

APA KHABAR

Patron: Her Grace The Duchess of Norfolk

www.malayanvolunteersgroup.org.uk



**64th EDITION
OCTOBER 2020**



**POPPY WREATH AND POSIES LAID IN MVG'S MEMORIAL GARDEN
IN CELEBRATION OF V-J DAY 75,
AND IN MEMORY OF THOSE WHO SUFFERED AND DIED**

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V-J DAY 75 CELEBRATED AT THE NMA BBC'S RENDERING OF 'THE CAPTIVES' HYMN' IN THE EVENING PROGRAMME UPSETS MEMBERS ANNUAL REUNION AND LUNCHEON POSTONED DUE TO COVID-19

The 75th anniversary of the Japanese surrender – V-J Day – was marked in the UK on 15th August 1945. Although the war officially ended on that day, thousands of prisoners in the Far East, both military and civilian internees, had to wait for several more weeks until they were finally able to be repatriated. And, as we know, the official signing of the surrender in Singapore did not take place until 12th September 1945. Sadly, due to the present pandemic, we were not able to be in Singapore to celebrate on that date.

To mark V-J Day in this country, The Royal British Legion must be congratulated on delivering a very thoughtful ceremony at the National Memorial Arboretum on 15th August, attended by **Their Royal Highnesses The Prince Charles and The Duchess of Cornwall**, and the Prime Minister **Boris Johnson**. The planning to ensure that we were all socially distanced from each other was meticulous. Those taking part in the ceremony were seated on benches in and around the FEPOW Plot where the rails from the Thailand-Burma Railway and Sumatra Railway are placed, and near the Burma Star Memorial. Those not taking part but fortunate to have been allocated tickets for the event, were seated on the FEPOW bank in the open area dedicated to the Korean War Veterans. The ceremony could be seen on a large TV screen placed in front of us. The MVG was well represented at the NMA on V-J Day. At the end of July, the MVG was invited to send 2 members to represent the Malayan Volunteer Forces at the ceremony. **Imogen Holmes** and **Rosemary Fell** attended on behalf of the MVG. It was disappointing that the ceremony concentrated more on the Burma Campaign and less on the FEPOWs. Sadly there was no mention of the Malayan Volunteer Forces either.

Two of our former child internees taking part in the ceremony were **Olga Henderson** and **Jane Elgey**. Both were interviewed by **Sophie Raworth** and **Dan Snow** during the BBC broadcast before the ceremony began. **Jane** took part in the ceremony itself, and talked about her imprisonment in Loebok Linggau, the last civilian camp to be liberated in the jungles of Sumatra when the war ended. Also present at the service were **Keith Andrews** Researcher for COFEPOW, and **Lt. Col. Geoff Strivens** and his wife, **June**. A copy of the service sheet is included & a full report can be found in the V-J Day booklet. The BBC's V-J Day's evening programme caused some dismay amongst members about the rendering of "The Captives' Hymn." It is a hymn, with heartfelt, meaningful words which are meant to be heard - not a pop song to be jazzed up so that no-one knew what it was. Neither was mention made of the fact that the words and music had been written by **Margaret Dryburgh** in a women's civilian prison camp in Sumatra, and sung every Sunday in camp. A letter of complaint was sent to the BBC about this; the singing of a song associated with football instead of one which soldiers would have known and sung; and querying why a Japanese lady was allowed to air her views on a programme designed to be a thankful celebration of the Allies winning the war and bringing the fighting finally to an end.

Singapore -15th August 2020

Despite permission being granted by the Singapore Government only 2 days before the event, V-J Day was also celebrated in Singapore at the Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery at Kranji during a ceremony arranged by the British High Commission. Wreaths were laid by **Her Excellency Kara Owen CVO**, British High Commissioner to Singapore and eleven National Representatives, including MVG member **Mr. Adrian Villanueva** and our good friend **Mr. Jeya Ayadurai**, Director Singapore History Consultants. A copy of the ceremony is included in the V-J day booklet.

MPOA Appeal letter.

We have received a letter from the Malaysian Palm Oil Association Perak, informing friends of the Association that a concrete building is to be constructed to replace the Cabin Gallery which is situated at Sungai Siput Estate (formerly called the Phin Soon Estate where the estate manager was shot by Communist guerrillas on 16th June 1948) and which was built, together with the Malayan Emergency Monument, in 2010-2011. The Cabin's roof, ceiling and part of the interior have been damaged by heat and the contents of the Gallery have been affected. The purposes of the Monument and gallery are 3-fold:

- 1.). To commemorate the Planters, Miners, Police Personnel, & British and Commonwealth Troops who died during the Communist Emergency.
- 2.). To preserve this area as a place of historical interest for posterity.
- 3.). To provide information and records about the Malayan Emergency 1948-1960.

The MVG has been represented at the Commemoration Service at God's Little Acre in Batu Gajah for several years now, and it was agreed that the MVG should support this project. Our secretary in Malaysia and Singapore, **Richard Parry**, has donated RM\$1,000 on behalf of the MVG towards this project. We are also grateful to **Richard** and **Liz Moggie** for their personal contributions towards this donation.

Please note:

Our Annual Reunion and Luncheon booked for the 17th October at the RAF Club has been yet another casualty of the Covid-19 pandemic. All those who had booked to attend were informed of the social distancing measures which would have to be observed, and given the option of attending the event in October or postponing it until April 2021. By a large majority, members voted for a postponement and the lunch will now take place on Saturday 10th April 2021, provided the Covid-19 restrictions have been lifted. Our booking for 16th October 2021 is still in place, and at present we plan to continue with this.

Naming of a Rose to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of the Fall of Singapore – February 2022.

On a much happier note, we thank **Judy Balcombe** for her wonderful suggestion to name a new rose which will be available to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the Fall of Singapore in February 1942. Many names have been suggested, but the preferred name is – **Singapore Far East Moon**.

Judy contacted firstly **Treloar Roses** of Bolwarra in Victoria, who put her in touch with **Sandra Turner**. She recommended a rose breeder called **Walshroses**, the Registrar of naming new rose varieties for Australia and who specializes in producing new types of yellow roses. The name of the rose has to be registered during 2020 so that it can be released for sale in 2022. Photographs of the new yellow varieties, bred in Australia by rose growers **Richard** and **Ruth Walsh**, have been sent to **Judy**. She chose the colour yellow to represent Friendship, Mateship and Compassion, and because the Malay Peninsula was formerly known as **"The Golden Chersonese."**

The MVG is fully in support of this lovely idea and we plan to advertise the rose so that as many people as possible can buy it, if it is imported into the UK.

When approached about this project, **Richard** and **Ruth Walsh** said, **"It would be an honour as Australian breeders to be involved in such an iconic celebratory rose. We have been focussing on yellow roses in our breeding programmes for several years now and have a few that might fit the bill."**

We are also grateful to **Judy** for asking **Mr. Fakhrizal** to spread some flower petals in the Peace Museum and on the civilian grave in the Catholic Cemetery in Muntok on V-J Day. **Judy** also asked **Dennis Ang** and **Joseph Thambiah** at St. Andrew's Cathedral in Singapore to say some prayers on 15th August in memory of all the victims of WW2, and this was arranged despite the limited numbers allowed in the Cathedral at present.

Flower petals placed on the grave in the Catholic Cemetery



Flower petals placed by the plaque in the Peace Museum



"A Guide to Singapore in World War Two" by Jane Booker Nielsen

Fewer than a dozen members have contributed to the sum of £153 raised for **Jane's** really worthwhile booklet guide to Singapore. While we are very grateful to those who have been generous in sending donations, and thank them, we feel that more members could have shown an appreciation of **Jane's** work. It is **very** disappointing to have had such a poor response. Please would you look at the booklet again – understand the time and research that went into it, and show your appreciation by sending a donation for our funds. Cheques should be made out to: **Mrs. R. Fell Malayan Volunteers Group** and sent to **Rosemary** at the address at the end of the newsletter.

Albert Henry (Bert) Warne

We send our warmest (and belated) congratulations to **Bert** on reaching his centenary last October – and apologies for not picking this up last year. We wish him a **Very Happy 101st Birthday** on 12th October this year, and many congratulations. Those of you who receive the Commonwealth War Graves Commission newsletter may have viewed the online interview with **Bert** on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of V-J Day on 15th August. Called **The Railway Man** by the reporter, **Bert** spoke about his ordeal while working on the Burma-Siam Railway. **Bert** joined the RAOC and, as part of the British Army 18th Division, he was sent out to Singapore where he was captured by the Japanese on arrival. In captivity he was part of the 6th Army Field Workshop and was sent up to the Railway in June 1943. He spoke movingly about his Commanding Officer, **Captain Lambert** who died while on the Railway and is buried in Chungkai Cemetery on the banks of the River Kwai. **Bert** recalled that the POWs' clothing was, by this time, in tatters and they worked wearing nothing but a G-string and were mostly barefoot.

LEST WE FORGET

Rod Liddle's headline in the Sunday Times on 16th August:

"If you think Hiroshima was monstrous, you've forgotten the monsters it stopped."

The first paragraph detailed some of the **"bestial, almost unimaginable, 'medical experiments'"** being carried out by Unit 731 of the Imperial Japanese Army on civilians and captured enemy soldiers. Some of the most hideous ever devised by man.

THE JAPANESE INVASION FORCE

By Rosemary Gransden

[Ed: Thank you, Rosemary, for setting out the size and extent of the Japanese Army so clearly. It is easy to criticize with hindsight, but for the Allies to have ignored the threat from such a large force massing on the Siam/Malay border is inconceivable].

By December 1941 Japan had over 250,000 soldiers at their bases in Indo-China. From the beginning of October 1941, Japanese troops had been encamped along the border of Siam and Indo-China and on 20th November large numbers were transported by train through Siam via Chiang Mai Province in the north, eventually reaching the Siam/Malay border on 30th November. To assist the Japanese, the Siamese had provided maps and diagrams of the railway system from Prathet and across the Malay border and had also made available to the Japanese the necessary engines and rolling stock. On 7th/8th December, 12,000 Japanese troops were transported by sea across the Gulf of Siam for then invasion of Northern Malaya. Only a very short time after the Japanese invasion force of 12,000 men were approaching the beaches at Kota Bahru and Singora, the Japanese launched an attack from *inside* Malaya against Alor Star, Jitra and Kangan. But how was it possible for the Japanese landing force to secure a beachhead at Kota Bahru and then suddenly be 300 miles away attacking the rear of the British defences at Alor Star just twelve hours later?

The answer is simple - a week *before* the Japanese landing at Kota Bahru, more than 50,000 Japanese troops had already crossed the Siam/Malay border from Indo-China and, on 1st December 1941, set up a base at Kangan in northwest Malaya in readiness for the Japanese invasion on 8th December. Thousands of front-line enemy soldiers infiltrated more than forty miles behind the Allied defence line near Alor Star and in order to ensure complete secrecy of their presence, Japanese soldiers murdered all the residents in the area. British Intelligence was aware of the infiltration of these Japanese troops in readiness for the invasion of Malaya but the information was ignored and was never acted upon!

Since the war in the Far East there have been many estimates and calculations given concerning the numbers of fighting men involved and the number of prisoners of war taken by the Japanese.

The numbers of Japanese forces who commenced their attack on Northern Malaya in December 1941, as verified by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission report in 1956 and by Sir Basil Liddell in his history of the Second World War, were as follows:

- 55,000 men of 15th Army under General Lida covering north of Malaya and south of Siam
- 83,000 men of 25th Army under General Yamashita & Count Terrauchi including 18th Division
- 28,000 men of 26th Infantry Division under Lt. Gen. Mataguchi
- 38,000 men of the Imperial Guards Division under Gen. Nishimura
- 2 Artillery Regiments
- 1 Armoured Division of 500 tanks
- 500 warplanes with 80 in reserve
- Plus 2 support aircraft carriers, 10 destroyers, 5 submarines and other ancillary craft commanded by Admiral Ozawa

An approximate total of some 265,000 trained combat troops with 50,000 Koreans in reserve.

During the fighting in Malaya, the Japanese lost more than 25,000 killed and wounded, their losses on and adjacent to Singapore were in excess of 20,000.

Allied forces on 1st December 1941 were 19,000 British; 15,000 Australian; 17,000 Malay or local Volunteers; and 37,000 Indian Army – totalling some 88,000 troops.

During the fighting in Malaya, Allied losses were in excess of 25,000 killed, wounded and missing, reducing the overall strength to around 65,000. At the end of January 1942, the Singapore garrison was strengthened by the arrival of the 18th Division bringing the total number of defenders on the island to around 68,000, 20% of whom were administrative non-combatants.

Allied losses during the battle of Singapore were around 7,000 killed and 2,000 missing & unaccounted for. The Japanese list of casualties showed in excess of 20,000 killed and 5,000 wounded or missing ... discounting the assertion made by Churchill that it was a mere 30,000 Japanese on pushbikes who had overwhelmed an Allied force of 100,000 men. His statement that the men of this country and of the Empire fighting in Malaya and Singapore had not given of their best with the inference that the defenders of the island were cowards Many brave men serving in the Far East at that time, fighting impossible odds, died either in battle or as prisoners of war of the Japanese, believing what Churchill said was true and sadly no subsequent British Government has deemed it necessary to put right the lies spoken by Churchill, which may have saved the reputation of this "great war leader" but it was done at the expense of the many thousands who paid the ultimate price.

AIR CHIEF MARSHALL SIR ROBERT BROOKE-POPHAM
An Appraisal of his Appointment and Legacy
By Rosemary Gransden

Air Chief Marshall Brooke-Popham had himself only been in the post since 18th November, 1940, when he was appointed Commander-in-Chief, British Far East Command, responsible for the defence of Singapore, Malaya, Burma and Hong Kong. This had been a newly created command and **Brooke-Popham** was the first RAF officer to be made the Commander-in-Chief of a joint command during a major war conflict, but there was a significant gap between the responsibility he had and the authority he was given. He had no authority over local government or the Navy. Although responsible for all defence matters in the British colonies of the Far East, the Royal Navy did not come under his command reporting back instead to their own Commander-in-Chief in London and, similarly, local government civil servants also did not report to **Brooke-Popham** but to their own senior ministers in London.

With the Japanese threat escalating in South East Asia and the existing defences still mainly focused against an enemy attack coming from the south of Singapore by sea, with a serious lack of defences everywhere else, the aerial defences being particularly deficient, **Brooke-Popham** had known that he had to build up the defences in the whole region. The British Government's priority, at that time, meant that British resources were needed for operations taking place in Europe and the Middle East, and so **Brooke-Popham** struggled, with little success, to do what he could to build up these defences, secure the much-needed reinforcements and rectify the unsound command arrangements. In August, 1941, he submitted a plan for the defence of Malaya to London for approval.

The secret war plan, code named **Operation Matador**, was drawn up on the assumption that the Japanese would attack northern Malaya, landing on the east coast of Siam and advancing south towards the Siam/Malay border where the Allied Forces would intercept them just over the border in Siam. However, the success of **Operation Matador** relied heavily on additional force levels which were not available to **Brooke-Popham**, despite his urgent requests for many more men and resources in order to carry out the plan and despite an earlier similar request which had been made by **Major General William Dobbie**, Officer Commanding Malaya in 1937, when he had looked at Malaya's defences together with a certain **Arthur Percival**, then a Lt. Colonel. In 1937, **Dobbie** had reported back to London that during the monsoon season from October to March, landings could be made by an enemy on the east coast of Siam and he recommended then that large reinforcements should be sent immediately. **Dobbie's** predictions in 1937 of the possible landings taking place at Singora and Patani in South Siam and Kota Bahru in northern Malaya turned out to be correct, but his recommendations for the necessary reinforcements were ignored by the British Government as were **Brooke-Popham's** later requests for additional men and resources in 1941 when the situation, by then, was critical and the Japanese invasion an inevitable reality.

In order to secure the northern borders of Malaya, **Operation Matador** called for the British defending forces to occupy key air and sea bases around Singora ahead of any suspected Japanese landing, thus denying to the Japanese the use of the port at Singora, the nearby air bases and rail and road connections to the Malayan frontier. With **Dobbie's** predictions that the Japanese were most likely to attempt landings at both Singora and Patani, control of the airbases near the towns would allow air cover of the northern approaches to the Malay Peninsula and hold a further defensive position south of Patani. The four beaches in Northern Malaya deemed to be most likely for a Japanese landing were Kota Bahru, defended by the 8th Indian Brigade; Kuantan, defended by the 9th Indian Division; and Endau and Mersing, defended by the 8th Australian Division. Despite this plan to meet the Japanese threat in Southern Siam by attempting to stop the enemy gaining any of the beach-heads at the Siamese towns of Singora and Patani, the Foreign Office in London insisted that no aggressive move should be made to start a war against the Japanese on Siamese soil which might possibly provoke a war, not just with Japan but Siam too. Siam was a neutral country and therefore there was the complication that carrying out **Matador** would involve Britain violating the neutrality of Siam with whom a non-aggression pact had been signed a year earlier.

Churchill's concern at what was happening in the Far East prompted him to send a special cabinet envoy, **Duff Cooper**, to Singapore in order to assess the situation, a decision which did nothing to help maintain **Brooke-Popham's** authority at this difficult and crucial time. At the age of sixty three, **Brooke-Popham** had been given an almost impossible job to do. The Air Chief Marshall was an extremely affable and personable man, known as **Brookham** or **Brookie** to his friends, but he was cautious.

On 22nd November, 1941, with the Japanese establishing sea and air bases in southern Indo-China, **Brooke-Popham** urged London that **Operation Matador** should be put into effect immediately and he requested permission for Allied forces to advance into southern Siam. Unfortunately, the unwillingness of the Foreign Office to upset the so-called neutrality of Siam by entering Siamese territory, prevented **Operation Matador** being put into effect and thus the Japanese were able to land in Siam unopposed. Subsequently, of course, it was revealed that far from being neutral the Siamese Government had been in secret collusion with the

Japanese and had given every support possible. Had the Siamese not been so quick to assist the Japanese, the British would never have lost Malaya.

Although on 5th December 1941, Brooke-Popham did eventually receive permission from London to authorise **Operation Matador**, many conditions were attached and the plan had to be reworked to take account of the limited forces available. By then, **Brooke-Popham** was not prepared to order its implementation unless and until he was absolutely sure that the Japanese threat was serious and this, despite several sightings of the Japanese fleet in the area, including a report on 4th December 1941 by RAAF reconnaissance planes operating as far as South Hainan, that a huge armada of Japanese transports, supported by naval vessels, was moving southward. The convoy was apparently hostile, as the Japanese naval escort had, in fact, fired on the Australian Air Force planes, but no offensive action was ordered as the Air Chief Marshall did not consider these reports to be sufficient evidence that the Japanese would actually attack northern Malaya.

On Saturday, 6th December, at around 3.00pm Flt. Lt. J.C Ramshaw of the Royal Australian Air Force, flying an Australian Hudson reconnaissance plane out of Kota Bahru, sighted the Japanese armada through a break in the monsoon storm clouds and relayed a message back to the British Commanders that the transports had rounded Cambodia Point, were steaming into the Gulf of Siam and, judging from the direction they were taking, were proceeding for Malaya and Southern Siam. On the Sunday, efforts were made to locate the Japanese fleet, but extreme weather conditions prevented any successful observation. It is probable, in the light of what occurred later, that part of the large armada sighted earlier on the 4th, at some point during this time, moved westwards in the direction of the Philippines. When Japanese transports were then sighted along the coast near Kota Bahru in the north east corner of Malaya, south of the Siamese border, both **General Heath** in Kuala Lumpur and **General Percival**, en route from Singapore, expected **Brooke-Popham** to launch **Operation Matador** immediately, but he still did not do so. The Air Chief Marshall had recently been advised by **Churchill** that he was to be replaced, a decision he found very humiliating, as to be relieved of his command at the very point the fighting might start would suggest that he was not up to the job and he certainly did not want to be blamed for committing his country to a conflict they had been trying to avoid, just as he was leaving his post as Commander-in-Chief of the Far East.

On 7th December, the first plane to be shot down by the Japanese over the Gulf of Siam during their invasion of northern Malaya was, in fact, a Catalina Flying Boat piloted by a Malayan Volunteer Air Force Pilot, **Flying Officer Patrick Beddel**, formerly of "C" Flight but attached to RAF 205 Squadron. **F/O Beddel** and his crew were searching for the Japanese invasion convoy & became the first Allied casualties of the Pacific War. At dawn on 8th December, **Lt. Gen. Percival** was ready to put **Operation Matador** into effect, if so ordered by his superior, and there is little doubt that such a plan could have saved Malaya and would certainly have strengthened the northern defences, but after so much indecision and prevarication, by the time **Matador** needed to be put into operation after there was positive proof of hostile intent with the sightings of the Japanese war ships and transports off Patani and Kota Bahru on the evening of 7th December, it was too late.

FLYING OFFICER GEOFFREY FISKEN

NEW ZEALAND'S FLYING ACE - with thanks to Graham Lee.

Geoffrey Fiskens's death on 12th June 2011, aged 95, was reported in The Times. He was the top-scoring Commonwealth pilot against the Japanese in the air battles during the defence of Singapore. He scored 7 combat victories (including 5 kills) in the space of four weeks. This was a remarkable achievement in view of the fact that RAF and Commonwealth Squadrons were outnumbered by the Japanese in terms of aircraft, equipment and maintenance facilities. He trained at New Plymouth and Ohakea and graduated as a Sergeant Pilot in 1941. He was posted to Singapore in February 1941 and joined 205 Squadron RAF, a flying boat unit, but later converted onto fighters, flying the Australian-built Wirraway and the American-built Brewster Buffalo. He joined 243 Squadron at RAF Kallang flying the Buffaloes. These aircraft were not popular with pilots due to their badly conditioned engines, barely serviceable guns and malfunctioning oxygen system. When the Japanese invaded Malaya, **Fiskens** was in one of two Buffaloes which arrived as the battleship **Prince of Wales** disappeared under the waves. As the Japanese advanced, 243 Squadron was in the forefront of the air defence of Singapore. He shot down a Japanese Army 97 bomber on 12th January; a Japanese Navy Zero fighter on the 14th; two more 97s on the 17th plus a probable 3rd which was damaged; and another Zero on the 21st. But 243 Squadron also suffered terrible losses and by January 21st nearly all aircraft and pilots had been lost. **Fiskens** was himself wounded twice in the arm and once in the hip.

He was evacuated before Singapore fell and returned to New Zealand where he recovered from his wounds. He was commissioned and posted to 14 Squadron RNZAF flying American Curtis P40 Kittyhawks. He was sent to the Solomon Islands in his personalized P40, NZ3072, the **Wairarapa Wild Cat**. Flying out of Guadalcanal, he had four more combat victories against Japanese fighters and a possible fifth against a Betty Bomber, totalling 11 certified and possibly a dozen 'kills' in all. He was awarded the DFC in September 1943, and stood down from operations in December that year due to continuing problems from the injuries incurred in Singapore. NZ3072 was scrapped after the war, but NZ3009 was restored and painted to represent NZ3072 – the famous "**Wild Cat**."

THE RAF FAR EAST PRISONERS OF WAR MEDICAL OFFICERS

With thanks to Dave Croft RAFBPA

"In the prison camps, they did not even bother to allot prisoner medical officers in proportion to the number of POWs, and they did not care if the prisoner doctors had to go short of equipment, supplies, drugs and food supplements. In Japanese words: 'Those who fails (sic) to reach objective in charge of health and or spirit is regarded in Japanese Army as most shameful deed.' No Japanese soldier was allowed to become attached to the thoughts of illness ... prisoners were not allowed to get sick – they had this beaten into them to strengthen their weak spirits. Despite all they go sick, by the scores of thousands!" Adapted from "Prisoners of the Japanese: POWs of the Second World War in the Pacific."

This article is about a selected few RAF doctors (medical staff) held in Japanese captivity. It is intended to represent the care and dedication given to the sick and injured POWs by the medical officers of the Allied services, who also suffered at the hands of the Japanese. The names given to cities etc. in Java are the names in use at the time.

1. 75449 Flt. Lt. Nowell Peach RAFVR (1913 – 2012).

On the outbreak of WW2, **Dr. Peach** was commissioned in the RAF Volunteer Reserve Medical Branch, later being posted to RAF Seletar, Singapore in 1940, followed by a short stay at Kallang before being moved to RAF Alor Star (62 Squadron Bristol Blenheims) early in 1941 as resident Medical Officer. He was still at Alor Star when the remnants of 62 Squadron were withdrawn to RAF Butterworth on 9th December 1941. It was from Butterworth on that same day that **Squadron Leader Arthur Scarf** carried out his VC action against the Japanese at Singora that resulted in him being mortally wounded by enemy aircraft. He achieved a forced landing at either RAF Alor Star or on an open piece of land close to the Alor Star General Hospital.



Flt. Lt. Dr. Nowell Peach RAFVR

Here there is some uncertainty as to where the aircraft (Bristol Blenheim L1134) came down, but a QAIMNS Nursing Sister on duty at the hospital, **Pat Davies SRN** 1* stated that **S/Ldr Scarf** 'was accompanied to the hospital by the RAF doctor, Flt. Lt. Peach, who sedated him and treated him for shock. He had a bad wound in his shoulder where he had been hit by a Jap fighter, but he managed to bring his plane back and land in a nearby paddy field. He was quite conscious and cheerful when I went over to the bungalow for tea, but was hurriedly summoned back when it was found he was suffering a secondary haemorrhage.' A later letter from QAIMNS Nursing Sister 'Sallie' Scarf SRN (the wife of S/LDR Scarf) to Pat Davies states, 'I remember I was off duty, but when I came over (to the hospital), Dr. Peach was there with the other two crew members of the aircraft. Had a speech with Peach, whom I knew as he went to Singapore on the "Viceroy of India" with us ... He told me about Pongo's 2* arm. I felt very depressed when I heard it was his left one as he was left handed and once told me that flying was his whole life and I thought 'how is he going to manage if he can't fly?' Then when he was moved from the stretcher the severe wound in his back bled profusely and you put up a drip and I gave two pints of blood ... I came to the conclusion that he died of secondary shock before they managed to do anything for him!' [Note: This account is taken from Apa Khabar, 44th Edition, October 2015.]

Following the death of **Arthur Scarf**, **Flt. Lt. Peach** remained at Alor Star as a number of ground staff were still involved in refuelling and bomb loading duties, leaving at the last minute in a well used Ford V8 to make a (very) rapid journey to Singapore. From Singapore he was posted to Sumatra then, at the end of February 1942, he was sent to the No: 1 Allied Hospital at Bandoeng in Java.

This hospital was an Australian field hospital housed in a modern school under the command of **Lieutenant Colonel E.E. 'Weary' Dunlop**. When the Netherlands East Indies surrendered on 8th March the hospital functioned for another six weeks before being closed at short notice by the Japanese.

While at the hospital, **Nowell Peach** was given a second hand copy of *Gray's Anatomy* by **Lt. Col. Dunlop**, the book being carried and studied earnestly throughout his captivity – he retained the book courtesy of the Japanese through a 'chop' mark stamped in the book.

His next move was described as a place that was, "awful, an old local jail (*Lands Ovocdings Geshcht* – also known as *Landsop*) 3*, where the covered enclosure that was provided for the British measured only about 30 by 60 yards. Some 50 of the 500 men had to sleep outside and on their first night the temporary bivouacs were flooded out by rain. There were two barely functioning showers and 10 latrines, which had to be unblocked by the prisoners. The diet was poor – rice pap twice a day and vegetable stew at night ... there were no serious illnesses in the six weeks that I spent there. Later the telltale signs of vitamin deficiency appeared – men would lie with their feet in water to reduce the burning sensations (burning feet)."

After six weeks in that 'awful place', he was moved to Tandjong Priok (Port of Batavia) POW camp, where he was to spend several months before moving on again but not before he conducted a study (without the Japanese knowing) of burning feet'. It was at Tandjong Priok, where POW doctors set up an operating theatre at the back of the prison hospital, that he assisted **Captain L.O.S. Poidevin** (Royal Australian Army Medical Corps), aided by the invaluable copy of *Gray's Anatomy*, perform delicate vascular surgery on a soldier wounded earlier on Timor. The operation, taking place on a 'homemade' operating table in the makeshift theatre, involved the use of basic surgical equipment and parachute silk to close the damaged artery. The successful operation was testament to the skill and care of the POW doctors working under difficult (and trying) conditions.

Eventually, in April 1943, **Nowell Peach** was able to settle down in a new hospital, as he recalled from his diary at the time...

'13 April – In charge of five medical officers and 30 orderlies, I moved from Tandjong Priok POW Camp to Mater Dolorosa Convent, Batavia. The modern (1931) buildings, with tiled floors and proper sanitation, will be POW Hospital No 2 for infectious diseases.

17 April – The new hospital opened. About 180 sick men arrived from Tandjong Priok. They are all sitting patients except one with a tuberculous hip whom I had previously put up in a Thomas's splint and sliding bed specially made by Royal Engineer staff in camp. The Japanese guard in charge of hospital administration says that the bed frame has not been signed for and must go back to Priok!

18 April – Lying patients arrived from the old POW hospital. Those with tuberculosis were put in the same ward as Gunner Webb, the man with the tuberculous hip, and we could not get the Japanese corporal to understand he is not infectious and should be moved. They seem scared stiff of tuberculosis even the guards on the hospital transport lorries were wearing masks.

20 April – Four British medical officers and all the orderlies moved to the new main POW hospital at St. Vincentius Convent. Nine medical officers now remain (at Mater Dolorosa) – seven of whom are Dutch – covering tuberculosis, typhoid, dysentery, malaria, ENT, skins, pathology and surgery.

10 May – I am in charge of surgical cases ... but apparently I was included on the staff only to diagnose, rather than treat any surgical condition that might arise here ... I also assist in the malaria ward. There are about 350* patients here, with the following illnesses:

Malaria: about 40, mostly Australians infected in Timor.

Skin: 60 patients – scabies, widespread in the old hospital but often overlooked.

Dysentery: the patients, about 150 in total, are spread among four wards according to the severity of their illness. These wards and that for tuberculosis have seen most of the deaths in the hospital so far.

Tuberculosis: there were about 10 cases of pulmonary tuberculosis ... three died in the first month here. These poor fellows have been put in a ward where the ventilation is inadequate – the windows are all up near the ceiling. For over a month these windows have had to be closed at night and the Japanese have only recently been persuaded that they should be left open.'

*Note: the total figure of 350 given does not match up with the total taken from the different illnesses.

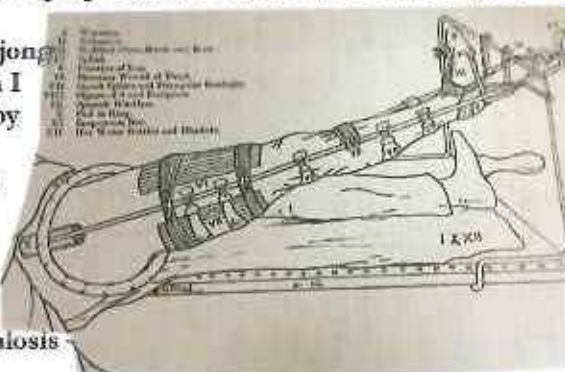
'For the first two weeks, the Japanese gave us no extra food and the supply of medicines was poor. However, at the beginning of May (1943), they started supplying about 100 hen's eggs, 180 bananas and 20 papaya daily. Hospital funds come from three sources: officers' subscriptions, canteen profits and subscriptions from camps. In May, the officers also bought 3 kg of liver daily for especially sick patients. With the general funds we bought extras for the whole hospital – green beans twice a week, milk for certain patients, eggs and oil to make nasi goreng once a week, and yeast media for growing cultures in the lab.

Quite a good supply of drugs was received from St. Vincentius dispensary. There were no general facilities for X-rays (except the limited capability of a dental unit.)'

It was here where **Nowell Peach** became involved with the recycling of the very small quantity of barium made available, which was recovered from each gastric patient over the normal passage of time following the barium meal. As he mused, if only the next patient knew where the barium had been previously!

In his 1990 notes to the BMJ, he mentions that, 'One of our greatest difficulties and annoyances is that the administration of the hospital is dominated by a Japanese corporal who appears to have scanty medical knowledge. He is petty about certain small regulations – for instance, he ordered that a patient's radiant heat be removed because there is a rule that electric light bulbs may not be used without permission and he had not been asked. I have also heard him raging away in the office about filling in forms that he does not understand.'

Towards the end of May, he was invited to attend an "international medical conference" to be held on 30th May as the British representative at the St. Vincentius main POW hospital. This was because the Japanese were 'concerned



about the level of sickness among the Prisoners of War and sought advice from POW medical staff.' Flt. Lt. Peach, in his 1990 communication writes:

'I went as British representative ... the Japanese officers told us that we were to forget that we were prisoners of war and to speak our minds freely. With cigarettes and iced coffee, we settle down to business.

Firstly, we were told that the Japanese authorities were concerned that there were many sick men among the prisoners, and we were asked what was needed to make them fit. We said that we needed more protein, especially meat, and more vitamins, in the form of red unpolished rice rather than the polished rice we had so far. We also requested letters be allowed through (not one had arrived at the hospital, although we had heard that about 20,000 were held up in Batavia) and that books, dentures, glasses and exercise facilities be provided. The Japanese announced that they intended to return the POWs fit and well and that, subject to general shortage in Java, they would do what they could to supply better food. But no promises were made and it remains to be seen if anything will happen.'

Nowell Peach was at Mater Dolorosa Convent for just over a year. Between May 1944 and April 1945 he was moved twice before ending up at *Landsop* (again).

'It was now grossly overcrowded, 3,000 men (British, Australians and Dutch) having a space of some 80 by 200 cm for each man. But there was some comfort – Red Cross parcels (the first we had seen) arrived with bully beef. And it was here that we finally heard the war had ended on 24 August!

I waited a month, assisting in the [care and] evacuation of British and Dutch patients, before flying to Singapore to sail home. Even then, I had an uncomfortable half an hour while the Dakota aeroplane almost had to turn back because of bad weather.'

He returned to the UK onboard the repatriation ship *MV Cilica* arriving at Liverpool 29th October 1945. Prior to arrival he, with other RAF medical officers, were each presented with a handwritten testimonial of thanks from the RAF contingent for the care given in the voyage home.

Following his return to the UK in 1945, Dr. Nowell Peach eventually became a GP surgeon at Horsham Hospital in 1954 following a series of appointments leading up to the position.

1* Pat Davies SRN (the mother of Sallie Hammond MVG Secretary for Canada and the USA) was married to S/Ldr Harley Boxall, a close friend of Arthur Scarf, both being pilots in 62 Squadron.

2* Pongo...Arthur Scarf was also known among his many friends as 'Pongo', a somewhat derogatory term used these days for Army personnel by the RAF. The relevance in Pongo's case is not known.

3*BJM Volume 3-1 22-29 December 1990 pp. 1469-1471 [To be continued in January.]

SOME INTERESTING WEBSITE LINKS

<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C2680472> Letters relating to the Second World War service of Sergeant 13246 Ronald Maurice PULLIN, FMSVF. He was actually Singapore Royal Engineers.

<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C2677478> Memoir notes relating to the Second World War experience of Hugh King ASHBY, SSVF. He was briefly Singapore Royal Artillery Volunteer Battery.

<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C119260> Story about the model yacht made in Changi by 2 Australian FMSVF men, who were brothers-in-law. Both worked on Blakang Mati. William C. BARTON who was a keen rower and worked as a mining engineer for Anglo-Oriental. Wife & daughter evacuated on the "Orion." William J. HARRISON worked as a mining engineer at Larut Tin Mines, Taiping (Anglo-Oriental). Returned to Malaya post-war 1946-48. Lived on his boat in Melbourne with his dog. In Changi, they joined the 'Changi Yacht Club' for sailing enthusiasts. They took 18 months to make the model with a small pocket knife and an old chisel. The yacht was a two masted schooner with a white painted hull & attached to a small fixed stand. William Barton took the model yacht with him when he was evacuated after the war.

<http://www.deadlinenews.co.uk/2020/07/29/charities-call-for-nation-to-join-in-celebration-to-mark-vj-day/?fbclid=IwAR1wAR1fDUUp3cUkgy6pvJS5c7NQII18J7VYVhLQc4ifK2fgk3svNurINf15emkQ> an article on the then Jenny Davidson who was born in civilian internment in 1942. Her story was also related in the Scotsman in July 2020. Her father James Davidson worked for William Jacks in Singapore as an engineer & enlisted as Pte/Signalman in the 1/SSVF. POW to Thailand. Her mother worked as a secretary in the Colonial Secretariat & was interned in Changi (where daughter Jenny was born) & Sime Road.

<https://asia.nikkei.com/Opinion/Singapore-should-tear-down-its-statue-of-Raffles?fbclid=IwAR23Mjdp5vlpw9Koj8dsi73-hAiGwbkskanahbS9IE6f2a4fiSKPefgQcGU8> An article in a Japanese newspaper! Let's hope the Singapore Government does not agree with this "Opinion."

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/fall-of-singapore-captured-in-itv-drama3bgsj08ls?fbclid=IwAR2spyrsp1CUwPNR9onsjr00QQTyakAfrGjHFzR7TrAOa3UtrDgMqD4q0> The novel "The Singapore Grip" by J.G. Farrell is to be serialized on ITV starting in September. It will be interesting to see how the novel is handled and how many myths about the Fall of Singapore are presented as facts. The storyline is not very interesting and very thin on content.

<http://www.shropshirestar.com/news/features/2020/07/15/shropshire-family-epic-war-time-escape/?fbclid=IwAR3TCpKnqA5loOltUq6SdbU303UzDhUx4UP5nhE-b0NLZJbXUcjsFkfw0> See P. 26 for Merryn Godber's story

BRITISH MALAYAN MEDICAL SERVICES 1941-1945

By Nigel Stanley

This article condenses more elaborate information given in the medical sections of my recently published book, *Twists of fate: the civilian ordeal in British Malaya, 1941-1945*. [Ed: See Book Section & review.]

The medical history of the war in southeast Asia has been extensively presented from a military point of view. The civilian story is less well known, but equally interesting regarding civil defence preparations, coping with casualties and health care during internment. British Malayan doctors addressed all these tasks and some, serving in the Volunteer forces or seconded to the RAMC, were key providers of healthcare for POWs after the capitulation.

Civil defence arrangements

Civilian doctors were organised in three ways. Approximately 150 European and 240 Asian Government employees of the Malayan Medical Service (MMS) supervised hospital care as part of the colonial infrastructure. Three hundred private practitioners and company doctors provided other services according to their age and fitness: the younger ones in the Volunteer forces and those older or unfit in the Medical Auxiliary Service, often manning urban first-aid posts. Hospital accommodation was expanded by 50% with extra beds provided in the main establishments and the improvisation of subsidiary hospitals elsewhere. First aid posts linked with ambulance depots were set up with capacity to cope with influxes of up to 100 casualties at any time. Each served a population averaging 50,000 in number. Substantial extra medical stocks were purchased. Extra stretchers, hospital beds and other equipment were constructed in local workshops. Shell dressings and first field dressings were made by parties of local women for both military and civilian use. Thereby medical supplies were rarely lacked during the military campaign, although serious losses occurred in Singapore after the store of ether and surgical spirit was set ablaze by a bomb.

The Blood Transfusion Service for civilian and military needs was organised in Singapore's College of Medicine. Blood groups of 35,000 servicemen were determined and stamped on to their identity discs. Blood was collected from 4,000 donors, one third of which was prepared and stored as pooled plasma. The plasma bank provided life-saving treatment for fifty men who had suffered severe burns when the *Prince of Wales* and *Repulse* were sunk.

Conflict in the Malay Peninsula

Although Singapore was raided within hours after the Japanese landed at Kota Bharu on 8 December 1941, the first heavy casualties were incurred when Penang was bombed three days later. This was a daylight raid, repeated on four further days, and was virtually unopposed. Mr. Forbes the Resident Councillor at Penang, wrote:

"For sheer intensity of attack on a comparatively restricted area, nothing else in Malaya [including Singapore] can be compared with it."

One thousand were killed on the first day, nearly twice as numerous as in Coventry, a city with a similar head of population, during its heaviest and much cited German bombing attack during the night of 14 November 1940. At the Penang General Hospital five operating theatres were run continuously day and night by a rota of its seventeen medical officers. Several doctors were also brought up by very hazardous air flights from Kuala Lumpur and Singapore. The regular nursing staff were supplemented by partially trained female volunteers from the nursing reserve, often mothers with family duties. One, our neighbour **Kitty Fisher**, described how she performed minor operations too, such as stitching on a patient's ear whilst the surgeon reduced a fracture.

Most large towns in peninsular Malaya were bombed, although less heavily than Penang. In Ipoh, many of the supporting staff deserted, leaving the doctors and nurses to pick up their work, including cleaning, cooking and burying the dead. As the Japanese advanced, civilian hospitals would be changed to military use as casualties clearing stations, field ambulance units and regimental aid posts. European doctors and nursing sisters would be ordered to move south. Patients requiring continued treatment would also be transferred or left under the care of local Asian staff. As part of our 'enemy denial' policy much hospital equipment was also transported by military vehicles or rail to Singapore. It was an invidious task for our doctors to decide what to take and what to leave for the Asians who stayed behind. For six weeks, whilst the Japanese troops fought their way down the Malay Peninsula, Singapore received little heavy bombing of its city area, although this increased in late January 1942. Hospital admissions due to casualties then rose to a hundred per day, but were efficiently dealt with and their management was facilitated by the arrival of other medical and nursing staff evacuated from the mainland. Major problems did not arise until the last two weeks of fighting when the Japanese commenced regular daylight terror bombing of the most densely populated areas. Blackout conditions, however, caused difficulties peculiar to the tropics. Hospital wards were not air conditioned and screening windows made the heat intolerable.

The siege of Singapore

On the 7th of February, the casualty rate in Singapore began to soar due to increased bombing and the start of shelling from Johore. Next day, Japanese forces landed on Singapore Island. As the front line moved closer, the city's downtown and residential areas became crowded with refugees. The Tam Tock Seng Hospital in the northern outskirts was most vulnerable to artillery fire due to its lack of blast proof buildings and proximity to the fighting. It was abandoned for civilian use on the 12th, but continued to be occupied by two military field ambulances.

The two remaining large centrally located civilian hospitals somehow had to accommodate all patients transferred from the periphery and supply 1,100 beds for military use. The usually 800 bedded General Hospital finally housed 3,400 patients, even though makeshift hospital facilities had been set up in St. Andrew's Cathedral and elsewhere. The Kandang Kerbau Hospital, previously a maternity hospital, undertook general services too. Its main building received more than eighty shell hits, attracted by nearby British artillery guns. Two doctors, one British and one Asian, were amongst its dead. Casualties kept pouring in, although all the beds were occupied. New inpatients were laid on mats on the floor between beds and, after this floor space had been filled, the space under each bed was used as well.

Personnel available to provide care became depleted. On the 11th February all British and Australian military nurses were ordered to evacuate, hoping to spare them the rape and murder suffered by their colleagues at Hong Kong seven weeks earlier. Tragically, though, eighty-eight lost their lives due to Japanese bombing of their escape ships, massacre after they struggled ashore or later death in captivity. Evacuation of our civilian nursing sisters was voluntary and only half of them departed. Three who stayed were killed at work by shrapnel. Forty-six, including two matrons, died during their disastrous escape attempt or subsequently during internment.

Singapore on fire by Leo Rawlings



Depletion of British nursing staff on hospital wards was aggravated by decreasing attendance due to family commitments of Asian supporting staff. The situation was partly relieved by employing 147 rescued crew of the sunken **Empress of Asia** as stretcher bearers and orderlies. The youngest was fifteen-years-old **Len Butler**. He was deployed to the Singapore General. There, with no relevant experience, he found himself as sole assistant in a ward filled with a hundred major casualties staffed by a single eighteen-years old Tamil Nurse. A regular task for him was to carry dead bodies to the mortuary, which was already cram-full with decomposing corpses.

Food supplies were adequate at the remaining hospitals, but in the last three days shortage of water became a critical problem. Its supply pressure dropped due to damaged pipes and the Japanese capture of the island's reservoirs. The sewage system

was not functioning and linen could not be washed. There was insufficient water even to make plaster of Paris to splint limb fractures. Two large holes in the hospital grounds had been dug to provide ponds for emergency water supply, but were used instead as mass graves for one thousand of the dead. Seven hundred more corpses from the hospital mortuary were added after the surrender with one end allotted to Christians. Over this a large cross was erected and the ground consecrated by the Bishop of Singapore.

When we surrendered, the total number of civilians who had been killed or died of wounds in Singapore was six to seven thousand; 25,000 casualties had been admitted to its hospitals and 40,000 treated at its first aid posts. In mainland Malaya, casualty deaths probably totalled three to four thousand. The civilian mortality per capita caused by the final one-week blitz of Singapore was substantially higher than by all the bombs and missiles dropped on London from 1940 to 1945. **Lt. General Percival** had been correct to make his invidious decision to surrender without further delay.

Army medical services

Care of the wounded during the retreat in Peninsular Malaya was a dispiriting experience. Forward facilities would be repeatedly closed, moved and reopened to the rear and with ensuing hardship for the casualties and staff alike. Matters culminated during the last week before the surrender in Singapore. The official medical history of the campaign observed:

"Never in their history were the Army Medical Services called upon to discharge their functions in circumstances more difficult and more disadvantageous than those that obtained in the island and city of Singapore."

Hospital precincts provided scant protection from the battle. On the 11th of February the main Indian military hospital at Tyersall was set on fire, which caused 200 deaths. More criminal was the massacre of 250 patients and staff at the

Alexander Military Hospital on the 14th February. Japanese soldiers even burst into an operating theatre and killed an anaesthetized patient, who was a Penang Volunteer. The dead staff included eighty medical orderlies, three dental officers and thirteen medical officers, of whom three were British Malaysians.

Evacuation of Singapore hospitals for Japanese use

Early on the 16th of February, Lt. General Yamashita ordered that all patients then occupying beds in the Singapore General and Alexander Military Hospitals should be removed forthwith, so that they could be brought into exclusive Japanese use. Those requiring continued inpatient care were transferred to new facilities. A new military hospital was established for British troops at the Roberts Barracks in the area which became Changi POW Camp. The Australian POWs there set up their own hospital in the nearby Selarang Barracks, although this was later relocated to a wing of the Roberts Barracks after a Japanese order.

Civilian patients were transferred to another out of town facility, the Woodbridge Psychiatric Hospital, then usually known as the Mental Hospital. It was located ten miles northeast of the city and renamed Miyako (Victory) Hospital. All of its patients had been sent to St. Johns Island before the surrender and it served as a general hospital throughout the rest of the war. The Kandang Kerbau Hospital also continued to provide general medical as well as maternity care, and the Tan Tock Seng Hospital was re-opened for civilian use.

The Japanese stipulated a 48-hour time limit for completion of hospital transfers and that no equipment should be moved from the General Hospital. All walking cases were discharged leaving 700 civilian sick and wounded who were transferred to Miyako. Patients were moved on stretchers under blankets, in spite of the tropical heat. The Hospital's doctors smuggled drugs and much portable equipment beneath these blankets past watchful Japanese eyes. Miyako was a depressing place and for some time the air was disgusting to breathe, due to the stench of rotting bodies and the smoke from burning oil depots at the naval base not far away. Dr. Cicely Williams was admitted to Miyako as a dysentery patient after only two days of internment. She found herself on a mattress in a ward full of other European men and women with Japanese sentries wandering around. The overstretched nurses were Asian, but at that time the Europeans were provided with direct medical care of British doctors under Asian supervision. The Asian medical and nursing staff treated the internee patients kindly, but some kept their distance in obvious terror of being seen fraternising with the conquered enemy by Japanese staff or sentries.

Civilian internment

This commenced on 17 February in temporary accommodation at Katong. From there the internees were moved first to Changi Jail on 6 March 1942 and then to Sime Road Camp in early May 1944. The final camp population totalled 4507 and included 79 MMS doctors and 32 private practitioners. Four MMS doctors had died during earlier captivity.

Separate hospitals were set up for men and women at the Jail and Sime Road. These were mainly furnished and equipped by on-site manufacture or purchasing using camp funds. The only medical supply from the Japanese in the first two years was a single bale of cotton wool. During the first eighteen months the internees were allowed access to Miyako for their most sick inpatients and outpatients and to Kandang Kerbau and Tan Tock Seng for certain diagnostic facilities. Only minor surgery then was carried out at the Jail until October 1944. Major operations subsequently were performed there and at Sime Road too after access to the City hospitals became very restricted as a consequence of the Double Tenth crackdown.

The internees often suffered the same diseases as the POWs in Changi Camp, including dysentery, malaria, tropical ulcers, skin infections and nutritional deficiency diseases, but perhaps less severely. Remarkably, no internees died from malaria and only two from beriberi, excluding two held outside their camp in Kempeitai custody. Cholera was not experienced on Singapore Island, in contrast with Thailand where it killed hundreds of POWs.

Certain medical challenges confronted internee doctors which were not encountered in the POW camps. Their patients were often elderly. Some were women and children but, overall, they survived captivity better than the men. Others had pre-existing health conditions, of which the most notable example was diabetes. All the diabetics eventually died after exhausting their store of insulin, which the Japanese commandants willfully refused to replenish. In September 1945, after the liberation, a large stock of insulin retained for Japanese use was found at the Singapore General Hospital.

POW work by British Malayan Doctors

In his last report regarding Changi Camp's medical services, Lt. Colonel Neal reflected on the key factors which sustained POW survival. He highlighted the boosts to morale given by clandestine wireless news, mail, Red Cross supplies and air raids together with POW adaptability and ingenuity. He then concluded:

"Finally, mention must be made of the Malay Medical Service [doctors] who, with their local knowledge, were frequently

able to advise as to the best procedure, and enable us to avoid many pitfalls. Their work was of inestimable value."

Their contribution to camp welfare was disproportionate to their number. Amongst the 291 British and Australian medical officers captured at Singapore, 21 had been seconded from the MMS or Volunteers, to provide tropical expertise lacking in the RAMC and AAMC, and 17 remained designated as Volunteers. In Changi Camp these 38 British Malayan doctors were strongly represented in the allocation of posts concerned with the control and treatment of malnutrition and tropical diseases.

Major Robert Burgess was appointed to be Nutrition Officer to Changi POW Camp. He had been one of the MMS doctors assigned to the RAMC from the Institute of Medical Research in Kuala Lumpur. **Burgess** was assisted at first by two other British Malayan doctors: **Dr. Thomas Wilson** from Malacca and **Dr. Edward Vardy**, Medical Officer at Seremban. **Dr. J.H. Strachan** was put in command of the anti-malaria field laboratory set up at Changi Camp, assisted by **Major John Reid**, an entomologist also from the Institute, as well as **Burgess** and **Wilson**. **Dr. Robert Wallace** from Kedah became Medical Officer in charge of malaria treatment at the POWs' Roberts Hospital. **Lt. Colonel Coutts-Milne** was given charge of field hygiene for the prevention of dysentery.

Wilson, Reid and **Vardy** were sent overland later to support the POWs constructing the Thailand-Burma Railway (TBR), where they served with great distinction. They were joined there by **Ross McPherson** from Seremban. Circumstances in captivity often demanded change in practice and **McPherson**, a radiologist, undertook the daunting clinical task of acting as single-handed Medical Officer at several small camps 200 kilometres up the TBR.

Practically skilled Volunteer doctors also rose to the forefront on the TBR. **Stanley Pavillard** from Kedah had won admiration not just for his initiative in dealing with cholera, but also his force of personality in negotiations with POW guards making unreasonable demands for unfit men to perform heavy work. He authored a popular post-war memoir, but also informative scientific reports regarding the early detection of subclinical beriberi and how this state risked sudden death if coupled with heavy exertion. **Robert Hardie** was rated by **Professor Hugh de Wardener**, a former RAMC officer, as *'one of the finest brains on the Railway, an accomplished artist and multilingual polymath.'* He had become a partner in a private medical practice in Kuala Lumpur in 1937. Earlier he had been an Oxford Classics scholar and then a civil servant for three years before training to become a doctor. He wrote a diary, published posthumously, which provides the most immediate impressions of a British doctor on the medical actualities arising during the TBR construction. Significant contributions were also made by others, to name a few. **Dr. Ian MacKintosh**, who had been **Dr. Hardie's** medical partner in Kuala Lumpur, enlisted in the FMSVF too. He brought his surgery's microscope to the TBR to provide an essential service for identifying malaria and amoebic infection at Chungkai and other camps. **Arthur Marsden** had been Health Officer for Central Kedah and provided pathology services up and down the TBR. He published his POW work after the war and likened his experience to *'a large scale human experiment on the effects of prolonged malnutrition ... fatigue and intercurrent disease.'* **Captain Leslie Turner**, was one of the few British doctors awarded the MBE (mil.) for his efforts to save lives in "F" Force, which incurred the highest POW mortality in Thailand.

In the POW medical services essential duties were played by other non-medical Volunteers. **Hugh McCutcheon** and **Brownlow Smith-Laing**, for example acted as non-medical health workers performing anti-mosquito work on the TBR, in which role previous UK residents were novitiates.

Postscript for internee doctors and nurses

The praise by **Lt. Colonel Neal** regarding the work of British Malayan doctors for POWs was matched by a post-liberation statement by the former Colonial Governor's wife, **Lady Thomas**, regarding internee health providers:

'That so few [internees] died is solely due to the magnificent work of our doctors and nursing sisters, for whom no praise can be too high.'

The obvious importance of healthcare in camp affairs also drew a disproportionate number of its providers into wider administrative roles. Most notably, three of the seven individuals elected to the post of Men's Representative or Commandant were doctors. The Women's Representative was a doctor or nurse during four out of five terms of office. Having such a high profile had disadvantages since it exposed the individuals to the risk of ill treatment as negotiators with an increasingly hostile Japanese camp administration. Even worse, though, seven MMS doctors were amongst the fifty-seven internees detained by the Kempeitai during the Double Tenth atrocity and two lost their lives as a direct consequence of this ordeal. Finally on a happier note, several of the doctors left a substantial legacy in their research work on malnutrition observed in the civilian internment camp. Although similar work was undertaken in the POW camps, longitudinal studies of the Singapore internees were easier to perform since they were a less itinerant population. The internee studies also had extra interest, because they included both men and women with considerable diversity in age. Their meticulous data proved invaluable post-war in calculating minimum nutritional requirements for preservation of health.

BRIEF HISTORY OF SS/MRNVR (SINGAPORE DIVISION) – Part 2

By Lt. Adrian Villanueva MRNVR (1960s)

“The Reservist is twice the Citizen” P.M. Winston Churchill

SWANS (MRNVR Singapore Division – Women’s Section)

In 1957, a Women’s Section, the Singapore Women’s Auxiliary Naval Service (SWANS) was established as part of the MRNVR. It was patterned along the lines of the RN’s WREN. Two former WREN Officers who served during World War II were commissioned as SWANS’ Officers. The first batch of 14 local women were selected as Ratings, and trained by the RN in drill, swimming, communication, radar plotting and S&S duties. In the early 1960s, the SWANS Section expanded to one 1st Officer (**Barbara McIntyre**, the wife of **Cdr. Jim McIntyre**, the MRNVR Staff Officer), one 2nd Officer and two 3rd Officers. The 2nd and 3rd Officers rose from the ranks, and there were at that time close to 30 Ratings. They were teachers, nurses, clerks and administrative staff in civilian life. Sea training was thrilling and exciting for the girls. At the mention of going out for sea training on board *HMS Panglima* (2), the girls would jump with glee even if it was only for a short or an overnight cruise. The SWANS were an enthusiastic lot, always willing to learn and to participate in all manner of ship board duties and training, including the scrubbing of decks as sailors have to do. According to the girls, they were never tired of doing anything on board, and were prepared to do whatever is expected of them as “sailors.” However, the excitement usually subsided when the engines were stopped and the boat began rolling from side to side. During that time, almost every SWAN was sea-sick, with the girls “throwing their guts out” over the side. Once the engines were started and the breeze started blowing, everyone was alive again and they continued to enjoy the cruise and looking forward to more of them.

In addition, training was also conducted by the MRNVR Permanent Staff SD Officers. They included whaler rowing, canoeing, shooting, fire-fighting, communication and swimming. They also had social nights including barbeque and cinema.

The SWANS did their share of duties during a crisis, when 20 of them were mobilised during Confrontation (1963-1964). On transfer from the MRNVR, they served with loyalty and pride with the RMN (Royal Malaysian Navy). The SWANS did administrative and communication duties in shore establishments and manned the radar and Operation’s Room monitoring shipping in the Singapore Straits and Southern part of the Straits of Malacca. These girls were always a lively and happy lot of Volunteers who proved that they could do as well as the men of the MRNVR in their given duties.

In the mid-1970s, the SWANS Section was disbanded. The SNVF (Singapore Naval Volunteer Force) the precursor of the RSN (Republic of Singapore Navy) was formed in 1967. The RSN gradually recruited women as Ratings and Officers. The SWANS played an important role in the earlier years both as Volunteers and as Mobilised Ratings; and were indeed the women pioneers of Singapore’s new Guardian of the Sea, the RSN.

Transfer of the MRNVR (Singapore Division) to Malaysia as RMNVR

On 16th September 1963, Malaysia was formed, comprising of Peninsular Malaysia, Singapore, Sabah (formerly North Borneo) and Sarawak. It was also a time of uncertainty and crisis, as Indonesia under **President Sukarno** opposed its formation and declared Confrontation which lasted till August 1966. It was very fortunate that Britain, together with Australia and New Zealand contributed Military Units to protect the newly formed Nation. At that time, Malaysia had a relatively small Army, and a nascent Navy and Air Force.

It was also during this period that a major change was made to the MRNVR (Singapore Division). It was transferred to Malaysia and served as the Reserve for the RMN (Royal Malaysian Navy). The timing was perfect as it was an opportunity for the RMN to mobilise Officers, Men and Women (SWANS) during that period of crisis. The MRNVR Royal Navy White Insign was lowered on 22nd September 1963, at the MRNVR TAB (Telok Ayer Basin) Parade Square. Present at the ceremony were the Flag Officer, Commander-in-Chief RN Far East Fleet, the Malaysian Secretary of Defence and **Commodore A.M. Synott**, a RAN seconded Officer who was the CNS (Chief of Naval Staff) of the Royal Malaysian Navy. All MRNVR Officers, Ratings and Junior Ratings and SWANS of the Singapore Division were on parade. It was a poignant occasion and the ending of an era that was closely connected with the Royal Navy. The RM Band of the RN Far East Fleet beat the retreat that evening at TAB, and there were saddened hearts when the Band marched off playing “*Auld Lang Syne*.” *HMS Laburnum*, the MRNVR IIQ Ship was “paid off” with a blue commissioning pennant stretching fore and aft of the ship denoting close to 30 years of the Colonial SSRNVR/MRNVR service. The replacement Ship’s bell and Name plate had the newly inscribed Ship’s name: **KD (Kapal Di-Raja – HMS in Malay) Singapura**.

When the RMN (Royal Malaysian Navy) white ensign was hoisted, the Officers, Ratings and SWANS of the MRNVR were automatically transferred and became Volunteer Naval Reservists of the RMN, with a new designation, the RMNVR (Royal Malaysian Navy Volunteer Reserve – Singapore Division). *HMS Laburnum* (2) was renamed *KD Singapura*. *HMS Panglima*'s designation was changed to *KD Panglima* (2). 25 Officers and about 80 Senior and Junior ratings, and 20 SWANS were almost immediately mobilised for active service with the RMN during the Indonesian Confrontation (1963-1966).

The mobilised Volunteer Reserve Officers and Ratings were posted to RMN ships patrolling the waters off Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak. The Reservist Officers served as 1st Lieutenants (XOs) and some as Commanding Officers of SDMLs (Seaward Defence Motor launches) and IMS (Inshore Minesweepers). The Ratings served as crew on board RMN Inshore and Coastal Minesweepers and Fast Patrol Craft. They also manned the Radar Stations at lighthouses that stretched along the Southern Coast of Johore and Singapore. A few Officers and Ratings were posted to Borneo to serve under the Tawau Assault Group (TAG) River Complex Frontline. The SWANS were posted to shore establishments for S&S (Supply and Secretariat) duties, and with the Coast Guard Operations HQ located at Pearl's Hill, Singapore.

Singapore's Separation from Malaysia

Singapore separated from Malaysia on 9th August 1965, but upon the request from the Malaysian Ministry of Defence, the serving Mobilised Officers and Ratings (including the SWANS) of the RMNVR (Singapore Division) were given permission by the Singapore Government to continue serving with the Royal Malaysian Navy for the remaining duration of Confrontation which formally ended in August 1966.

Cdr. Jaswant Singh Gill became the first Mobilised Commanding Officer of the newly formed SNVF (Singapore Naval Volunteer Force) in 1966/1967, the precursor of the RSN (Republic of Singapore Navy). He was the Senior-Most Naval Volunteer Reserve Officer, having served with the MRNVR in the mid-1950s, and later mobilised with the RMNVR during Indonesian Confrontation.

The Mobilised Naval Volunteer Reservists during Confrontation were eventually demobilised. A good number were recalled to serve as Regulars in various appointments in the Singapore Ministry of Defence, the Singapore Army and the newly established RSN (Republic of Singapore Navy) officially formed in 1967.

Naval Reserves Transformation to 2 Regular Navies (RMN & RSN)

The MRNVR (Singapore Division) played historical roles in the formation of 2 Regular Navies: Royal Malaysian Navy (RMN) which traced its inception from the time of the SSRNVR established on 27th April 1943; and the Regular Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN) formed on 5th May 1967. The RSN has acknowledged the services of its pioneering Volunteer Reserve Naval Officers, Ratings and SWANS who served in the MRNVR. Our Old Naval Veterans' rallying call still is "UP THE NAVY," a slogan coined by our close friend & Kontrontasi Comrade-in-Arms (1965-65): **Tan Sri Admiral (Retd.) K Thanabalasingam**, (BRNC Dartmouth trained Cadet/Midshipman in the mid-1950s, and First Malaysian Chief of the RMN (1967-1977).

WHY WE SHOULD REMEMBER VJ DAY 15th AUGUST

My Father's Story – by Julian Beavan

My father, **Roger Beavan**, was born in 1909. He went to university where he studied engineering, after which he joined Vauxhall. He was sent to Hong Kong in 1937, where my mother later joined him and they were married in 1938. My brother was born in 1940.

They moved to India and in September 1941 he joined the Indian Army. After training he was commissioned and sent to Singapore, arriving there in November 1941. My mother, who was left with a two-year old, managed to get a ship back to England – a terrifying experience, with the constant fear of attack by German U-boats – but they made it safely back.

Fall of Singapore 15th February 1942

Two British Battleships, *HMS Prince of Wales* and *HMS Repulse*, were sent to defend Singapore and Malaya, but both were sunk by Japanese aircraft on 10th December 1941 off the coast of Malaya. Malaya was overrun as the Japanese moved south, sometimes on bicycles. They were ferocious fighters and the British had lost nearly all their aircraft, so were defenceless.

Life in Singapore seemed oblivious to this and my father commented that Senior Command seemed not to have a care in the world. Parties and social life continued right up to Christmas 1941 and into January 1942. Defence did not seem a priority. All the troops were spread out along the whole coast of the island; however they proved to be far too thinly dispersed and unable to defend.

After two weeks of bitter fighting and the partial destruction of The Causeway (linking mainland Malaya to the island of Singapore), the Japanese crossed over the Straits of Johore and invaded Singapore, which fell on 15th February 1942.



Around 28,500 British, 18,000 Australian and 67,000 Indian soldiers were taken prisoner, as well as civilians. This was the largest capitulation in British history. Most of the soldiers had never seen any action and had come to Singapore by sea, straight out of training. There were very brutal killings by the Japanese, including local civilians and in hospitals, notably the Alexander Military Hospital atrocity.

My father and his troops were marched to the Changi area where they were accommodated in Changi Barracks. The POWs were also sent to Roberts Barracks and to other smaller barracks. My father hardly saw any Japanese for two weeks and the POWs fended for themselves, finding water, food and accommodation. The Japanese could not cope with the vast number of prisoners, but escape was almost impossible owing to Singapore being an island: the heat, food, disease, sharks and Japanese air power made escape impossible.

Apart from the murdering there were other atrocities: the Chinese were hated and their decapitated heads were put on spikes and displayed in the streets.

There was confrontation between the Japanese and the POWs, when up to 15,000 men were forced into Selarang Barracks (built for 1,200) because they refused to sign an agreement not to try to escape. Those POWs who tried to escape or were out of camp were shot when captured. When the POWs continued to refuse to sign, the Japanese cut off the water supply and they had to dig latrines on the parade ground. Eventually the POWs were ordered to sign by their commanding officers, and they did so, many using a variety of fictional names.

Father looked after his men, but with the overcrowding, lack of food and medical supplies combined with being overworked, disease was rife. He kept a daily diary for the full 3 ½ years, including on the Railway. He wrote it as a letter to my mother, rather like a conversation. I think it gave him hope. He became quite religious, probably for the same reason. He kept a few things throughout his captivity: a mosquito net, Lilo, tube of toothpaste, small folding table and a clean shirt for when he was released as a British officer. I doubt the shirt survived! But the diary did. These items went everywhere with him, including the Railway and I am sure they saved his life.

The Thai-Burma Railway – 'The Death Railway'

In May 1943, my father was part of "H" Force, comprising 3,270 men of whom 1,979 were British. They went by train up from Singapore to Ban Pong west of Bangkok, and from there to Kanchanaburi on the River Kwai where the Railway Bridge is located. "F" Force had preceded them in April 1943. The journey from Singapore was 1,808kms (1,124 miles) and took 4 days. They were crammed into metal trucks with closed doors. They could hardly sit down; temperatures were boiling by day and cold at night. When the train stopped to refuel the POWs often got nothing to eat, not even water. There was no sanitation on the train and the men had to stick their bums out of the door whilst being held by their colleagues. When they arrived in Ban Pong they had to march to their destination, sometimes 20 miles a day. As the railway progressed it took them longer to get to their work place. In March 1943, the war was going against the Japanese and they brought forward the completion date for the railway from December to August 1943. This became known as the 'Speedo' period and as a result the number of casualties increased. Some 19,000 more POWs were brought in to work and tens of thousands more Asian labourers. The stage was set for tragedy and the phrase 'Death Railway' was coined. The advent of the wet season brought on even more casualties. I know my father's mosquito net, Lilo, toothpaste and table were invaluable.

There were 61 camps established as the railway progressed and the casualties were unbelievable, mainly caused by disease: dysentery 27%; cholera 12%; beriberi 9%; malaria 8%; diarrhoea 3%; malnutrition 2% and tropical ulcers 2%. Often the POWs suffered from more than one ailment. The highest death rate occurred between June and December 1943, and this coincided with the time my father was there. When finished, the Railway was 415 kms long. It opened on 17th October 1943 with great loss of life, disease and injury, both physical and psychological.

Father returned to Sime Road Camp in December 1943, but in May 1944 the POWs were transferred into Changi Jail in exchange for the civilian internees (men, women and children) who had been imprisoned there since February 1942. The Jail was a terrible building: cold at night, damp and full of bugs. Built as a prison for local prisoners in 1936, cells were only 8' x 6'. The bed was a stone block in the middle for one person, along with a very smelly hole in the corner as a latrine. Sometimes there were up to five in a cell. Built for a maximum of 800, there were up to 8,000 held there later on, and there were buildings and tents around the prison as well.

Whilst VE Day was celebrated on 8th May 1945, my father and his men had to wait until 15th August 1945 for the war in the Far East to end, and then get back to the UK, where the war in Europe had been over for three months. People wanted to forget the war and were looking for jobs and homes. A new Government was elected in July 1945 and my father got back to the UK in October 1945. This is why we must remember the war in the Far East and all those who suffered.

My father was incredibly lucky. He must have been very strong mentally and physically to survive, which never showed. He was a quiet, modest man, but I did have to eat all the food on my plate and clean my teeth with very little toothpaste! He died aged 67 as a result of the effects of malnutrition from being a FEPOW 31 years earlier. Such a shame! We did not know then.

[With thanks to Julian Beavan and the "Budworth Bulletin" for permission to print this article in which it appeared.]



Changi Museum and Chapel

by Donald Ruffell

Opened in 2001 the Museum and Chapel commemorate and honour servicemen who were made Prisoners of War when the Japanese overran the Malayan Peninsular in the Second World War and incarcerated in Changi Gaol. As is well known, the conditions in the camp were appalling with severe overcrowding, disease, hunger, ill-treatment and the tropical climate blighting the lives of the captives.



The Museum is currently closed for the purpose of renovation and as part of that project the Trustees made an appeal through the Malayan Volunteers Group for any items connected to the

camp. My late father-in-law, Forbes Wallace, was serving as an Assistant Commissioner in the Malay States Police in Kuala Lumpur when the Japanese invaded. He activated the Territorial Army Commission he held in The Black Watch and was attached to the 5th Battalion, The Royal Norfolk Regiment in the rank of Captain. With them he fought with distinction until the capitulation in Singapore on 15th



February, 1942. His exploits are documented in *Eastern Epic* by Sir Compton Mackenzie, *Out in the Midday Sun, Singapore 1941-1945* by Kate Caffrey and most recently by Peter Thompson in *The Battle for Singapore* (sub-titled *The True Story of the Greatest Catastrophe of WW11*).

Towards the end of his life my father-in-law entrusted me with the meagre possessions he had when the camp was liberated. Effectively, everything except the tattered clothes he wore. When the Museum appeal was made last year my family felt the time was right to donate the items for safekeeping and to be seen by others. They were accepted with alacrity and gratitude and included his Japanese-issue Identity Tag, his wire framed sun glasses (broken), his knife and fork, his toothbrush (fashioned from bamboo and bristles from a broom), his crude pipe (which he made from prison clay) and, of special interest to the Museum, a flimsy copy of the Japanese language leaflet dropped into the camp by the RAF when the Japanese surrendered, warning them of dire consequences if they maltreated their erstwhile prisoners.

My father-in-law survived those awful years (being a Scot he attributed this in part to have been brought up on porridge!) and resumed his Police career up until Malaya gained its Independence. I hope one day to be able to visit the Museum and spend a moment of quiet reflection in the Chapel.

Donald Ruffell

THOUGHTS ON JAPAN AND ENGLAND

By Father Ulick Loring

[Editor: This article tells the little known story about the Catholic population in Japan during WW2]

"Who turned this beautiful city of Nagasaki into a heap of ashes? We did. We started this foolish war ourselves." Quoted by **Dr. Takashi Nagai**, a Japanese Roman Catholic radiologist from the village of Urakami.

A family story was that my father, **James Loring**, a Flight Lieutenant in the RAFVR, was on Mount Victoria in Hong Kong at the beginning of April 1946 when he was handed a telegram announcing my birth. He was in Hong Kong, so he told me, because he was in a unit which would have taken over the running of Japanese airfields had an invasion of Japan taken place. Instead, the atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki while he was *en voyage* to the Far East.

My father had a 'good war', as they say. In Hong Kong he was a young officer in a victorious army. He told me how Japanese POWs were told to dig trenches because they were to be shot and buried in them. His diaries record that he was sad to return home to England. His country was shabby and impoverished as the result of the European War. He had a wife and three children to look after. He would have to start anew. Eventually he came good and was awarded the CBE for charity work.

Supervising Japanese POWs on Hong Kong



Had my father been involved in the American led invasion of Japan he would have been part of an enterprise fraught with great danger. The Japanese still had tens of thousands of men under arms, and they would follow the Emperor to the end unless ordered to the contrary. Then they would follow him unquestioningly into peace, which is what they did. Such was the mystique of the Emperor. Of course, the British were only a small element in the invasion which would be under American command. Their presence in a Japanese invasion was a token of lost British imperial influence.

Back in England in May 1946, my father met my aunt Margaret (See A.K. 62 ps.14 – 19) for the first time. She had been out of the country since 1938, first as a music teacher in the Cameron Highland and then as an internee in Changi Gaol and Sime Road Camp. She was a diffident woman who took a long time to unburden herself of her experiences.

In 1988 I bought my first car. I was excited and proud as I drove for the first time to see my mother and aunts in Hastings from London. When my aunt realised I had bought a Nissan she looked shocked.

My mother, my aunt's sister, was eclectic in her tastes. In later years, if she saw a book which she thought I might like, she would offer to buy it. One of these was '*Silence*' by **Shushaku Endo** a successful Japanese novelist and a Roman Catholic. **Endo** became another stage in my life. Themes about the War appear in a number of his novels and illustrate the sufferings of both sides. They were tale of ordinary men trapped in situations beyond their control. '*Silence*' follows the misfortunes of a Portuguese priest who travels to Japan to discover why one of his fraternity has apostatised. He finds a world of incredible cruelty, secrecy and suspicion. He lands near Nagasaki where many foreigners made their landfall since it was at the southern end of the country. He apostatizes himself. A theme of **Endo** was that Christianity can never take root in Japan.

About twenty five years on, I found myself on a flight from Tokyo to Nagasaki. Japanese airlines are like five star hotels compared to British Airways. I felt an honoured guest not a piece of baggage to have M & S sandwiches thrown at me. Nagasaki Airport is quite a way from the city for the terrain is very rugged and one can visualise how difficult an American landing in southern Japan would have been. On my first evening, we walked up the hill behind our hotel and found the shrine of the 26 Catholic martyrs put to death in a form of crucifixion in 1597 by **Toyotomi Hideyoshi** who was trying to unify the country. The shrine is on a spectacular site overlooking the city and across the harbour to the sea.

The next day, we took a tram up from the city centre and walked up the hill to Urakami, once a village inhabited by secret Catholics known as Kakure. When in the 1870s they were able to come out into the open,

they built a Cathedral there. On 9th August 1945 an American bomber heading for Kokura found there was too much cloud and so it was flown on to its secondary target – Nagasaki. Here there was a technical hitch and the A bomb was dropped just below Urakami Cathedral on what is now the Peace Park. It has been estimated that 8,500 Catholics were wiped out. It seems a cruel paradox since the Catholic population was often regarded by the Japanese as having dubious loyalty towards their own country.

Walking down the hill from Urakami, we found a little single-storey house called *Nyokodo* which, after the war, became the home of a radiologist, **Takashi Nagai**, who was already ill with leukaemia when the bomb came. He retrieved the ashes of his immolated wife, **Midori**, and buried them. He then set to work caring for the survivors. He regarded the massacre of his Roman Catholics as a necessary holocaust to end the War. He died of radiation in 1951. The Catholic Church regards **Nagai** as a candidate for sainthood. After visiting *Nyokodo* and its museum, we made our way through the Peace Park and by the bomb's epicentre, and navigated the tram system back to the city centre.



We went onto the island of Tsushima. A memorable site there is the Shinto Temple of Watazumi which has deeply rooted mythological associations with the beginnings of the Imperial Family. The next day, we were on a ferry from the island to the port of Hakata. As we entered then harbour, I saw a Japanese warship in port flying the Chrysanthemum flag with the rising sun at its centre. The sight gave me a strange uneasy sensation. I am a Catholic priest, but I have no ethical tools which help me to judge one atrocity from another. The shockingly cruel actions of the Japanese forces in China, the Philippines, Malaya, Indochina and the Dutch East Indies wound my psyche. But then I find it incomprehensible that Britain refused to alleviate the Bengal famine of 1943 or why the American Government pointlessly interned tens of thousands of its Japanese citizens in remote desert camps.

At the time of the Falklands War an ethics lecturer reminded a group of us that War is one of the four horsemen of the Apocalypse alongside Famine, Pestilence and Death.

Who am I to argue?

WORLD WAR 11 EXPLOITS OF LT. (LATER LT-CDR) F.O.S. MAN DSC SS/MRNVR (SINGAPORE DIVISION)

ESCAPE FROM MALAYA AND SINGAPORE – Part 2

With thanks to Lt. Adrian Villanueva

Landing at Sumatra and Meeting Survivors

As it was now impossible for us to get through to Batavia and as the nearest port, Palembang, was already in the hands of the Japanese, we decided to land on the coast of Sumatra and make our way, somehow, over to the other side and from there, perhaps, commandeer a Junk or other vessel and sail to Colombo. Although we did not know what was ahead of us, we had to make plans of some sort. After a consultation we decided to enter the mouth of the Indragiri River, which flows for some hundreds of miles into the interior of Sumatra, and to arrive at the entrance at dawn the following morning.

Soon after darkness had fallen, we were signalled by two ships (that were afterwards identified as "*Tenggaroh*" and "*Hung Sau*") who told us that they were full of survivors (men and women) from two other ships that had been bombed and sunk that morning. They asked us for a position which we gave, and as they had a large number of wounded on board we advised them to try and make to the Indragiri River with us the following morning, to which they agreed. We then carried on at slow speed. At approximately 22.30 a shout was heard in the darkness just off the starboard bow: the Aldis lamp was brought into action and picked out a figure sitting astride an Oropesa float. The ship was brought alongside and the figure was identified as **Signalman Findlay RNZVR** a survivor of **HMS *Changteh***. He stated that his ship had been bombed and sunk about 8 hours previously, that casualties were heavy and that he thought there were several more survivors floating nearby. We circled around for about an hour trying to find these survivors but without success, and we eventually gave up hope and carried on.

At dawn on 15th February 1942, we found ourselves at the mouth of the Kuala Lajau, which is the southernmost arm of the Indragiri Delta. The entrance was very shallow and we had no charts to help us. However, thanks to Providence, we managed to find our way up to the mouth without mishap. Here also we found a small Examination Station with two Malays in charge. We anchored here and sent a boat ashore to try and contact someone to pilot us up the river. The Malays were extremely obliging and helpful and were not at all put out by the motley crowd who had disturbed their peaceful existence. They got hold of the local *"kapala"* or headman for us who agreed to pilot us as far as Lapat which was a small village about 15 miles further up stream. From there up to Tembilahan, which was the largest village in the district, we were left to our own devices. We accomplished this journey safely and arrived there at 16.30. *"Tenggaroh"* and *"Hung Sau"* had followed all this time and at Tembilahan they discharged their wounded and we did the best we could to help them. Fortunately there was one RAMC Doctor in the party who was not wounded and he did a magnificent job with the very limited medical supplies at his disposal. He reportedly carried out twenty-seven amputations within four hours by candle light and without the use of anaesthetic. His name was **Lieut. Colonel Hurd-Wood, RAMC**. He had been in the Navy in World War 1 and had commanded a Destroyer.

On arrival at Tembilahan, we discharged all the Military personnel we had brought out of Singapore, and we were glad to get rid of them as they were a responsibility as well as a millstone round our necks. In this village, we also learnt of the fate of various other ships that had left Singapore with us; these included the *"Thu Kwang"*, the *"Kung Ho"*, *"Changteh"* and *"Kuala"* all of them had been bombed and sunk. We also understood that there was still a vast number of survivors from these ships who had not been picked up but were still floating around in lifeboats or else stranded on small islands, and among them some 200 women and children.

Embarking Wounded

The following morning, 16th February 1942, at 0800 we started to embark as many wounded as we possibly could; and we finally managed to squeeze in 17 seriously wounded stretcher cases and about 40 walking wounded. The majority of the latter should have been stretcher cases but there were not enough stretchers to go round. Amongst these were 5 nurses, 2 of whom were not wounded. One of them was **Miss Howard**, a former Matron of Seremban Hospital, in Johore State. She did magnificent work under very trying conditions. Medical supplies were more or less non-existent, fresh water was very scarce, and food consisted of bully beef and biscuits. By mid-day, we had got all the wounded on board and weighed anchor and carried on upstream with two young Malays as pilots. As we had wounded on board we painted large Red Crosses in all the most conspicuous places and dismounted all our guns; fortunately we never saw an enemy plane.

Our plan was to proceed up as far as a place called Rengat which was some 200 miles upstream where we believed a small hospital was located as well as road and available telephonic communication with the other side of Sumatra. It was impossible to accomplish the journey in one day, so we spent the first night at a small village called Chenako, which had one hut with a telephone line to Rengat. We made use of the telephone telling the hospital at Rengat to prepare for the wounded. Up as far as Chenako, the river was still fairly broad with flat padi (rice) fields on both sides of the banks. We proceeded very close to the banks, and on some occasions we were so close it was possible to lean out from the upper deck and pick leaves off the trees in passing. We arrived at Chenako at 1830 and anchored; considering the number of people on board, especially the seriously wounded, we had a very quiet night. There was not a human sound to disturb the silence of the night until dawn broke. The only thing that bothered us was the mosquitoes.

At 0630 on 17th February 1942, we weighed anchor and proceeded up stream. With all the extra people on board it meant so many more mouths to feed and with our very limited cooking arrangements. The lack of choice in food was made up with the fine efforts put up by the Chinese boy **Shi She Yek** as well as **Able-Seaman Barstow**. They provided food regularly and efficiently for everyone on board and did so cheerfully - an aspect of our journey which might have become a serious problem, had they not turned to it ably and willingly.

After leaving Chenako, the river narrowed considerably and there was dense jungle on both sides. The current was very strong and our speed became slower and slower. At 1430 we finally arrived at Rengat and went alongside the Pier. We were expected, so arrangements had been made for disembarking the wounded, and

accommodating them in the local hospital. One incident in this disembarkation is worth recounting. As in Tembilahan, there was some difficulty in getting the stretchers off the ship and on to the jetty, as most of the cases had to be handled very carefully. There was one man who had had his forearm amputated as well as having several shrapnel wounds in his back. In fact, he had been placed on the danger list. When his turn came to be lifted out, much to everyone's surprise, he stood up, walked to the side of the ship and started to climb on to the jetty. No-one was more surprised than the doctors; however, they soon had him back on his stretcher and safely into a lorry. Having disembarked the wounded, we unloaded all our stores and all the personal gear which was of value to us. The next problem was how to dispose of the ship, as she had done her job and was of no further use to the war effort. However, owing to her secret and valuable sweeping gear on board, it was essential that she should not fall into the hands of the Japanese. We slept on board that night and the following morning we sailed up a small creek and opened the sea-cocks, and she sank very quickly as she was already half full of water.

Moving by land from Rengat

In Rengat, Sumatra, one of the Dutch officials was very kind to us and lent us his house where we all had a much needed bath. Later on in the day, we managed to commandeer two lorries from a nearby Rubber Plantation and on these we boarded and packed all our gear. In these lorries, we hoped to cross Sumatra and reach the port of Padang where there was a chance we might find a ship to take us away. We also took with us 19 walking wounded, in fact all those that were fit to travel. We finally departed at 1400 and spent the first night at a place called Telok, arriving there at 2000 on 18th February 1942. At Telok, we were extremely well looked after, officers being accommodated in the Rest House and the ratings in a house close by. We slept in a bed for the first time for weeks.

The next morning on 19th February 1942, we packed into our lorries and proceeded on the next stage of our journey. We left behind us in Telok the greater part of the walking wounded as they had found the journey too much for them. It was by no means easy going as the 'road' was really not much better than a track through the jungle and be very bumpy. The country became very mountainous and in parts most picturesque; we had to cross the high mountain range which runs down the centre of Sumatra. We had a young Malay driver who insisted on going as fast as he could the whole way. On several occasions he nearly gave us a heart attack by taking a hairpin bend on two wheels at 40 mph with a drop of a few thousand feet on one side, however he got us there in the end. Our next stop was Tawah Luentong (sic) where we arrived at 1530 in the afternoon. This was a delightful place and boasted a railway station. We spent the night there and at 0500 on 20th February 1942, we took the train to Padang, where we arrived at 1130. From here we marched to the local Club where we were provided with an excellent lunch and a glass of beer.

Evacuation by HMS *Danae* to Tyilatjap (sic)

A considerable number of evacuees from Singapore had already arrived in Padang, chiefly service personnel. That afternoon we marched down to the Harbour where HMS *Danae* was waiting to take us off. It was a very pleasing sight and put a lot of heart into us especially when the Marine Band started to play popular melodies. About 600 passengers were taken on board and told to stake their claims on the deck and sleep where they could. The *Danae* slipped at about 1800 and we proceeded on a westerly course to avoid enemy aircraft. Our speed was 24 knots, zigzagging continually. Our food consisted of sandwiches and water with occasionally a cup of tea. At night, we slept huddled on the decks to keep warm. We were still at sea the following day, 21st February 1942, which was without incident; most of us were past caring what happened. At 1500 the following afternoon, 22nd February 1942, we arrived at the port of Tyilatjap in Java. The Military and RAF personnel disembarked first and were taken to some camp inland. The Naval personnel, now amounting to about 200, were accommodated in HMS *Kedah*, which was lying alongside just ahead of *Danae*.

Sailing to Australia

We remained in Tyilatjap for four days trying to find a ship to take us down to Australia. Amongst the naval party were several senior officers, including Captain Bell RN (late *Exeter* and *Graf Spee* action) who automatically

took charge of us and organised our passage. We eventually found accommodation in a very ancient and small Dutch coastal steamer called *Khoen Hoea*. We had received permission from the Dutch Authorities to take her over, which we did on the afternoon of 26th February 1942. The regular ship's crew of Javanese immediately deserted on our arrival so all the business of working the ship, fuelling and victualling her had to be done by ourselves. We started that afternoon and by mid-day the following day, we had a large stock of coal on board and tinned provisions sufficient to last us for several weeks if necessary. The only serious problem was fresh water, the ship's capacity was limited and with the extra number of people on board strict rationing was necessary; each man was allowed one pint per day for washing and drinking. Actually this turned out to be sufficient as we washed in seawater and kept the pint for drinking only. On the morning of 27th February 1942, we were joined on board by some Australian troops (44), deserters from the AIF in Malaya. We had no alternative but to take them, although it would have been a pleasure to have left them behind. They were arrested on their arrival in Australia. We set sail in the *Khoen Hoea* at 1700 on 26th February 1942. Approximately 15 ships left at the same time, all of them proceeding independently and bound either for Australia or Colombo. There was no convoy of any kind, in fact no warship of any description was seen. The ships that left with us were of all shapes and sizes, some large freighters amongst them and some carrying evacuees. On board the *Khoen Hoea* we also had 12 civilians from Singapore, including **Mr. Rogers**, Chairman of the Singapore Harbour Board. They stood up to the hardships very well and played their part in taking submarine watches. Another difficulty with which we had not reckoned was the question of charts. It was not until we were at sea that it was discovered that the ship possessed no charts of Australian waters. Luckily, we found an old number of, *"The National Geographical Magazine"* on board, at the back of which was a meteorological map of the world; this we used as our chart to navigate us down to Fremantle. The ship's maximum speed was about 8 knots, but owing to rough weather which we experienced most of the way, we were only able to average just over 5.

The first night out we experienced no excitement, and on the following morning we were passed by the majority of ships that had left shortly after us. On the night of 28th February 1942, at about 0200, gun fire and search lights were heard and seen on the port beam. We could not identify them at first until we saw one of our merchant ships ablaze, when we realized that we had run into part of the Japanese Fleet. We turned away immediately but with our slow speed we were unable to get away from the scene of the action for some time. At one time one of the look-outs reported *"torpedoes approaching"* and we saw something which might have been a torpedo approaching us on the port beam. We all waited for the sound of the explosion but it never took place. There can only be two explanations for this and they are (1) it was not a torpedo, and (2) the torpedo passed underneath us. The second explanation is quite plausible in view of the fact that the ship was very small only drawing eight feet of water and that owing to the rough weather she was bounding on top of the waves with most of the ship out of the water. It was confirmed that submarines were in the vicinity as shortly after this occurrence another merchantman was torpedoed and shelled by an enemy submarine. The whole action only lasted about an hour and a half and when dawn came there was not another ship in sight. The rest of our trip down to Fremantle was uneventful apart from the weather. After we had been out for three days, the wind freshened considerably and the sea was rough. It blew half a gale most of the way down. After the fourth day, part of the bridge collapsed owing to the continual buffeting and the heavy sand bags that had been put up there as protection. We decided to dispense with the sand bags after this and temporarily repaired the damage. We were anxious about our approach to Fremantle as we had no charts of the harbour nor did we know the positions of any of the minefields. Luckily, about a day before we expected to sight land, we met an American submarine. We had spent an anxious half hour until the submarine was identified as American. She gave us our position and offered to show us the way into the harbour; this offer was very gratefully accepted. At 0600 on Monday 9th March 1942, we entered the harbour of Fremantle and we all breathed a sigh of relief when the anchor was dropped and small ships came out to take us off.

[**Lt. FOS Man** was awarded the DSC at Buckingham Palace when he eventually returned home to the UK. He was later promoted to **Lt-Cdr. RNVR**].

THE BETRAYAL IN WW2 OF BRITAIN'S COLONIES IN SOUTH EAST ASIA

By Rosemary Gransden

[Editor: Some of the comments in this article may seem highly controversial, but they are quotes taken from various sources including transcripts from a BBC programme and a YouTube posting.

In 2012, historians Richard Aldrich and Anthony Best reported on material recently released from the National Archives about treachery at the heart of government in WW2 in a programme called, "The Fall of Singapore: The Great Betrayal." See. A.K. 31. More information has now become available, and this article articulates the treachery].

The fall of Singapore was the largest surrender of British-led forces in history.

It didn't require any superior military wisdom to acknowledge that the loss of Singapore was, in **Winston Churchill's** words, *"The worst disaster and the largest capitulation in British history."* History, or rather **Churchill**, was to distort the true facts when he said that the British had the men, and that they far outnumbered the Japanese but what they did not have was sufficient air power or mobile ground armaments. Despite the valiant efforts of those hard-pressed defending troops and those involved in sea borne operations, the Allied forces were effectively an army and a navy operating without adequate air cover or ground mobile armament in the way of tanks, which greatly increased the odds for defeat against an enemy that had both. The British Prime Minister also failed to say that many of the Indian Army soldiers and the recently arrived British and Australian reinforcements were very young, raw and inexperienced recruits who had barely completed their military training; some had never even fired a gun.

Although allegedly **Yamashita** had fewer men, the men he had were nevertheless three first class divisions of well-trained, experienced Japanese soldiers, their best troops, who had the support of both air and naval supremacy, and they had tanks. The Japanese 5th Division was the most heavily motorised division in the Imperial Japanese Army. Had the fighting continued, there was also the very real possibility of Japanese reinforcements being sent to increase their numbers. At the time of surrender of Singapore, the huge new Naval base, a base without a fleet, lay destroyed and abandoned. The Japanese controlled most of the island, including the water, food and fuel supplies. Their troops had surrounded the city itself and defeat was inevitable. It would have been suicidal for the British to have fought on and, if **Percival** had not surrendered, there would have been substantially even more and quite catastrophic loss of life among thousands more soldiers and innocent civilians.

Later it was said that the British and Allied troops were burying surplus ammunition while the Japanese were desperately running short of theirs and that **Yamashita** had bullied **Percival** into surrender when in fact not only was the Japanese army running out of ammunition and supplies, but the Japanese soldiers were weary and on the point of giving up.

Yamashita wrote in his diary, *"My attack on Singapore was a bluff – a bluff that worked. I had 30,000 men and was outnumbered more than three to one. I knew that if I had to fight long for Singapore, I would be beaten. That is why the surrender had to be at once. I was frightened all the time that the British would discover our numerical weakness and lack of supply and force me into disastrous street fighting."*

A total of over 3,500 Japanese were killed in the fighting for Malaya and Singapore with over 6,000 wounded, but during **Yamashita's** week long campaign to take Singapore, he lost almost as many men as he had lost in the whole of his five-week campaign in Malaya with 1,713 killed and 2,772 wounded. On the British side, an estimated 7,500 of **Percival's** men were killed with approximately 11,000 injured and about 130,000 became prisoners of war, 80,000 surrendering in Singapore. Never before had an enemy captured so many top brass senior British commanders. Dozens of Generals, Brigadiers and Colonels would accompany tens of thousands of their men into captivity, and had the senior British and Australian Generals known the terrible fate which awaited both themselves, their men and the civilian population in the Japanese prison camps, it is inconceivable to imagine that they would **not** have fought on despite their limited chance of success.

Back in England, the war in Europe was not going well for Britain and **Churchill** was therefore already in a difficult position but, if the British public had known the truth of what happened in the Far East and had been aware that it was, in fact, their own Prime Minister, **Winston Churchill** and his Government, who had betrayed thousands of British men and women serving in that part of the Empire, it would have without a doubt caused **Churchill's** political downfall and so the truth was distorted and covered up. The distortion of the truth has been perpetuated by many historians and writers, who have not checked the facts, just used the information already published and repeated it and, sadly, many soldiers died believing they were to blame and that what **Churchill** said was true, implying that the Fall of Singapore was a shameful defeat of the British Army.

The British Army, Royal Navy and Royal Air Force did not lose Singapore. The blame for the loss of Malaya and, subsequently, Singapore was down to Churchill and the British Government who abandoned and betrayed thousands of British, Australian and Indian servicemen and the people of Singapore, whom they sacrificed to the Japanese for their own political ends. Sir Winston Churchill and the British Government at Westminster lost Singapore – Raffles' "great Emporium and Pride of the East"; the "impregnable fortress" with the heaviest guns in the world, which were never used for the purpose for which they were originally installed. But the British lost more than an island colony; they "lost face" in the East.

The Japanese, with apparently an allegedly inferior force in numbers but certainly with superior tactics and armament, were instrumental in destroying forever, the white man's domination of this part of the Empire and this was the contributory factor which would lead to independence throughout Asia and the turning point for British colonialism. Although the British returned after the war as liberators, it was never to be the same again. There would be no more *Tuan Besars*, *"Big Masters."* The magic and mystic which had surrounded the British *Tuan* for so long, and the hitherto deference and respect shown by the local people for their white Colonial Rulers disappeared for ever into the thick black smoke that was now rising into the sky from the burning and fallen City of Singapore.

Both Malaya and Singapore were badly defended and the Allies unprepared and Churchill and the British Government knew this. Although most people, including senior military commanders and members of the local Singapore Government, underestimated the Japanese military capability because, like everyone else, they believed the propaganda put out by the British Government and the British newspapers, Churchill and his cabinet certainly knew that during the 1920s and 30s the Japanese had acquired the necessary technology and expertise to be able to build planes and ships to match those of the British Royal Navy and the RAF. The attack on the American Pacific fleet at Pearl Harbour and the loss of Singapore, symbol of Britain's power in the east, were disastrous blows inflicted by the most deadly combination of Naval and Air power ever seen, but behind Japan's conquest were TWO MEN, TWO BRITISH TRAITORS, who were passing on vital information to the Japanese and whose treacherous activities were known to Churchill. Incredible as it may seem, it was Britain who gave the Japanese the know-how to take out Pearl Harbour and capture Singapore. Most shocking of all, was the fact that the Japanese had infiltrated the heart of the British Establishment through a mole who was a Peer of the Realm and part of Churchill's inner circle.

In 1918, it had felt as though the sun would never set on the British Empire.

Britain was the dominant power in Asia and victorious after the First World War – she didn't just rule the waves, but the skies above them. That year, she found a revolutionary way of harnessing power from both sea and air when she built the world's first air craft carrier, **HMS Argos**. These great ships could carry an entire squadron of planes thousands of miles over the ocean and bring them within range of anywhere on the planet. Naval air power was already being seen as something with huge potential and the British were recognised as being at the forefront and ahead of the rest of the world with this latest military technology, the most crucial part of which was the construction of the deck of a carrier. This technology gave Britain a huge advantage, and one nation particularly noticed the advantage the carriers were giving the British and that was Japan, who had been an ally of Britain throughout the First World War.

When the sister ship of **HMS Argos**, **HMS Eagle**, was launched in 1918, the Japanese approached the Royal Navy to inspect its new **state of the art** carrier. They were rebuffed, not once but ten times. The Admiralty was quite sensitive about the technology around Naval Air Power and understood this was a war winning weapon, described as a deadly technology, but the Air Ministry and the Foreign Office saw the prospect of lucrative arms contracts with the Japanese and so a compromise was agreed.

A civilian mission would be allowed to go to Japan to help develop air craft carriers and to encourage the Japanese to buy British military hardware. Many thought that even with the new military technology, Japan could never be a threat. There was the ridiculous opinion that the Japanese would never make good pilots because they were not good cavalry men, the reason thought to be because as babies they had been carried on their mother's backs, so selling them the aircraft posed no threat at all. It was also believed that the Japanese would want only "**gentlemen**" on the mission and Whitehall believed they had found the perfect man to lead the mission – **William Forbes Semphill, the son of a Scottish peer**, who carried the title **Master of Semphill** and whose father, the 18th Lord Semphill and 9th Baron of Craigievar, had been aide de camp to **King B George V**. **William Forbes Semphill** did indeed seem to have all the necessary credentials.

He had been born at the family seat of Craigievar Castle in Aberdeenshire, educated at Eton before, in 1910, becoming apprenticed to Rolls Royce. At the outbreak of the First World War he joined the Royal Flying Corps. Following initial flying duties as a 2nd Lieutenant, he took up a position at the Royal Flying School as a flying instructor and was promoted to Lieutenant. Within a few months he was appointed a Flight Commander before he transferred to the Royal Naval Air Service in 1916, where his rapid rise through the ranks continued in the Navy and by 1917, aged just 24, he was a Wing Commander and probably one of the most experienced British Naval Flying Officers. On 1st April 1918, with the amalgamation of both the RFC and the Royal Naval Air Service into the Royal Air Force, **Semphill** was transferred and appointed a deputy director in the RAF personnel department. He was awarded the Air Force Cross in the 1918 Birthday Honours' List and remained at the Air Ministry until October 1918 when he was seconded to the Ministry of Munitions. At the end of WW1 he became a test pilot and in 1919 he retired from military service.

In 1920, the **Semphill Mission** left for Japan. The Japanese chose a handpicked team of their very best people to develop, to start with, this mainly aircraft technology. They were shown what sort of aircraft they needed and they were trained in the kind of weapons to be used in bombing and the use of torpedo. **Semphill's Mission** was a large-scale operation but these planes had limited range. To take on an enemy the other side of the Pacific Ocean, the Japanese needed aircraft carriers and, at that time, this was way beyond Japanese know-how and capability.

Work began on the first Japanese carrier, the **Honsho**, and within two years **Semphill** and his military missionaries had given Japan's Naval Air Service a potentially world-wide reach. The **Semphill Mission** and its base were put under the vice command of **Yamamoto Isoroku**, the future master mind of the Japanese attack on the American Naval Base of Pearl Harbour. **Semphill** regularly visited Japan to advise them on the building of aircraft carriers and planes. He sold them British made flying boats and assisted the Imperial Japanese Navy in setting up a new air base where he helped train the Japanese pilots. The Air Ministry and the Foreign office in London were, at that time, aware of and actively encouraged the lucrative arms contracts being set up by **Semphill** with Japan, a country which was then an ally of Great Britain, but America viewed Japan's growing naval and air capability in the Pacific with increasing alarm and voiced their concerns at the Washington Conference of 1922, insisting on the halt of the building of further new Japanese war ships. The Anglo-Japanese Alliance was subsequently terminated, ending any further discussions between Britain and Japan about naval technology or tactics, at which time **Semphill** should have ceased all contact with the Japanese regarding British naval aviation technology and strategy, **but for nearly twenty years he continued to give them designs of the latest aero engines and was passing on military secrets to the Japanese Foreign Ministry in Tokyo through the Japanese Embassy in London.**

Following his mission to Japan, **Semphill** began a new career, a role carefully regulated by the Official Secrets Act, his job, seemingly, advising governments on arms' sales and particularly the sales of aircraft, but he should have been very careful with the contacts he had and he should have informed the British Government of any discussions about the transfer of technology. Recently declassified documents at the National Archives in London reveal that, in fact, **Semphill** was embarking on a far more dangerous path. An MI5 report shows in forensic detail the file they were keeping on **Semphill's** activities. Their suspicions were first aroused in early 1923 when it was noted that, *several incidents have shown the Japanese are adopting other than orthodox methods for finding out information about the Royal Air Force, notably a recent report that Colonel Semphill's servant is a Japanese Naval rating.*"

MI5 thus began an investigation of **Semphill**. It turned out that he wasn't just socializing with the Japanese, he was in regular contact of a very different nature with Japan's Naval Attache in London, **Captain Teijiro Toyoda** and MI5 had evidence that **Toyoda** was not just an ordinary naval attaché but a trained Japanese intelligence officer conducting his own espionage activities. British Military Intelligence kept **Semphill's** communications with **Toyoda** under surveillance from 1922 and this led to the discovery that **Semphill** was passing secret classified information to the Japanese for money, all of which was confirmed in the communications between **Toyoda** and **Semphill**.

In February 1924, MI5 intercepted a letter from **Semphill** at his office at Sardinia House, London, to **Toyoda** referring to his former letter of 7th January regarding large bombs, the contents of which instantly raised the alarm. The MI5 officer noted that **Semphill's** letter was enclosed in a double envelope, the inner marked "**Strictly Confidential.**" The Air Ministry were of the opinion that the letter referred to a very confidential matter to do with the new construction of bombs for the RAF. This was, in fact, about Naval Air Power and about destroying capital ships. The Japanese were struggling to see how they could take out major battle ships with the relatively light aircraft of the 1920s. It was this forensic detail which persuaded MI5 to take the next step to start to monitor **Semphill's** phone. Phone tapping in the 1920s was a very new and revolutionary kind of surveillance and it was not sanctioned lightly.

The evidence that **Semphill** was selling Britain's military secrets to Japan began to grow. On 13th May 1924, a letter to **Semphill** was received from **Toyoda** in which he thanked **Semphill** for the enclosed details of drawings and specifications which had "*accorded him much interest*" and which papers he would be sending to Japan. By this time **Semphill** was passing on a whole range of military secrets including information about the success of experiments being done on sound detectors on anti-aircraft, and letters were intercepted from **Toyoda** requesting any information **Semphill** might have on parachutes, the new **Handley Page** and other machines.

In July 1924, **Toyoda** was invited to the British Fleet Review, a public event, at which **Semphill** took the opportunity to introduce his Japanese friends to the top carrier designer, **Sir Eustace Tennyson d'Eyncourt** and wrote afterwards to **Toyoda** that he hoped that **Toyoda** had "*had a good look at the carriers*" and that "*with careful handling d'Eyncourt will produce much valuable data.*" **D'Eyncourt** was subsequently warned off by the Authorities.

Semphill then tried to produce another key figure for the Japanese, **Air Vice Marshall Sir Charles Vyvyan**, to whom he wrote asking for his co-operation and saying how vital it was that the matter should be kept quiet as, of course, should the word get out, it would cause trouble. MI5 was appalled by **Semphill's** behaviour reporting that "*Semphill's conduct in inciting Toyoda to endeavour to secure Air Vice Marshall Vyvyan's services and to keep it dark clearly shows that he is quite unscrupulous as regards confidential British Air Force information he passes on to the Japanese.*"

Semphill always presented himself as a man who was only helping British companies sell abroad, but in July 1924 MI5 secured evidence that **Semphill** had clearly crossed the line into illegality when **Semphill** wrote to **Toyoda** with key details of Britain's latest aero engine, the **Jaguar IV**, which was on the Official Secrets' List and therefore, by sharing this information with **Toyoda**, **Semphill** had committed a serious infringement of the Official Secrets' Act. MI5 now had overwhelming evidence that **Semphill** was spying for the Japanese, yet nothing was done about it.

MI5 did not want to give away their methods and sources. In the 1920s they were reading telegrams which were sent by cipher from the Japanese Embassy in London to Tokyo, forerunner of work done later at Bletchley Park, and their means of deciphering and obtaining information were therefore very closely guarded state secrets which would be in serious jeopardy if a case were brought against **Semphill**. Despite the secrecy of MI5 operations, one letter from **Semphill** to **Toyoda** shows that **Semphill** may have been alerted to the fact that he was under suspicion. On 19th December 1942, he wrote, "*Today, I meant to tell you please be very careful how you use any information you get and don't couple the name of an individual with it. I will tell you more when we meet again but I know exactly how the wind blows and the need to be super-cautious.*"

In October 1925, **Semphill** travelled to Brough in Yorkshire to visit the Blackburn Aircraft Factory. This trip would later be of great significance. Ostensibly he went to see a single-engine plane but his real motive was to spy on a new *state of the art flying boat*, the **Iris**, Blackburn was building exclusively and secretly for the Air Ministry. MI5 noted on 30th October 1925 that following **Semphill's** visit to Brough, the Blackburn Aircraft Company forwarded a letter to **Semphill** containing a detailed account of the performance of fleet aircraft including the secret flying boat, the **Iris**, in practically the same form as that requested by **Toyoda** on 6th January 1926.

It was clear that not only was **Semphill** furnishing the Japanese with aviation intelligence but he was also being paid for doing so. In early 1926 the authorities were finally given the chance to challenge **Semphill** without giving MI5's game away.

Semphill was negotiating with the Greek Government to organise and train its Naval Air Service but the Greek Naval Attache in London reported to his Government a chilling warning he had received from the Air Ministry that **Semphill** was not a suitable candidate and had financial problems. **Semphill** heard about the warning and wrote to the Air Ministry demanding a meeting about the cloud of suspicion which he claimed hung over him and was damaging to his business prospects. MI5 at last saw a way of confronting **Semphill** without admitting that they had been intercepting his letters and tapping his phone.

At 12 noon on 4th May 1926, in the office of the Deputy Chief of Air Staff, **Semphill's** interrogation began. Present at the

meeting were **Major Ball** of Air Intelligence Security MI5 and the Director of Public prosecutions himself, **Sir Archibald Bodkin**, who knew what **Semphill** had done, but now wanted him to come clean. He was asked which foreign government he had had dealings with, and his reply was most governments including Japan, adding that his dealings had always been very small. When probed further about his activities with the Japanese Government, he said he had only helped them out of good will and had been paid very small 'presents' usually at Christmas time. He denied having given them information about parachutes, bombs or planes, all of which MI5 had evidence of his doing. He was also asked why **Toyoda** chose to deal with him rather than the Air Ministry, and leading questions about the passing of secret information, namely about *the Iris*. Because the details of **Semphill's** dealings with the Japanese had been established through covert means, they could not be used against him, but his interrogators had an ace up their sleeves. Whilst on the train to Brough the previous November, **Semphill** had made a foolish mistake. He had talked openly to two foreign air attaches, one of them from Chile, about the secret aircraft the British were developing and a witness to this conversation had reported it to MI5. **Semphill's** loose talk provided the one piece of damning evidence that could be used against him. He later denied that the Japanese had ever asked him for information regarding *the Iris* which, of course, was a lie. **Sir Archibald Bodkin** warned **Semphill** that his duty lay to this country, not to any other foreign power.

Despite the evidence and a high-powered meeting which followed at Whitehall on 13th May 1926, and was chaired by no less than the Foreign Secretary, **Sir Austen Chamberlain**, and attended by amongst others **Air Chief Marshall Sir H.M. Trenchard** and **Sir Samuel Hoare**, it was decided not to prosecute **Semphill**. He had been let off the hook, although the Director of Public Prosecutions wrote that he could not free his mind of the uneasiness that he felt about the case. **Semphill** was never prosecuted for spying and he was allowed to continue in public life. He was, after all, a British war hero, a veteran ace pilot of the First World War and he was a member of the British aristocracy. He knew everyone, including **Churchill** and, despite huge concerns about his espionage activities, there was a lack of political will to do anything, and so **Semphill** was able to continue spying for Japan against this country right up to the start of the 2nd World War.

During the 2nd World War, despite further damning evidence of **Semphill's** activities, the decision not to prosecute him was taken at the highest level of the British Government by **Churchill** himself, because a public trial would have compromised important and sensitive work being done at that time at Bletchley Park, the code breaking centre of British Intelligence, and revealed their success at decoding Japanese communications. A public trial would also have caused considerable embarrassment to both the British Crown and the British Establishment, not just in this country but across the world.

Semphill's father was, after all, a former aide-de-camp to **King George V** and the British Establishment did not want it known that one of their own, a member of the British Aristocracy – on the death of his father **John Forbes Semphill** in 1934, **William Forbes Semphill** succeeded to the titles, **Lord Semphill** and **Baronet of Craigievar** – a former officer with Britain's Royal Air Force and a part of **Churchill's** inner circle was, in fact, a traitor.

Semphill had an affinity with militarist right-wing regimes and during the 1930s he developed extreme right-wing political opinions and was active in several anti-Semitic organisations such as the Anglo German Fellowship and the Right Club led by **Archibald Ramsay**. These extreme right-wing pro-Nazi groups included many members of the British Aristocracy and the British upper class who believed that Britain should be allied to Germany and Japan against Russia and the communists. There was a real fear of communism at that time after the Russian revolution and the murder of **Czar Nicholas** and his family in 1918, and the worry that, if communism spread to Britain, the lands and estates of the British ruling class would be taken away from them, as had happened in Russia when the communists had confiscated the estates of the Russian nobility.

Churchill and Semphill were long-time friends.

They were part of the same social circle and who knows what was said or what **Churchill** might have told **Semphill** after a few drinks. **Churchill** was known to be a heavy drinker – although on the subject of his alcoholism, he remarked with characteristic dryness, "I have taken more out of alcohol than alcohol has taken out of me." **Churchill** also suffered from bi-polar disorder, a condition he himself described as "black dog" and which he self-medicated with alcohol. Being bi-polar, an alcoholic and an insomniac – he slept only four hours a night – is it any wonder that he was prone to making ill-advised, ill-informed, snap decisions which proved disastrous to this country. Disaster after disaster for the British can be attributed to this man who was often described as reckless, egotistical and pretentious.

Churchill was born at Blenheim Palace into the family of the Dukes of Marlborough. His father, **Lord Randolph Churchill**, was a politician and his mother, **Jennie Jerome**, an American socialite. As a young Army officer, **Churchill** saw action in British India, the Anglo-Sudan War and the Second Boer War where he gained fame as a war correspondent. In 1900, he was elected Conservative MP for Bolton in Lancashire, but in 1904, having refused to submit to the rules of his Conservative Party, he crossed over to the Liberal Party ("the Blenheim rat jumped ship"). His political ascent as a member of **Asquith's** Liberal Government was rapid over the next ten years as he became Under Secretary of State for the Colonies under **Victor Bruce**, [9th Earl of Elgin, a previous Viceroy of India (1894 – 1899)]; President of the Board of Trade; he was made Home Secretary in 1910 and First Sea Lord of the Admiralty in 1911. As First Lord of the Admiralty, **Churchill** had played a central role in planning the disastrous military campaign at Gallipoli during the First World War, which resulted in a quarter of a million Allied casualties and caused his resignation and departure from Government.

He briefly resumed active army service on the Western Front in 1916 commanding the 6th Battalion of the Royal Scots Fusiliers before returning to government under **David Lloyd George** serving as Minister of Munitions in 1917, Secretary of State for War and Secretary of State for Air in 1919, and Secretary of State for the Colonies in 1921 until the downfall of the **Lloyd George Coalition** in 1922 and the loss of his seat in Parliament. After a few unsuccessful years as an independent, **Churchill** rejoined the Conservative Party in 1925 making he comment that, "Anyone can rat, but it takes a certain ingenuity to re-rat!"

He was appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1924 under **Stanley Baldwin** and oversaw Britain's disastrous return to the Gold Standard exchange rate system which resulted in deflation, unemployment and the miners' strike that led to the General Strike of 1926. After the fall of the Conservative Government in 1929, out of office and politically in the wilderness during the 1930s, **Churchill** became isolated from Party colleagues because of his opposition to home rule for India and his support of **King Edward VIII** during the Abdication Crisis in 1936. **Churchill** also campaigned for the unpopular policy of re-armament in the face of a resurgent Germany, warning against the dangers of appeasement with Nazi Germany. By 1939, **Churchill** had been out of the Cabinet for ten years and his political career was deemed to be all but over until September 1939 when, despite his fierce criticism of **Neville Chamberlain's** appeasement of Hitler, **Churchill** was proved right after Germany had absorbed Austria, conquered Czechoslovakia and invaded Poland. At the outbreak of World War Two, Prime Minister **Chamberlain** appointed **Churchill** as First Lord of the Admiralty and following the resignation of **Sir Neville Chamberlain** in May 1940 with the failure of appeasement, **Churchill** became Prime Minister.

Certainly **Churchill's** rousing first speech to the House as Britain's wartime leader offering nothing but "blood, toil, tears and sweat" was electrifying, and his subsequent equally eloquent speeches and radio broadcasts, the two most famous given just before the Battle of Britain which included the inspiring words, "We shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our island, whatever the cost may be. We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender" and "Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duties and so bear ourselves that if the British Empire and its Commonwealth last for a thousand years, men will still say - this was their finest hour" did much to inspire British resistance especially during the darkest time of 1940 when Britain and her Empire stood alone in the fight against Adolph Hitler.

At the height of the Battle of Britain, **Churchill's** memorable line of "Never in the field of human conflict as so much owed by so many to so few" truly reflected the nation's debt and gratitude to the RAF fighter pilots whose courage and sacrifice won the Battle of Britain.

Nevertheless a number of decisions made by **Churchill** during the Second World War have caused considerable controversy and led to not only the loss of Malaya and Singapore but the mismanagement of the Desert War, the Dieppe Raid and probably the most controversial of all, the fire-bombing towards the end of the war between 13th and 15th February 1945 of the German city of Dresden which was by then crowded with an estimated 200,000 refugees and wounded, starving people and resulted in thousands of civilian casualties. [To be continued in January 2021].

ONCE UPON A BEAR – By Merryn Godber

In 1940, my mother, **Molly Bretherton**, sent off to Hamleys in London for a teddy bear. He travelled via the Suez Canal and arrived safely in Penang. **Edward Bear** was there to greet me in August, and we have been together ever since! 8th December 1941, the Japanese invaded Malaya and everything went wrong. My mother and I made our way to Singapore, leaving just about everything behind. My father, **Howard Bretherton**, was not a soldier, was on the peninsula to help set up the education system, had to surrender his sword (on the golf course) in February 1942. He had been training with the Federated Malay States Volunteer Forces.

We managed to escape on the **Ulysses**, thanks to my mother's great friend, **Marigh Bain**. Together with her three children we squeezed into one cabin. We landed in Fremantle, Australia, safely, many other ships were sunk. The **Ulysses** headed for the UK – see Rosemary Fell's story with her bear.

We journeyed on to see **Uncle Pat** in Sydney. The next stage was a week long train journey across Australia to Perth. Our train was delayed, so we missed the ship we were booked on, that was sunk. We finally set off on the **Sarpedon**. I was the youngest child on board. I had a knitted blue bathing costume, most children's swimwear were similar, with cross over straps at the back. So, **Captain McClure** called me the ship's mascot, the **Blue Butterfly**.

"How is the **Blue Butterfly** today?" he would ask my mother every day as we sailed up the coast of South America.

"She is fine," she would reply. "Then we will be fine today," he said.

On through the Panama Canal and up the East Coast of North America.

The ship's charts had rather run out by this stage, so it was a bit make do & mend.

We gathered, with other ships, in Newfoundland, like a flock of sheep.

The convoy set off across the Atlantic and docked in Liverpool on

27th April 1942. I had to have a serious operation on my throat, it took

four hours. Oh, the problems, no warm clothes and nowhere to live,

but we did get together with my two brothers, who were in Shrewsbury.

We eventually heard that my father and two friends had escaped from the prisoner of war camp. Only **Howard** and **Major Roberts** made the rendezvous on the River Pandon estuary. They 'borrowed' a Malay fisherman's boat and reached Tanjong Bali, on to India, Kenya and the UK. After the war he did a stint at the War Office, returned to Singapore and paid the fisherman for his boat. He was awarded the MC. Then he took up a position as Principal of the Sultan Idris College. His photo, apparently, still hangs on the wall of this thriving college. Back in England, we picked up the pieces of our lives as best we could. The **Blue Butterfly** survived and so did **Edward Bear**, who completed his circumnavigation of the world!



Merryn's teddy bear

OBITUARIES

Lieutenant-Colonel Bill Mundell – born 1/7/1931 & died 22/2/2020

Lt. Col. Bill Mundell was awarded the BEM for his service with 22 Special Air Service Regiment in Borneo. In 1963 during the Confrontation he commanded an SAS fighting patrol in Sarawak. Having a flair for intelligence work, he recruited agents from the local people and gathered information about the activities of the Indonesian Army. He took part in a number of clandestine cross-border operations. He served in the Korean War during his National Service and after demob in 1952, re-enlisted for service in Malaya with the SAS. He was a first rate jungle fighter and instructor. He learnt tracking skills from the Iban and Dayak people and would parachute into the jungle canopy on missions. He later saw action in Oman and served in Northern Ireland.

Colonel Mike Hall – born 11/2/1939 & died 26/4/2020

He was awarded the George Medal for disarming a highly dangerous bomb while serving in Malaya during the Confrontation with Indonesia. His citation said that the bomb was 'a particularly fiendish device.' Later he helped to develop the bomb disposal 'Wheelbarrow' robot, which is believed to have saved many lives.

As a Captain in the RAOC he was serving with the Ammunition Inspectorate at Rasah Camp, Seremban in 1965, when he was called to assist the police in defusing a bomb which had been placed in a garage in the centre of Malacca. The bomb had been put together in a biscuit tin, and he could see that this was a new and dangerous device.

He ordered the area to be cleared and it took 2 men 2½ hours to take it apart. It contained 7lb of TNT, 2 Russian hand grenades and incendiary material, 2 anti-handling devices and a timing device.

He later worked in Sarawak during the Confrontation, disarming booby-trap bombs which had been placed covertly along the 1,000-mile long border front line between Sarawak and Kalimantan. He was also Mentioned in Despatches in Borneo "in recognition of gallant and distinguished services in the Borneo Territories."

He returned to the UK for a deployment in Northern Ireland and staff job in London before a spell in BAOR in Germany. In 1979, he moved to Ottawa as assistant military attaché and defence sales officer with the Canadian Army, and ended his Army career in command of the Central Ammunition Depot in Kineton, Warwickshire.

Able Seaman Moss Berryman – born 9/11/1923 & died 6/8/2020

Able Seaman Moss Berryman was the last survivor of *Operation Jaywick*, perhaps the most long-ranged and audacious special forces raid of WW2.

In 1942, he volunteered for the Royal Australian Navy with his friend **Abel Seaman Fred Marsh**, and while training they heard that a British officer was looking for volunteers to do something special. Sent to Refuge Bay north of Sydney they found they were members of Z Special Unit or "Z Force." Commanded by **Major Ivan Lyon** they were part of SOE Australia and were to train to operate behind Japanese lines in S.E. Asia.

In September 1943, they sailed from Exmouth Gulf, Western Australia, in the former Japanese fishing boat which they called '**Krait**,' together with 7 British and Australian Commandos and 6 crew members, to Singapore with their mission, 'to blow up a few ships.' The voyage took them 2 weeks of sailing through Japanese-occupied waters. They flew the Japanese flag and posed as Malay fishermen wearing sarongs and brown dye to hide their white skins. **Berryman's** job was to keep look-out from the top of the mast for Japanese float planes. They waved and pretended to unpick their fishing lines when planes flew overhead.

Krait arrived off Singapore on 18th September 1943 and offloaded 6 commandos in 3 2-man canoes. **Berryman** and **Marsh** were disappointed to be left behind, and told to look after **Krait**. The commandos established a base in a cave on a small island and on 26th September, paddled into Singapore harbour and attached limpet mines to 7 ships, sinking or damaging 37,000 tons of shipping.

The 6 commandos arranged to rendezvous with **Krait** on Pom Pong Island – some 50 miles from Singapore – on the night of 1st-2nd October. However, only one canoe turned up, and despite being told to leave, **Berryman** and the crew returned 2 nights later to find the other 2 canoes with their commandos.

On the return journey, **Krait** was intercepted by a Japanese patrol boat just before midnight on 11th October in the Lombok Strait. With the bows filled with high explosives and **Berryman** training his Bren gun on the boat, **Lyon** was prepared to ram the warship if necessary. After 15 minutes the warship drew away without switching on a searchlight, and **Krait** returned to Exmouth Bay after a 48 day mission. **Berryman** was Mentioned in Despatches for gallantry, skill and devotion to duty in a hazardous mission.

Later that year, when asked to return to Singapore on *Operation Rimau*, he declined. It was a fortunate decision as all members of this operation were killed in action or captured and executed by the Japanese. He then served on **HMAS Vendetta** for the rest of the war. On the 50th anniversary of *Operation Jaywick* in 1993, he met **Lyon's** son – "the spitting image of his father." Both **Lyon's** wife and baby son had spent the war in Japanese internment camps. **Lyon** had intended that *Jaywick* should be publicised to boost Allied morale, but senior commanders were against this. Instead the Japanese inflicted savage reprisals on Singaporeans and civilian internees in Changi Gaol, known as the "Double Tenth" because they suspected that the raid had been masterminded by the Allies in Singapore and in the civilian camp.

TWO MORE WEBSITES OF INTEREST

https://www.theborneopost.com/2020/09/11/batu-lintang-pow-campsite-celebrates-75-years-of-liberation-from-japanese-occupation/?fbclid=IwAR1qv_q-c73sd1enkTZEZ8geizOiKyaC3Kp1rEpRNikr1mcEgSstvD8U3xl – Liberation of Batu Lintang in the Star newspaper in Malaysia.

https://expatliving.sg/anne-griffith-jones-tanglin-trust-school-world-war-two/?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=share_buttons&fbclid=IwAR3zqlDnYecXxOResi5zpKIB1HM9z1sOgoc1LDNeS_3oPmdXjiWho02O5bU – the story of 'Miss Griff' from a Hong Kong ex-pat magazine.

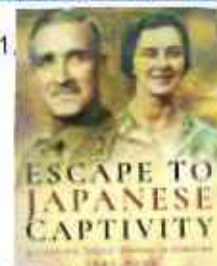
BOOKS

"ESCAPE TO JAPANESE CAPTIVITY." The story of Captain Mick Jennings' & Margery Jennings' captivity in WW2. By Sally Jennings. Published by Pen & Sword Military (30th October 2020). 224 pages; 32 black & white illustrations. ISBN 978-1526-783-097. RRP: £19.99. Introductory offer £13.99. <http://www.pen-and-sword.co.uk/Escapes-to-Japanese-Captivity-Hardback/p/18441> Contacts: sallyjennings42@gmail.com and debdazzle@gmail.com

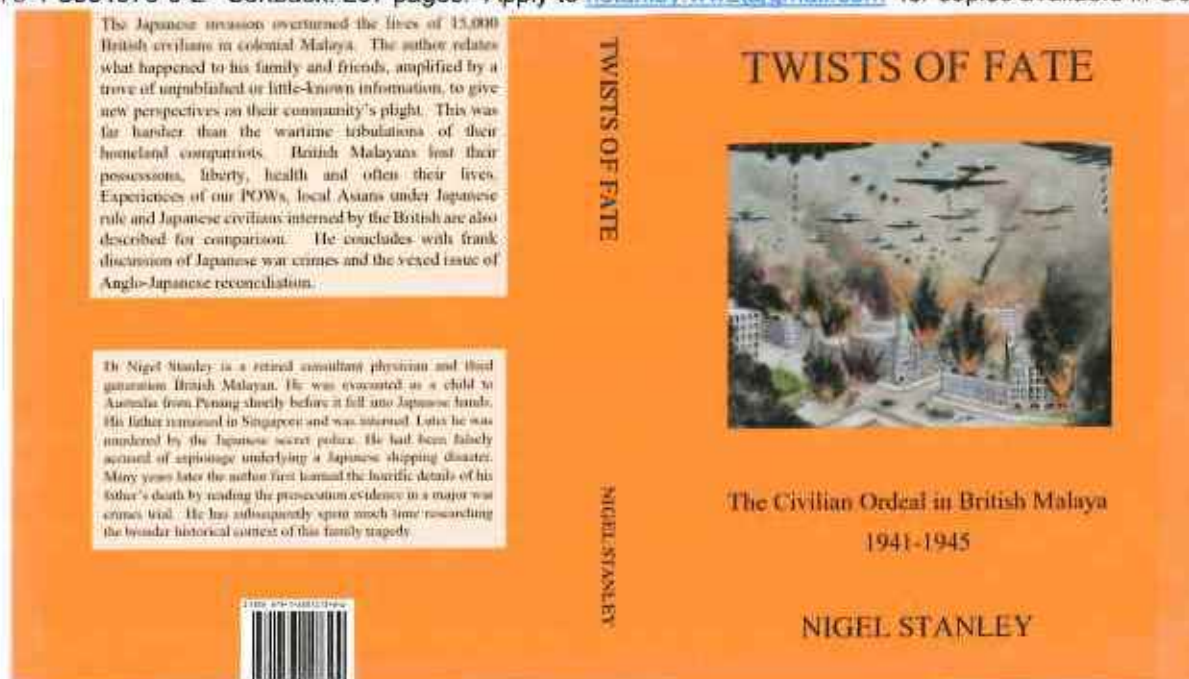
Mick and Margery Jennings's comfortable life in Singapore ended with the Japanese invasion in late 1941. Margery was captured in Sumatra after *HMV Mata Hari*, the ship taking her and other families to safety in Australia, was captured by the Japanese. Mick left Singapore after the surrender in February 1942 when he and other soldiers commandeered a junk and sailed to Sumatra. After crossing the island, he and Bombadier Jackson set sail for Australia in a seventeen-foot dinghy. After an appalling ordeal at sea he, too, was captured and, having recovered in hospital was incarcerated on Sumatra until moved to Changi Gaol in May 1945.

Despite not being far apart, Mick and Margery never saw each other again, although they managed to exchange a few letters. Tragically Margery died of deprivation and exhaustion in May 1945, shortly before V-J Day, while Mick miraculously survived.

Based on personal accounts and Margery's secret diary, this outstanding book describes in graphic detail their attempted escapes and horrific imprisonments. Above all, it is a moving testimony to the couple's courage, resilience and ingenuity. Born in Yorkshire in 1899, Captain Mick Jennings served with the Royal Engineers (RE) in Mesopotamia from 1917-1919. After Sheffield University, he worked in the Sudan, the Gold Coast (now Ghana) and Malaya, becoming the municipal architect in Kuala Lumpur in 1935. He was again serving in the RE when Singapore fell. His escape and captivity are recorded in this book. Post-war, after a brief repatriation, he returned to Kuala Lumpur where, in 1953, he established his own practice. He retired to New Zealand in 1958 and died in 1964. [More about the lives of Mick & Margery to follow in Jan.]



"TWISTS OF FATE. The Civilian Ordeal in British Malaya 1941-1945." By Nigel Stanley. Self published by the author. ISBN 978-1-8381573-0-2 Softback. 297 pages. Apply to nstanley.wv2@gmail.com for copies available in October. POA



Dr. Nigel Stanley writes: (My book) covers the pre-war civil defence arrangements; the military campaign; evacuations; captivity (internee and POW); something about the experiences of the Asians during the Japanese occupation; the Japanese civilians interned by the British; the war crimes trials; and my personal frank reflections on it from the viewpoint of British Malaysians, rather than servicemen from the homeland. There is a chapter on the Volunteers. It also includes a lot of information on the contribution of the British Malayan doctors to the welfare of the POWs (as well as the internees). Approximately half of the POW doctors were in the Volunteers, like Pavillard and Hardie, and the others were seconded to the RAMC. Their contribution to camp health was huge relative to their small number.

I do not seek to make money from the book and should like to donate sales proceeds to worthy causes. I specifically have in mind:

1. Commemoration of those held captive during the Japanese occupation of Malaya.
2. Provision of therapeutic care for the victims of latter-day torture (given my family connection with the Double Tenth).

In essence, the donations would be offered to the MVG and Victims of Torture, which cite these as particular aims. I should like to state two proposals, as worded, on my dedication page. Here I dedicate the book to my father and his fellow victims of the Double Tenth, but would not wish any MVG donation to be restricted to any specific cause. I am assuming that MVG would welcome the donation, but a few may find my opinions on some activities of the occupiers are uncomfortable forthright, although I have tried to keep these in reasonable balance. [Ed: We very much appreciate & thank Dr. Nigel for his kind offer].

Please note: Dr. Nigel has also written an article for this newsletter, entitled, "British Malayan Medical Service 1941-1945." See Ps 9-12 inclusive. The article is essentially the British Malayan medical history of the period, covering the 1941 medical preparations for war, the conflict experience and the work of the British Malayan doctors for the internees and in the POW Camps.

Jonathan Moffatt's review of "Twists of Fate."

This impressive and well researched book includes chapters on Civil Defence, evacuation, civilian internment in Changi Gaol and Sime Road Camp, including medical aspects, the Double Tenth of October 1943 and the Volunteer Forces. It fills a lot of gaps in my knowledge and successfully combines the Stanley family narrative with the structured, source based approach of an historian. Nigel points out that the bombing of Penang costs twice as many lives as the bombing of Coventry, of similar population just over a year before, yet remained out of the public imagination. Evacuated from Penang, Nigel and his sister,



Nigel & Erika Stanley

including those who gave assistance to the internees and POWs and the Stanley family's much loved Amah. This is a very readable book.

Erika were photographed at Ipoh Railway Station on a journey that took them and their mother to safety in Australia. The horrifying fate of their father, **Dr. Cuthbert Stanley**, whose innocent enthusiasm for electronics fuelled the paranoia of his interrogators and Nigel's post war involvement with the story, including exhuming his father's remains from Bidadari Cemetery, Singapore in 2002, are described as are his Kempeitai torturers and the post war War Crimes trials. Other characters emerge from the story, like the 15 year old 'Asia Boy' [Empress of Asia crew] **Len Butler** working alongside an 18 year old Tamil nurse amid the horrors of the Singapore General Hospital in the final days before Singapore fell; 'Barrel Roberts' determined to absent himself from Changi Gaol for a good night out in Singapore; **Mrs. Mary Cornelius** who bluffed her way into Changi POW camp to join her husband for some months; and **Dr. Ryrie**, a late Changi arrival, who worked among the lepers of Sungei Buloh, while secretly treating MPAJA wounded and claimed to have killed an over curious Japanese officer. Not to be forgotten, too, the local population

"THE BORNEO GRAVEYARD. 1941-1945." By John S.M. Tulloch. ISBN 978-983-3987-65-8 Published by Opus Publications Sdn. Bhd. £25 + postage. Hardback. Apply to John Tulloch for copies – johnsmtulloch@gmail.com

About 'The Borneo Graveyard 1941-1945'

This book portrays the horrific story of Borneo during the Japanese occupation of 1941-1945. Thousands of Australian, British, Dutch and Indian POWs, internees, locals of Borneo and Javanese ramusha perished in Borneo during this period.

Allied POWs, who were sent to various POW camps in British and Dutch Borneo, were to die of maltreatment, malnutrition or execution. Many were forced to walk Death Marches in the jungle which came to a horrifying conclusion. Internees of several nationalities were held in internment camps and suffered dreadfully. The local populace also suffered; torture, executions and massacres occurred and malnutrition was endemic. At great personal sacrifice, however, they helped the POWs and internees. The secretive Z Force gathered intelligence and trained local guerrilla fighters who exacted a heavy toll on the Japanese forces, whilst local tribes took their final revenge. In 1945, the Australian military engaged in bitter fighting to liberate Borneo.

This book closes with the convalescence of survivors at Labuan, followed by the repatriation of British POWs and internees, and the dreadful wall of silence experienced by so many on returning to the UK.

This book is a tribute to the strength of character and bravery of those who endured the Japanese occupation.



About the author

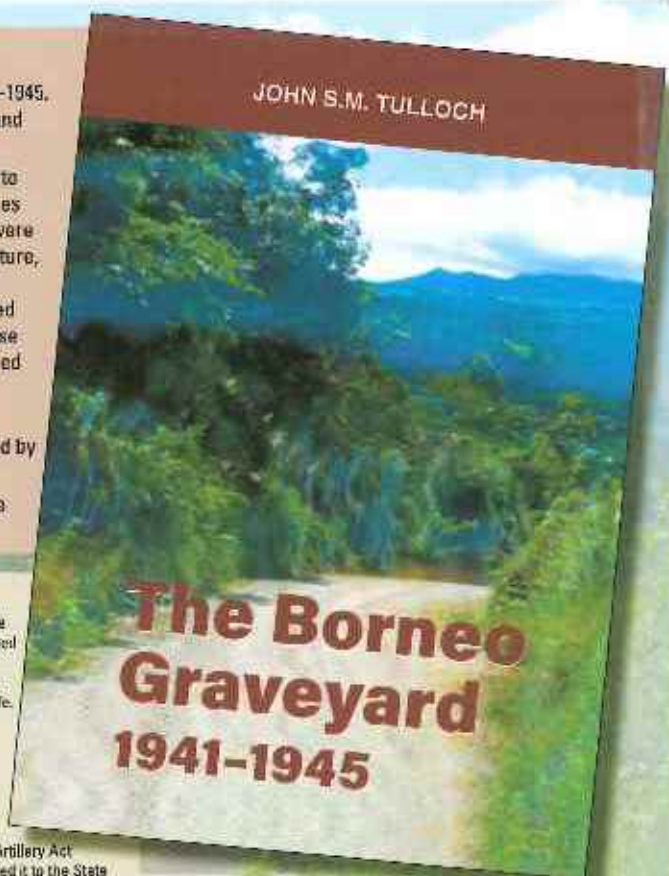
John Tulloch was educated at Victoria College, Jersey, CI. His military career began in 1965 in the New Zealand Army. He attended Officer Cadet School Portsea in Australia, and was commissioned into the Royal New Zealand Artillery (RNZA) in 1966. Whilst serving in Vietnam with 161 Battery RNZA from July 1968 to July 1969, John developed his jungle warfare expertise. This, along with his nine years' service in the New Zealand Army, would become such an important part of his life.

John transferred to the British Army and Royal Artillery in March 1973 and completed two Northern Ireland tours, followed by a two year secondment to the Sultan of Oman's Artillery in 1978. He later commanded 137 (Java) Battery RA, which included a tour in the Falkland Islands in 1982. From 1991 John began advising and instructing for the next 21 years on the British Army's Jungle Warfare Instructors' Course (JWIC) in Brunei. He also supported major jungle exercises in Belize for 10 years.

Retiring from the Army in 2003 and becoming a MOD Civil Servant, John continued to instruct on JWIC until May 2015. He investigated and organised various commemorative projects in Sabah, including SABAH SALUTE, the Royal Artillery Act of Remembrance in Sabah in August 2011. He researched and created the North Borneo Roll of Honour and presented it to the State of Sabah in March 2016 and to the Royal Artillery at the Service of Remembrance in Hyde Park, London, in November 2018.

John was honoured with the MBE in 2003 and the Royal Artillery Medal in 2011.

An author of several articles about the Vietnam War and Borneo, he also gives talks on these subjects to the military, history groups and schools. Since retiring from the Civil Service in 2015, John began writing 'The Borneo Graveyard 1941-1945', the product of 12 years of research. This is his first book.



Additional information

ISBN 978-983-3987-65-8

Format Hardback

Dimensions 26 x 20 x 3 cm

Contact johnsmtulloch@gmail.com

Cost £25 plus postage

Pages 472

Published 2020

Borneo, the land of the head hunters, was a World War 11 graveyard for POWs, internees, locals, Javanese and Japanese. The narrative follows the raising of five Royal Artillery air defence regiments in 1939, their deployment in late 1942 to South East Asia, their short campaign in the Netherlands East Indies and eventual captivity as POWs in Java and North Borneo. The account describes the invasion of Borneo and the subsequent 4 years of Japanese occupation. It depicts the sadistic treatment of Australian, British, Dutch and Indian POWs in the various POW camps in North Borneo at Jesselton, Sandakan, Ranau, Labuan and Batu Lintang. There were 3 Death Marches from Sandakan to Ranau.

The internee account covers the men, women and children from all over Borneo interned in Batu Lintang. They experienced the unspeakable behaviour of the guards. Several internees were killed or massacred trying to escape the Japanese regime or gratuitously executed before liberation.

The locals of Borneo suffered terribly. Torture, executions and massacres occurred throughout. Malnutrition, starvation and death were endemic. Tribes exacted their revenge and over 8,000 Japanese died during their withdrawals in Sabah.

The secretive Z Force gathered intelligence, trained local guerrilla fighters who harassed and exacted a heavy toll on the Japanese. The Australian military engaged in bitter fighting in the liberation of Borneo.

Finally, convalescence at Labuan followed by repatriation to the UK and the dreadful wall of silence experienced by so many of the returning FEPOWs and internees to the UK.

This disturbing history portrays the horror of the Japanese occupation of Borneo. It is why the book is called, *"The Borneo Graveyard 1941-1945."*

DEFENCE OF HONG KONG MEMORIAL WALL

with thanks to Sallie Hammond - MVG Secretary in Canada and the USA



Following **Sallie's** interview with **Lawrence Ross** of "C Force" Royal Rifles of Canada (reported in A.K. 63. July 2020), this report from the Canadian Government gives details about the Memorial in Hong Kong to honour the Canadian Forces who defended the colony.

The Defence of Hong Kong Memorial Wall, unveiled in 2009, honours Canadians who defended Hong Kong during the Second World War. In 1941, almost 2,000 Canadians reinforced the Hong Kong outpost and fought with courage and determination against overwhelming odds. The battle of Hong Kong saw the first Canadian troops in action as a ground force unit in the Second World War.

Many distinguished themselves under fire, including Company Sergeant, **Major John Robert Osborn**, who won Canada's first Victoria Cross of the Second World War. During the 17-day battle, 290 died and 493 were wounded. Some 267 more perished afterwards as prisoners of war.

The granite monument, located at the corner of King Edward Avenue and Sussex Drive and inspired by the mountains of Hong Kong, is etched with the names of all Canadians who fought there. On one side are the names of the 961 members of the Royal Rifles, and on the other side are the names of 911 Winnipeg Grenadiers. The 106 members of the brigade headquarters, including doctors, dentists and chaplains, are listed on either end of the memorial. One dog, Gander, is also included as he died while saving his comrades by catching a grenade.

A complete list of names can be found on the monument. The memorial was erected by the Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association.

V-J Day 75 re-launch of Captive Memories, Far East POW website.

To mark V-J Day 75, and as a legacy of the highly successful **Secret Art of Survival** art exhibition in Liverpool, hosted and curated by our partners Victoria Gallery & Museum, the LSTM is re-launching its FEPOW research Website – www.captivememories.org.uk The exhibition was accompanied by a new book *Captive Artists, the unseen art of British Far East prisoners of war*. To order the book, visit the website which now includes:

A virtual tour of the "Secret Art of Survival" exhibition, with extra information about many of the previously unknown artists and their artwork. **Your Memories Page** for anyone to contact to this history to leave their memories of a FEPOW relative – <https://www.captivememories.org.uk/the-far-eastern-prisoners-of-war/your-fepowhistory>

NEW: Downloadable resources for teachers and families. In addition, there is a link to the **Secret Art of Lockdown**, the University of Liverpool's Victoria Gallery & Museum's creative arts project marking V-J Day 75 commemorations. It features digital images of artwork submitted by members of the public on the theme of connecting people to friends and family whom they have not seen for many months. **Secret Art of Survival** is funded by players of the National Lottery, Trusts, FEPOW Groups and individual donors.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

LONDON - Saturday 17th October 2020. Annual Reunion and Luncheon at the RAF Club, Piccadilly.

NOW CANCELLED – RE-BOOKED FOR APRIL 2021

LONDON – Thursday 5th November 2020. Cross Planting Ceremony at Westminster Abbey.

This ceremony is still due to take place, but we have not received any details about attendance. As soon as information is available, those who have indicated that they may wish to attend will be notified. The RBL is planning to plant crosses in the Garden of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey.

LONDON – Sunday 8th November 2020. Remembrance Sunday.

We have been offered 8 tickets. Those who asked for tickets have been notified, and the tickets will be sent directly to you with instructions. We are advised that, depending on Government guidelines, the march may still be cancelled.

OTHER ARMISTICE DAY SERVICES IN CANADA AND MALAYSIA MAY ALSO BE CANCELLED.

NMA – Thursday 10th December 2020. Anniversary of the sinking of HMS Prince of Wales and HMS Repulse.

We await information about this service.

DATES FOR 2021

MUNTOK – February 2021

Cancelled

PERTH W.A. – February 2021. Stirling and Bicton Services

TBA

LONDON – Saturday 10th April 2021. Annual Reunion and Luncheon at the RAF Club.

We have re-booked the October 2020 lunch for April next year. Members will be asked in January 2021 if they wish to attend, provided the coronavirus restrictions have been lifted.

WYMONDHAM – Sunday 12th May 2021. Annual Service at the FEPOW Church in Wymondham.

All things being equal, it is planned to hold the annual memorial service in Wymondham as usual next year on this date. MVG hopes to be represented to lay a wreath on behalf of the Volunteers and civilian internees.

LONDON – SATURDAY 16th October 2021. Annual Reunion and Luncheon – RAF Club, Piccadilly.

Please keep this date free. We have kept this booking in addition to the April event, in case the COVID restrictions prevent us from meeting in April.

ALL OTHER DATES WILL BE GIVEN IN JANUARY'S EDITION OF APA KHABAR.

MVG'S ACCOUNTS.

A copy of the Income and Expenditure sheet for the year April 2019 – April 2020 is enclosed. This shows a healthy balance for the year. We are indebted to **Miss Sara Haines** for auditing the MVG's accounts every year without charge. If anyone would like to receive a complete set of the accounts please send a stamped addressed C4 envelope to Rosemary Fell at the address below.

CONTACTS

ELIZABETH ADAMSON – MVG Secretary in Australia

5, Penistone Street, Greenwood 6024, Perth, Western Australia. Tel: 089247 3374 e-mail: bunneyelizabeth5@gmail.com

SALLIE HAMMOND – MVG Secretary in Canada and the USA.

68, Kinnear Crescent, London, Ontario N6K 1V8, Canada. Tel: 519 473 1542 e-mail: salliehammondn@gmail.com

RICHARD PARRY – MVG Secretary in Malaysia and Singapore

Apartment A2, 12B-02, Infinity Condominium, Jalan Tanjung Bungah, Penang 11200, Malaysia. e-mail: rbparry@hotmail.com

JONATHAN MOFFATT – MVG Historian and Archivist

49, Coombe Drive, Binley Woods, Coventry CV3 2QU. Tel: 02476 545 013 e-mail: jonathanmoffatt@btinternet.com

ROSEMARY FELL – Secretary/Editor of Apa Khabar/Membership/Subscriptions/Donations/Annual Luncheon

Millbrook House, Stoney Lane, Axminster, Devon EX13 5EE. Tel: 01297 33045 e-mail: rosemaryfell11@gmail.com