the day of the disaster – was attended by British and Malay civilian and military VIPs, including Rear Admiral Andrew Betton, Director Joint Warfare, who represented the First Sea Lord, and Henrietta Wood, whose grandfather Captain John Leach was one of those lost and whose father, Admiral Sir Henry Leach, First Sea Lord during the Falklands conflict.

Mrs Wood told guests of the impact of the tragedy on her father, aged just 18 in December 1941; serving in Singapore at the time, he had been itching to “have a crack” at the enemy, while *his* father feared the naval force was probably doomed.

A few days later Capt. Leach was proved correct; his distraught son searched desperately for him among the survivors returned to Singapore until one of HMS *Prince of Wales* sailors gently told him that his father had been lost.

‘The memorial is, I hope, not just a grateful remembrance of the 840 men whose grave is the deep waters of the South China Sea but also a reminder to learn the lessons of history and look to a future of trust,

understanding and respect between nations. The current terrible conflicts just cry out for humanity', Mrs Wood said.

'This memorial is a poignant reminder of the sacrifices made in war but it is also a symbol of the bond between our countries and, I hope, will serve as an encouragement to others to accept their differences and work peacefully together'.

Ailsa Terry, the British High Commissioner to Malaysia, recited an extract from *For the Fallen* by Laurence Binyon. 'This memorial will provide an opportunity for visitors to reflect on the enormity of the loss and the cost of war', she said.

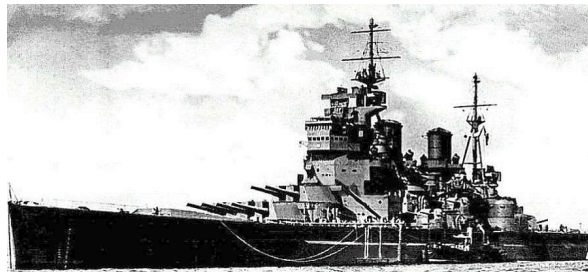
'It is a fitting tribute to the personnel who perished along with the ships and serves as a reminder that important naval heritage like this must be protected as well as of the strength of the UK–Malaysia relationship'.

Seven sailors from HMS Spey provided a small Guard of Honour for proceedings, less than a month after the patrol ship held a service of remembrance over the wrecks. The Portsmouth-based vessel is currently in Singapore after a short visit to Port Klang, the port city of the Malaysian capital Kuala Lumpur.

<https://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/news>

#### **War Memorial with a lesson for today – The Star**

<https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2023/12/12/war-memorial-with-a-lesson-for-today>



Iconic vessel: Captain John Leach was among 840 sailors killed in the sinking of HMS *Prince of Wales* (above) and HMS *Repulse* in World War II.

KUANTAN: The unveiling of a memorial to the battleship HMS *Prince of Wales* and battlecruiser HMS *Repulse*, which were sunk off the coast of Kuantan in World War II, is a lesson in history especially at a time when parts of the world are in conflict.

For Henrietta Wood (née Leach), her family's history is inextricably tied to the history of the region as her grandfather Captain John Leach was the *Prince of Wales*'s commanding officer (CO) and among the 840 sailors who perished after both warships were sunk by Japanese aircraft.

The event left an impact on the life of Wood's father Admiral Sir Henry Leach, who had met with Captain John a few days before the warships set sail as part of the ill-fated Force Z sent to intercept Japanese amphibious forces.

In her speech at the unveiling of the memorial, Wood, 64, recounted her father's written recollections of his last days with Captain John.



‘In December 1941, my father, who had recently celebrated his 18th birthday, was a midshipman based in Singapore as a temporary plotter in the war room while waiting to re-join his ship HMS *Mauritius*.

‘In 1940, he had been due to embark on HMS *Fiji*, but his father intervened and suggested that the Prince of Wales would be a better and safer option.

Henrietta Wood: The memorial is a reminder to learn the lessons of history. ‘It turned to be a lucky intervention for Fiji was sunk off Crete with the loss of nearly all the gunroom. When John Leach was appointed CO of Prince of Wales, his son was reappointed to HMS *Mauritius*,’ she said.

Shortly after the arrival in Singapore of Prince of Wales and Repulse, Henry and his father dined together.

‘He was in an upbeat mood and when his father asked him his opinion of the position of Singapore and the mounting Japanese threat, he said, “Let them

come, let’s have a crack at them.”

‘My grandfather replied very seriously, “I don’t think you have any idea of the enormity of the odds we are up against.” Two days later, father and son met for a swim prior to meeting up with Captain Bill Tennant, CO of Repulse.

‘My grandfather announced that he was going to swim a few lengths, saying, “You never know when it may come in handy.” Shortly afterwards, the two captains, who were good friends, parted.

‘Two hours later, Force Z sailed, and father and son did not see each other again,’ said Wood.

On the evening of Dec 10, 1941, after the sinking of the two warships, Wood said her father headed for the quayside in Singapore to try to get news of his father.

‘After much frustration and increasing despair, he went back to the war room where he was gently informed of his father’s death by an exhausted first lieutenant of Prince of Wales who had miraculously survived the ordeal,’ she said.

Henry eventually rose to become First Sea Lord and Chief of the Naval Staff, but Wood said the death of Captain John had always stayed with her father.

‘My father told me a little about my grandfather but mainly during the latter part of his life. I think the memory remained raw in his mind and he found it very emotional to talk about his father.

‘I think his career in the Navy was very much coloured by his experience as an 18-year-old. He was young and enthusiastic. I think his father’s death was a huge shock and brought him back to reality.

‘His career after that was affected by his father’s death. I think he wanted to do well to live up to his father’s memory’, she said in an interview here yesterday.

The memorial overlooking the South China Sea was unveiled by Yang di-Pertuan Agong Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri’ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah on Sunday, marking the 82nd anniversary of the sinking of the warships.

It features an auxiliary anchor, believed to be from the Prince of Wales, which was seized from illegal salvagers in 2016.

Wood said the memorial was a reminder to learn the lessons of history and look to a future of trust, understanding, and respect between nations.

‘It’s a lesson to all of us that conflicts can be resolved. The Japanese ambassador was there as a friend. Feelings change and who is your enemy today might be your colleague or ally tomorrow.

‘Everybody is different individually. Countries are different, and we all have different beliefs, loyalties, and politics.

‘I think in most cases, you should respect those differences and allow people to have freedom to live those differences’, she said.

The HMS *Prince of Wales* has since been revived as the name of a Queen Elizabeth-class aircraft carrier, which was formally named by Queen Camilla, then the Duchess of Rothesay, in 2017.



Bob Hall (Bob's father was a Royal Marine aboard HMS *Prince of Wales* and FEPOW. Bob turns up each year in all weathers.)





## **PENANG REMEMBRANCE CEREMONY – 3rd DECEMBER 2023**

Richard Parry

The annual Remembrance Ceremony held at the Cenotaph at Padang Kota Lama in Georgetown was held this year on 3rd December, having been delayed by work in progress on both the immediate Cenotaph environs and a nearby garden area. The work at the Cenotaph itself consisted of removal of the railing fence which had surrounded the monument, thus making it much more accessible, and the construction of a low, circular Wall of Remembrance around the Cenotaph, the latter referencing the various conflicts marked by this monument. The finished result will be a great improvement, but we were very fortunate that work was paused for the day of the ceremony in order to provide access, resumed shortly after, and is ongoing as Christmas approaches, particularly on the adjacent garden area.

The weather was pleasantly cool on the morning of the Ceremony as participants and VIPs arrived around 7 a.m., in anticipation of the arrival at 7:20 a.m. of the guest of honour, YAB Jagdeep Singh Deo, Deputy Chief Minister of Penang. As usual, senior representatives were present from the British High Commission, Malaysian, UK and Commonwealth Forces, and a large number of civilian organisations. It was my privilege to represent and lay a wreath on behalf of the MVG. The ceremony was very well attended by a larger crowd than I had previously seen, and extremely well organized as usual by the Penang Veterans Association, under their Chairman Kenneth Speldewinde, whose name will be familiar to many MVG members.



The ceremony followed the by-now familiar routine of the arrival of the Guest of Honour, the mounting of the Catafalque Party from the ADF Forces at Butterworth, the playing of the National Anthem, Negara Ku, and a speech from the Guest of Honour, YAB Jagdeep Singh Deo and other VIP guests, including Mr Robert Pepper of the British High Commission in KL who represented the High Commissioner. Various readings were then performed by Military representatives, which culminated in the playing of the Last Post, and the two-minute silence. Following the wreath laying, participants retired to the cool of the marquee for an excellent breakfast prior to departing.

<https://www.macva.org.my/pgmemorial.html>



## NOTICES

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**Christie Thomas of the Penang Veterans Association** recently became an MVG member. The PVA announced:

“Congratulations to Christie Thomas for the **Air Command Silver Commendation** for his contribution to Australia–Malaysia relations through his work with the RAAF and the Penang Veterans Association over the last 20 years. Well done!

It was a big surprise for Christie as he was called up on stage by the emcee at the sending-off ceremony of the present Wing Commander Darren Prior and incoming new Wing Commander Belinda Edmunds at the RAAF Airforce Base at Butterworth this morning.

It is a rare occasion for non-RAAF personnel to receive such a commendation and signed by the Vice Air Marshal Commander Australia. We at PVA are proud of Christie to be honoured as such.”

*Congratulations to him from us all,  
Rosemary Fell*



## REPORT

Elizabeth Adamson

My late husband, **Bill Adamson**, was the President of the Western Australian branch of the Malayan Borneo Veterans' Association, and when it was closing down, its banner was 'laid up' in the Uniting Chapel, in Guildford, WA. Since then the banner has lain in a cupboard.

At a meeting in June 2019, the MBVA members agreed to a proposal that credit funds following the winding up of the Association should be transferred to the Malayan Volunteers Group Australia.

Sadly, Bill Adamson died in March 2020, but at a special meeting held by members of the MBVA, the Treasurer Garry Burgoyne was elected President, and the proposal to transfer the remaining funds to the MVG was carried, and arrangements were made to attend at the bank to transfer the said funds. The Commonwealth Bank statement of 31st August 2020 shows that \$2486.49 was duly deposited in the MVG account.

At that occasion, I promised that the funds would be put to good use.

Fast-forward three years of inactivity due to Covid.

The Chapel in Guildford has had some renovations done, and it was suggested that the MBVA banner should be framed and on display in the hall behind the main church. I thought this proposal was an excellent one, and in company with the church Treasurer, we took the banner to a local framer. It was agreed that 'museum standard' framing should be done, so that the banner was acid-free, away from direct sunlight and insect-free! The framer's quote was for \$850 and agreed. In the end, the church paid for the work done at \$772.73, which we reimbursed, as the church does not pay sales tax!

Australian members were emailed about the proposal, and all agreed that it was a good initiative.

Please see the photos of the banner attached. The honour boards beside the banner show names of men from Guildford who went off to WW1.



## **OPERATION Manna From Heaven**

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**May 8th V.E. Day** will be celebrated in Canada and the USA. The Netherlands especially honour Canada, the USA and Britain for the **Operation Manna From Heaven** mission which was to deliver food and medical supplies to the starving Dutch people in 1945. Hitler agreed to a three-day ceasefire for humanitarian reasons.

The Germans honoured their word, almost entirely, that no coordinated anti-aircraft would fire upon the planes, and countless Dutch civilians benefitted from this “manna from heaven.” From April 29th through V.E. Day, May 8th, 1945, the combined efforts saw over 5,500 sorties dropping over an estimated 10,000 tons of food.



After the war, the Dutch people and Princess Juliana expressed their thanks to Canada by sending thousands of tulip bulbs to the capital, Ottawa. The Gift of Tulips became a yearly tradition. Every year, the Dutch Royal Family, and the people of the Netherlands each send 10,000 bulbs to Ottawa.



### **The Tulip Story**

When the Netherlands was invaded during the Second World War, Dutch Princess Juliana and her family were forced to flee. Juliana and her two young daughters set sail for Canada, an Allied country and safe haven far from the conflict. The three were given a warm welcome in Ottawa, where they lived throughout the war. In 1943, the bond between Canada and the Netherlands was made even stronger, when the Princess's third child, Margriet, was born at the Civic Hospital in Ottawa.

In the occupied Netherlands, the Dutch people experienced hardship, oppression, and starvation. In 1945, their ordeal came to an end as the Allies advanced across the country. Canadians played a major role in the liberation of the Netherlands, an accomplishment for which the Dutch still remember us today.

The tulips are planted in two flower beds in Ottawa. One bed, at the Ottawa Hospital, Civic Campus, pays tribute to the birth of Princess Margriet. The other is the Queen Juliana Gift Bed in Commissioners Park. The tulips planted in these beds are in shades of pink and purple, Juliana's favourite colours.

**August 15th V.J. Day 2024**

**November 11th Remembrance Day**



### This Land is Mine



TV Series; 15 episodes of 48 minutes

Released August 2021, Singapore

Based on the novel by Singapore's former Attorney General Walter Woon, "The Devil's Circle."

Singapore after the war, inspired by real events. Far from just a retelling of history, it is about how lives have been upended by the war and how circumstances play out in peacetime, and the constant question of identity in a multicultural country.

In late 1940s Singapore, the Chiang family is thrown into upheaval in the aftermath of the Second World War. Singapore has returned to British rule after four years of Japanese occupation and the repercussions ripple through society and into the Chiang's lives. Dennis, a rising young lawyer, trained in England, is assigned his first big case – defending a Japanese war criminal, a case no lawyer wants. Meanwhile, his cousin June, who is a law clerk at the same firm, is suffering from a traumatic incident during the war – a secret that takes her on a path of revenge. The tension grows as they try to help others affected by the tumultuous time. It is an epic story of loyalty, freedom and justice.

One storyline is based on the 1950 custody battle over a 13-year-old Dutch girl, Bertha Hertogh, which turns into a violent clash between East and West. (In the book, the girl is British and is claimed by her aunt.) The court case and bloody riots that followed in Singapore shattered the lives of Bertha and all those around her. Another plot involves the varying loyalties of the Indian soldiers to the British and among themselves. A third plot follows the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Association (MPAJA) which regularly meets in the Joy World Nightclub. The large cast of characters captures the diversity of Singapore with stories echoing the experiences of the Chinese, Malay, Indian and British communities.

[https://www.imdb.com/title/tt15212912/mediaviewer/rm1517353985/?ref=tt\\_ov\\_i](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt15212912/mediaviewer/rm1517353985/?ref=tt_ov_i)

#### UNSW Canberra at the Australian Defence Force Academy

PO Box 7916, Canberra BC 2610, Australia

Last updated: 2020, Version 2.1

[Australians at War Film Archive](https://australiansatwarfilmarchive.unsw.edu.au/)

<https://australiansatwarfilmarchive.unsw.edu.au/>

**11,000 hours 2,000 interviews 1,000,000 stories told by the people who lived them.**

In over 2,000 interviews, this Archive encompasses our wartime history from World War One to Afghanistan. It includes the battlefield, the home front, media and entertainment, children, wives, workers, and clerics. From signaller to Spitfire pilot, from SAS trooper to stoker, even to those who fought with us and against us; they are all represented in this collection.

What you will find on these pages are those interviews, with transcripts.

The Archive is an Australian Government initiative, commissioned through the Department of Veterans' Affairs. It is a unique, historical collection, a resource for everyone interested in Australia's wartime heritage.



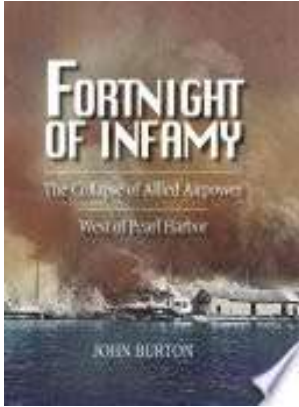
WW2 Talk

<http://ww2talk.com/index.php>

<http://ww2talk.com/index.php?forums/books-films-tv-radio.11/>

## **“Fortnight of Infamy – The Collapse of Allied Airpower West of Pearl Harbour” by John Burton**

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While America was preoccupied with the aftermath of Pearl Harbor, an even greater tragedy was unfolding across Southeast Asia. From Wake Island to Burma, the Empire of Japan opened the largest front in the history of warfare: an aircraft-driven invasion of colonial possessions throughout the Far East that crumbled the entire Western imperial legacy of the nineteenth-century. Events during the first two weeks of battle set the stage for the greatest military defeats America and Great Britain would suffer during any conflict.

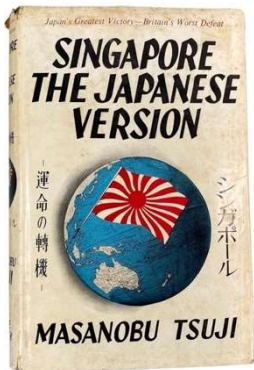
This book offers the first comprehensive overview of the collapse of Allied Air Forces between December 8th and 24th, 1941. Written for a wide audience, it gives readers both a cockpit view of the desperate actions that took place and an understanding of why such heavy losses occurred. The narrative account includes enough detail and analysis to hold the interest of serious students of Pacific War aviation and enough exciting descriptions of air combat to

attract those with little knowledge of the subject.

Explaining how and why the Japanese were able to win a quick victory, John Burton points to U.S. failures in the concepts for employment of airpower and a significant underestimation of Japanese ‘air-mindedness’ and aviation capabilities, failures that resulted in the loss or surrender of more than 200,000 troops at Bataan and Singapore. (Naval Institute Press, Sep 23, 2013 - History - 380 pages)

## **“Singapore – the Japanese Version” by Col. Masanobu Tsuji**

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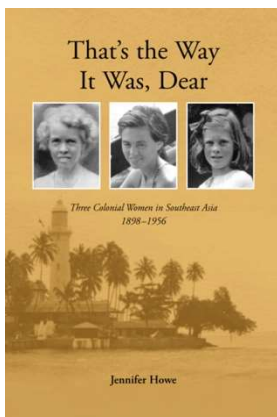


The story of how Malaya was won by the Japanese, told by the man who led the research work for the campaign and initiated the operations orders from the first landings to the final surrender. Now translated into English for the first time comes the crushing evidence for the prosecution – the story not of how Malaya was lost, but of how it was *won*. This book is by the key man – the brilliant strategist who as Chief of the Operations and Planning Staff for the 25th Army under General Yamashita, initiated the vital operations. The fairness of Col. Tsuji’s book is its most striking and perhaps unexpected quality. He remarks, ‘There is no difference in human nature between one’s own side and the enemy side’.

(Constable and Company, London, 1962)

## **“This is the way it was, Dear” by Jennifer Howe**

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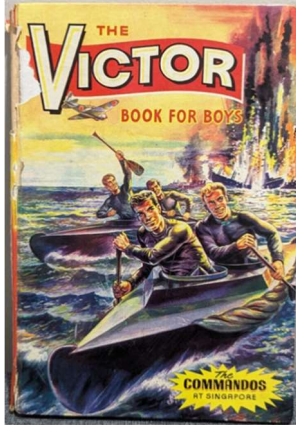


A story chronicling the journeys of three generations of women from England to Southeast Asia and the war that forever changed their lives.

4th October 2022, paperback

History is replete with just that: his story. So many women’s stories go untold or are passed down in verbal snippets from generation to generation until, often, those snippets are lost. This book captures three of her stories: my grandmother’s, my mother’s and my own in turn-of-the-century Malaya. It recounts our colonial family’s experiences during the Japanese occupation of Malaya and our lives during my father’s and grandfather’s captivity as prisoners of war, interspersed with passages from my father’s POW diary. It follows our long journey back to England after the war and our subsequent return to post-war Malaya, ending, ultimately, with our departure from the

land of my mother’s birth and my own. It is at its core a story about women finding and creating home wherever they find themselves. (Amazon.ca)



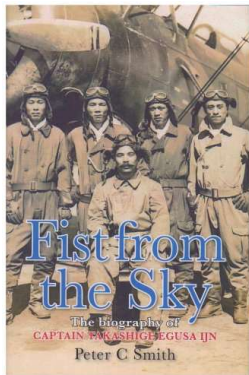
An interesting feature was published in the July-September 2023 edition of the Biblioasia magazine. It is a comic book version of “Operation Jaywick” based on “The Victor Book for Boys: The Commandos in Singapore” published in 1965. The story is told in text, based on **Lynette Ramsay Silver’s** book “*Deadly Secrets. The Singapore Raids 1942-1945*” and accompanied by comic-style drawings depicting the events. “The Victor Book for Boys” was owned by MVG member **Gautam Hazarika**, who donated this unusual historical book to the National Library Board in Singapore in April 2023.

Sadly, we know the terrible consequences for the civilian internees in Changi Prison which resulted from the success of “Operation Jaywick” planned from Australia. The raid by the Kempeitai on Changi Prison, from where they thought the operation had been directed, resulted in one of the darkest moments for the civilian internees. Fifty-seven men and women were taken away, interrogated, and tortured over many weeks, during which fifteen died. The raid took place on 10th October 1943, and has become known as “The Double Tenth.”

**Australian Navy source:** <https://www.navy.gov.au/history/feature-histories/krait-and-operation-jaywick>

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**“Fist from the Sky. The biography of Captain Takashige Egusa IJN” by Peter C. Smith**



ISBN 0 959791 22 X Published by Crecy Publishing Ltd. Soft Cover.

**Egusa** was one of the IJN’s most skilful and influential leaders in the field of dive-bombing, playing a major role in its development. He led assaults on Pearl Harbour, Wake Island, Ambon, and Darwin, and attacked British warships in the Indian Ocean, achieving an outstanding hit-rate.

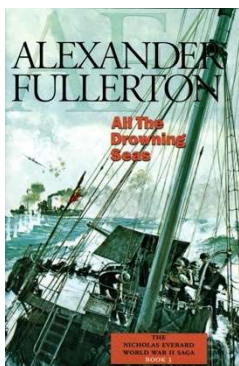
The book also provides an insight into the Japanese Navy’s pre-war thinking, its training regimes, culture, and achievements. Much of the early training in flying and, in particular, in flying from sea-borne carriers, was with the help of **Lord Sempill (William Francis Sempill)** and **Sqn. Ldr. F.J. Rutland**. The Sempill Mission gave much technical expertise to the Japanese, including the plans from the British carriers *Argus* and *Eagle*.

Thus, the ground was prepared for the upending of the old-world order in the Far East.

*[Should Sempill and Rutland have been charged as traitors for giving away state secret information? Other articles about the actions of these men have been included in earlier editions of Apa Khabar.]*

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**“All the Drowning Seas” by Alexander Fullerton**



ISBN 978-1-80032-035-2. Published by 10-Canelo.

This is a **novel** and Book 6 of 9 in the Nicholas Everard Naval Thrillers written by one of the bestselling authors of British Naval fiction. It tells a tale of the battle between the Japanese and Allied ships at Surabaya in the Java Sea in 1942. Not only is the Allied force doomed to defeat, but any surviving ships will be trapped as the escape routes are blocked by the enemy. The Japanese prepare to defend Java, and Nicholas Everard, commander of the cruiser *Defiant*, finds himself practically alone in the fight and forced to use his wits to avoid destruction.



## OBITUARIES

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The death of **LT. CMDR. MIKE HICKIE** was announced in the Daily Telegraph on 23rd September 2023. Aged 100, Lieutenant Commander Hickie was a submariner who had served forty-five years in the Royal Navy and the Australian Royal Navy. In June 1944, he joined *Taciturn* as the first lieutenant before sailing for Fremantle to join the 6th Submarine Flotilla, making patrols into the Java Sea as far as the coast of Malaya. In June 1945, while on patrol, *Taciturn* sank a Japanese air-warning picket hulk and narrowly evaded a depth-charge attack from two Japanese destroyers. Later, on the same patrol while surfaced near Singapore, he noticed from the conning tower a large shape among some fishing vessels. Then he saw bubbles from an incoming torpedo and dived to avoid a collision. For gallantry, skill, and devotion during many other similar patrols, he was awarded a Distinguished Service Cross.



We also note the death of **GORDON JAMIESON** who died on 23rd September, aged 102, in Australia. He was one of the last survivors of the Death Railway in Burma. As a 19-year-old, he enlisted in July 1940, joining the 2/26th Australian Infantry Battalion which arrived in Singapore in August 1941. As war with Japan became more likely, the 2/26th Battalion was sent over to the mainland, but they saw action only in mid-January deep in the rubber plantations where they defended the Simpang-Rengan crossroads from Japanese attack before successfully fighting a rear-guard action and crossing over the Causeway into Singapore on 30th January.

After the surrender and capture, he was imprisoned in Changi and worked as slave labour for about a year before being sent to Songkurai on the Burma-Thailand Railway in April 1943. This was one of the notoriously bad camps where treatment was harsh and disease rampant. Men died like flies, but Jamieson survived. He put his survival down to *esprit de corps* and eating as many maggots as he could for protein, yet removing any flies from his food as he knew they carried disease. In December 1943 he was taken back to Singapore. On liberation in September 1945, he weighed little more than six stone.

After the war he married a Quaker, whose pacifism helped him to come to terms with his experiences as a FEPOW. He unsuccessfully led a claim by the Queensland Ex-POW Association that Japan should fund an Australian research centre for tropical diseases. In his nineties, he was invited onto the set of the film "The Railway Man" and on seeing a really skinny man playing a POW, grabbed his hand and asked, "Are you OK, mate?" His daughter recalled that they were all mates until the end, looking out for each other.



As this column was being finalised on 13th December 2023, the death of the **REVEREND JOE MULLINS** was announced in The Daily Telegraph, aged 103. In 1945, while serving with the Queen's Royal Regiment (QRR) in the Burma Campaign he was awarded an Immediate MC for his outstanding courage and leadership. In July 1945, the 1st battalion QRR occupied a small Burmese village from which they carried out a night-fighting patrol to cut the Pegu-Martaban railway line along which the retreating Japanese were believed to be marching. No enemy was found, but on returning to the village, they discovered about fifty Japanese dug in.





Ordered to retake the village, they attacked with bullet and bayonet, with Mullins in charge as a temporary major. His men took heavy casualties but cleared most of the Jap positions except for one with two machine guns hidden behind a water tank. Mullins, with four men, crawled under cover of darkness to the tank and destroyed the gun crew, for which he was awarded his MC. He was shot twice through his steel helmet during this attack but survived. His battalion lost twenty-five men. After eight weeks in hospital suffering from infected leech bites he thought he was lucky to have survived and decided to be ordained after the war. He worked in India with the Children's Special Service Mission and often showed them his helmet with the bullet holes and told them the story of his miraculous survival. He retired to Australia, but regularly visited India, Britain, and New Zealand. He continued preaching until he was 99.



We have just received the sad news that **GERALD LINDNER** passed away on 29th December 2023. Gerald was a great supporter of the MVG with his wife, Pat, who sadly died some years ago. I corresponded with him on many occasions on various matters and he was a great letter writer. He usually came to our annual V-J Day Services at the NMA and played the organ for us for many years. However, he didn't come in 2023 and I wondered whether he was not well. Gerald kept in touch with us about Angela Geiger (née Willmot) daughter of Gerald's uncle Roger Willmot (Trade Commissioner in Singapore and civilian internee in Changi). Angela worked for HRH Prince Philip when he was president of WWF. She died in 2020. Gerald worked in Singapore and had the good fortune to live in a former colonial house at 31K Pepys Road (pre-war residence of the

Head of the Monopolies & Prevention Department). This has now been turned into an interesting interpretative museum called "Reflections at Bukit Chandu" which tells the story of the last battle before Singapore fell, waged on Pasir Panjang Ridge between the Malay Regiment under Lt. Adnan and the Japanese (12th-14th February 1942).

**From Jonathan Moffatt:** Thinking of Gerald Lindner – I recall he often wore an Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders regimental tie which I commented on. He did his National Service with the Argylls and told me he had a superb Platoon Sgt. who looked after him, a young inexperienced platoon commander. The sergeant turned out to be Rab Kerr, a highly regarded Malayan Campaign Sergeant.

### A Tribute by Rosemary Fell



I would like to pay tribute to Christine Cavender whose husband **MIKE CAVENDER** sadly died a week after our annual lunch on 14th October. Christine had been looking after Mike for some years due to his ill-health. I sat next to Christine at the lunch, and she said that she was hoping Mike would benefit from some respite care in a residential home and give her some rest. It was with great sadness I heard from Christine soon after that he had died. I first met Christine at a reception in Westminster Hall arranged by the Burma Star Association following a wreath-laying ceremony at the Cenotaph to mark the 60th anniversary of V-J Day in 2005. Christine

has marched with the MVG on every Remembrance Sunday since then except for this year, often accompanied by Mike and their children. Mike and my late husband, Donald, had a wonderful repertoire of stories, jokes and general repartee with which they kept us amused and generously supplied with RAF Club sweets during the long wait in Whitehall until it was our turn to march. The last time Mike and Donald marched together was in 2017 and I have a photo of us having lunch at the Premier Inn at City Hall. We send Christine our very sincere and heartfelt sympathies for her loss.

Michael Dennis Cavender (5th February 1949 - 28th October 2023, aged 74)

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## **DATES for your DIARY**

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**Friday 16th February 2024 Radji Beach Commemoration Service, Bangka Island, Indonesia.** The service will commemorate the anniversary of the massacre of the Australian Army Nurses.

**Saturday 13th April** at 10 a.m.

82nd anniversary commemoration of the  
Bataan Death March at San Francisco National Cemetery  
[www.bataanlegacy.org](http://www.bataanlegacy.org)

**Sunday 12th May 2024 – Annual FEPOW Service at the FEPOW Memorial Church in Wymondham, Norfolk 12.30** at the Catholic Church of Our Lady and Saint Thomas of Canterbury, Wymondham. Anyone wanting to register please email [fepow@wymondhamrcchurch.org.uk](mailto:fepow@wymondhamrcchurch.org.uk) or contact Colin Hygate who will pass names on to Peter Wiseman at the Church. Peter maintains the archive and the Book of Remembrance. A wreath will be laid again this year on behalf of MVG.

**June** (date to be confirmed) God's Little Acre, Batu Gajah, Malaysia

**15th August 2024, NMA Alrewas – V-J Day Service in the Chapel and MVG's Plot at 12 noon.** Please try to attend this service and mark the most important date in our calendar, not only to remember those who did not survive but also to celebrate the lives of those fortunate enough to survive. Please let Colin Hygate ([secretary@mvg.org.uk](mailto:secretary@mvg.org.uk)) know **AS SOON AS POSSIBLE** if you are attending so that we can order the appropriate number of service sheets. Following the service, the wreath will be taken to the MVG's Memorial Garden to be placed on the Memorial Stone before going to Heroes' Square where there are plenty of tables for those bringing picnics or making use of the various NMA food outlets.

**Saturday 19th October 2024, Annual Reunion and Luncheon, RAF Club, Piccadilly, London. 12 noon to 5 p.m.** we will hold our AGM in advance of the luncheon starting. Our speaker this year will be **John Tulloch** whose book "The Borneo Graveyard 1941-1945" has been exceptionally well received and has a most comprehensive account of all the Japanese wartime activities on Borneo. The lunch will take place in The Sovereigns' Room and further details will be provided in the April Edition.

**8th November 2024 (tbc), Cross Planting Ceremony, Westminster Abbey's Field of Remembrance** By kind permission of Revd. Pauline Simpson, FEPOW Padre, who coordinates the FEPOW Plot. The MVG's 8" Poppy Cross with our logo has been refurbished for this year and the Cross bearing the SSVF badge will be planted in this plot. The location of the plot is shown on a notice at the entrance. For any members wishing to attend the ceremony and plant a personal Cross of Remembrance **please let Colin Hygate know** so that tickets can be secured. They will be able to obtain a cross from the RBL stall near the entrance.

**November 2024, Remembrance Day Cenotaph Parade.** The Royal British Legion has offered MVG 12 tickets for this year's parade. We need early indication of numbers as we run the risk of losing our allocation if we cannot encourage enough members to march.

**Remembrance Day Commemorations in Canada and Malaysia** – details to follow.



Lest we forget: notes to self

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