

APA KHABAR

Patron: Her Grace The Duchess of Norfolk

www.malayanvolunteersgroup.org.uk



80th EDITION

October 2024

M.V.G. V-J Day Service At The National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas



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79th Anniversary of V-J Day

In stark contrast to the celebrations to mark the 80th anniversary of D-Day on 6th June, it was hard to find any mention in the media of the 79th anniversary of V-J Day on 15th August this year. There was a very small mention on the Court Circular page of the Daily Telegraph, but no other report could be found. Let's hope that the 80th anniversary of the end of World War Two next year will be remembered, celebrated and commemorated in similar style on 15th August by the whole country, as well as by all the associated FEPOW and civilian groups.

It was with great sadness that I was unable to attend our V-J Day Service this year – the first time I have missed since the MVG started to hold services at the NMA. Before that, we – that is my husband **Donald** and I, together with **Jonathan Moffatt** and former MVG member and Sumatra FEPOW **John Hedley** – attended the services held by the Shropshire FEPOWs until they disbanded. In those early days, before the Chapel was built, the services were held beside the re-constructed section of the Thailand-Burma Railway line or, later, in the FEPOW Plot.

Our thanks go to everyone who attended the service this year in memory of all those who suffered in the Far East during WW2, both military and civilian. The accounts of those who were evacuated from Singapore in the last few days before the Fall of Singapore demonstrate just how fraught with danger their "Escape" was, and how those who were not killed subsequently endured hardship, torture and starvation in captivity.

Muntok Peace Museum

In April 2015, in the 42nd Edition of "Apa Khabar" **Judy Balcombe** wrote an article about the construction of a Peace Memorial Museum in Muntok – a small town on the western tip of Bangka Island overlooking the sea. Now a peaceful little town, in February 1942, it was the site of a wartime atrocity (the massacre of the Australian Army Nurses) and internment camps for civilian men, women and children captured after their evacuation ships fleeing war-torn Singapore had been bombed and sunk by the Japanese. The Museum was conceived as Memorial to all those who had been interned there in harsh conditions with little food or medical care. The project to build the Museum was supported by the MVG and our support continues today with donations toward the costs of electricity to run the essential air conditioning.

Earlier this year, after nine years of withstanding difficult tropical weather conditions, the Museum was showing significant signs of wear and tear, with a leaking roof and peeling paintwork inside, and was in need of extensive renovation. We are pleased to report that the repairs have now been completed and the Museum is looking better than ever. The exhibits have been replaced and the Museum is open for viewing by local people and visitors to the town.

Our thanks go to **Judy Balcombe** and **Arlene Bennett** for raising the necessary funds for these repairs, helped by a small donation from MVG funds, and contributions from relatives' families.

Australia's Wartime Coastwatchers

Despite the enormity of the tragedy which befell Malaya when Singapore surrendered to the Japanese on 15th February 1942, and the impact it had on so many lives throughout the Far East, it is sad that so little is remembered or known about their suffering in this country. One therefore has to ask why the Australians are so much better at

remembering the Far East theatre of WW2 and those who suffered there than we are in the U.K. We salute them for their commitment and perseverance in their remembrance of all who suffered under the Japanese. However, even the Australians appear to have overlooked a special group of men who were recruited as secretive coastwatchers and who covertly reported on Japanese movements around the coastline of New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. The Coast Watch Organisation, which later morphed into the Combined Field Intelligence Service which reported to the Allied Intelligence Bureau, was set up pre-war by the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) originally as a network of expatriates living and working in those areas. This unsung, heroic group of people displayed selfless bravery during the war. Their mandate was not to confront the enemy but to report on their movements.

Nevertheless more than 38 were captured by the Japanese and killed – many beheaded. Their finest hour was in the decisive Guadalcanal campaign, which lasted from August 1942 to February 1943. They reported on the waves of enemy aircraft, assisted in the rescue of the future President of the USA, **John F. Kennedy**, and oversaw the launch of guerrilla raids on the Japanese with the assistance of the fearless Solomon Islanders. Their exploits were praised by US Navy Admiral **“Bull” Halsey** who said, *“The coastwatchers saved Guadalcanal, and Guadalcanal saved the South Pacific.”*

Two of these coastwatchers were mentioned in an interesting double obituary which appeared in the Daily Telegraph on 8th August - **Ron “Dixie” Lee** and **Jim Burrowes** who, by an extraordinary coincidence, died within hours of each other aged 100 and 101 respectively. **Jim Burroughes** served on the north coast of New Guinea and later on the island of New Britain where he reported on the Japanese stronghold of Rabaul. His older brother, **Bob**, was captured there in 1942 and later, as a FEPOW, lost his life on the prison ship **Montevideo Maru** which was sunk by the **USS Sturgeon** with the loss of more than a thousand POWs and civilians. His twin brother, **Tom**, was lost in a Beaufort bomber raid over Rabaul in 1943. **Burroughes** said he was lucky to be selected as a radio operator instead of infantry; he escaped being captured by the Japanese in the disastrous Hollandia infiltration party.

Ron “Dixie” Lee joined the RAN as a coder before joining the Allied Intelligence Bureau and volunteering for coastwatching duties. At Bougainville in Papua New Guinea, he served with one of the most famous coastwatchers, **Lt. “Snowy” Rhodes**, and provided invaluable information about Japanese aircraft approaching Guadalcanal. Both men were met post-war by **Caroline Kennedy** (JKF’s daughter and US Ambassador to Australia) at a ceremony at the Australian War Memorial. She thanked them for rescuing her father and his crew when their PT109 was sunk in the Solomon Islands.

MVG Member Yvonne Wurtzburg

It was with great sadness that we learned of the death in Australia of **Yvonne Wurtzburg**. **Yvonne** was one of MVG’s founder members and, until she moved to Australia to be near her son, regularly attended our annual lunches at the RAF Club – her last one being in October 2021 – and marched on Remembrance Sunday with the MVG contingent. She also joined the tours to Sumatra which **Liz Moggie** organised. On one of these visits we stopped at a local market where she bargained with a stall holder for a very decorative bird cage – not, she hastened to tell everyone, to keep birds in, but to use as a hanging plant holder. This bird cage travelled with us round Sumatra and on returning to the UK had to be stored separately from the luggage on the plane. Having checked in our cases we had to find a different place to check in the birdcage – suitably protected with brown paper and string. **Yvonne’s** love of the extraordinary has been an abiding memory. We send her family and friends our sincere condolences.

Wartime Pilot's Obituary



The death of **Dr. Arthur Page**, a wartime Fleet Air Arm pilot aged 100, was announced in the Daily Telegraph on 29th August. He was one of the last pilots to attack the Japanese mainland from the aircraft carrier **Victorious** which together with **Formidable** and **Indefatigable** joined the US 3rd Fleet in Task Force 38 on 16th July 1945. Flying an American-built Grumman Avenger torpedo-bomber on 28th July over Habu his aircraft was hit and set on fire. He managed to nurse his plane to the open sea where he encountered mountainous waves and had to crash land along the face of the waves. He and his two-man crew survived the crash and managed to exit the doomed aircraft into a life raft. They were picked up three hours later by a British destroyer. Earlier, in January 1945, he took part in Operation Lentil – air strikes against the oil installations at Pangkalan Brandan in North Sumatra and in Operation Meridian against the oil refineries at Palembang in South Sumatra. He also flew missions against airfields used by Kamikaze aircraft on the Sakishima Islands and on Formosa. After the war, he qualified as a doctor and worked in the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital as a Houseman before becoming a GP in the New Forest, where he built up a successful and busy practice.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/obituaries/2024/08/28/dr-arthur-page-fleet-air-arm-grumman-avenger-world-war-2/>

Badan Warisan Malaysia

Those of you who have visited Penang on holiday, or who live in Malaysia, will know how wonderful their hawker food is, with its rich culinary heritage. A delightful afternoon was held in K.L. at Badan Warisan – Malaysia's Heritage Society – on 17th August when **Dr. Ong Jin Teong** gave a talk and demonstration on Penang's Heritage Food. Also reported in Jendela Warisan – the digital newsletter for Badan Warisan – is the forthcoming talk on 21st September entitled "30 Years On: Remembering Tan Sri Mubin Sheppard" by **Sr. Dr. Zuraini Md Ali**.

Captain Mervyn Cecil Frank Sheppard 1/FMSVF was a member of the MCS and spent 35 years in government. He was well known for his noble and philanthropic nature. Captured by the Japanese when Singapore fell, he became a Changi and Sime Road internee. During internment, he was caught operating a one-man postal service between two camps and was taken to Kempeitai headquarters where he suffered greatly from harsh torture. After the war he helped to round up the Kempeitai operating in the Riau Islands and acted as a War Crimes Investigator. He became a Malaysian citizen and embraced Islam. An acclaimed academic and historian, his legacy to Malaysia is legendary. He died in 1994.



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mubin_Sheppard
https://military-history.fandom.com/wiki/Mubin_Sheppard

M.V.G. V-J DAY SERVICE AT THE NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM, ALREWAS

Colin Hygate

This was now my second attempt at organising the service but this time with not only the experience of last year but also knowing that I would not have Rosemary to guide me on the day. Her mobility difficulties hopefully to be resolved with an impending hip operation prevented her from making the journey. Notwithstanding this, her contribution was to help with preparing the Order of Service and providing two readings from the Sumatra Diaries of Dr. Marjorie Lyon, as I had chosen "Escape" as the theme for this year's service. Her absence and consequently that of Imogen Holmes as well meant that we were anxious to encourage as many as possible to attend. Another enforced absentee was my wife Sue who had been given a medical appointment on the day. Thankfully, Alison Brierley was able to come with Crofton, her husband and had agreed to lead us in prayer. Her brother, Michael Mowat, also came and agreed to give



the scripture reading. Sandy Lincoln made the journey from Scotland with Jim Tribble, our organist, who, last year, had stoically stood in to give Sandy's reading due to her suffering the dreaded Covid at the last minute. Roger Willbourn had agreed to lead us through the service. Anne Hinam and Sandy and Keith Andrews had agreed to join me in giving the readings. Richard Brown would lay our wreath and Bob Hall would give the Exhortation, FEPOW Prayer and the Kohima Epitaph to conclude our service. With all this wonderful support the main structure of the service was in place.

The NMA had confirmed that they would place a notice outside the chapel indicating that all who wished to join us for our service would be welcome. I had received confirmation that their organ was in good working order and had been used in another service a few days earlier. I took the opportunity to meet with the NMA Events Organiser to ensure our reservation for the chapel in 2025 was secure as it would be the 80th Anniversary. She advised that we had the reservation, but we should be aware that the Royal British Legion would be holding a significant event at the NMA on the same day. I asked if we could book a private room to hold a luncheon on that day, but she advised that with all the RBL arrangements it was not possible although we should anticipate an invitation to whatever the RBL were arranging. I asked her to ensure that RBL were aware that we were holding our service and that all were welcome.

It was a great relief that not only had a larger number of members indicated they were coming but also a further number of members arrived on the day making a much fuller congregation than last year, augmented by a further number of non-members at least one of whom is now in the process of joining. Having met in the cafe we made our way to the chapel, meeting Jonathan Moffatt, his wife, Suthi and family on the way. We started making final arrangements in the chapel placing our MVG altar cloth (embroidered by Elizabeth Adamson), distributing the Orders of Service and starting up the organ.

I had been struck by the new piece of music written for the 80th Anniversary of D-Day by Andrew Lloyd-Webber with lyrics by Don Black that are based on the words of D-Day Veteran Cecil Newton. The lyrics seem appropriate for all Services of Remembrance but after some consideration, we concluded they were probably not sufficiently well known by our members to sing. We consequently asked Jim to play it as our opening music. As the congregation grew, Jim began to play some introductory hymns, and it was during these that it became apparent the organ was misbehaving! With some trepidation Jim continued and although he may have noticed some variations, in general it did not noticeably effect the remainder of the service.

I made some introductory comments welcoming members and non-members alike as well as explaining the theme of Escape which was prompted by the "Great Escapes" Exhibition at the National Archives in Kew which had featured the wonderful Changi Quilt that two of our Honorary Life Members, Olga Henderson and Vilma Howe, had helped to sew as Changi Girl Guides. I explained that for the first time since we started holding the service our Life President, Rosemary Fell, was unable to attend as she was waiting for a hip operation but felt certain we all sent our best wishes for a successful outcome. I explained that we had booked the chapel for the 80th Anniversary V-J Day Service for next year and again all who wished to attend would be welcome. I apologised for unfortunately not telling Jim Tribble that the "Captives' Hymn" was included in the service which meant he did not have the music with him and so we would all read the words aloud. I was somewhat relieved when one or two commented afterwards that saying the words gave us more time to contemplate their meaning.

I then invited Richard Brown to lay our wreath at the altar and observe two minutes silence to reflect upon all those whose ultimate sacrifice had enabled our freedom. Roger Willbourn then guided us through the service, firstly with the singing of "Abide With Me". This was followed by Michael Mowat reading from the Gospel according to St. John. We had agreed that, at his suggestion, he would start from Verse 35 rather than 37 through to 40, as that made the whole passage more meaningful.

Sandy Lincoln read the first of our readings "Escape from Singapore" which was the first of two extracts from Dr. Marjorie Lyon's "Sumatra War Diaries". This told the remarkable escape by Marjorie Lyon and her friend and colleague Dr Elsie Crowe from Singapore on board the "Kuala" which was sunk by Japanese bombers off Pong Pong Island where they were fortunate to swim ashore. Keith Andrews then read "Escape from Pasir Panjang" which was an extract from Charles McCormac's "You'll Die in Singapore". I had rather selfishly chosen this as my father had spent a few months in Pasir Panjang camp in late 1942 and I had bought the book at the Changi Museum shop last year which they had recently reprinted.

Alison Brierley led us in prayer, starting with a prayer from St. Augustine, followed by praying for all those who had suffered and perished at the hands of the Japanese, remembering particularly those whose families were especially affected. We gave thanks to all their remarkable feats of resilience in the face of the atrocities being suffered. We prayed for all who continue to suffer war and for the hope of peace, honouring the past and putting our faith in the future. We concluded our prayers with the Lord's Prayer and singing the hymn "The Day Thou Gavest, Lord, is Ended".

Ann Hinam gave a further reading from Dr. Marjorie Lyon's Sumatra War Diaries entitled "Escape from Pong Pong Island" on board the Japanese fishing vessel later known as "Krait". This was the vessel ultimately used in Operation Jaywick. This vessel survived the escape from Singapore because the Japanese avoided bombing it as they recognised it as a Japanese vessel. I gave the last reading "Escape from Kuching" which was an extract from Roddy Martine's book "Scorpion on the Roof". This told of his mother and sister's escape from Kuching on Christmas Day 1941 through the Dahan rubber estate which was where the "Poak" work camp is located that we have recently identified. This was



where my father was the only known volunteer survivor from around 100 volunteers who worked there. Their escape through the jungle to Pontianak and onward to Sydney was aided by local Dyaks. Bob Hall concluded the Chapel Service with the Exhortation, FEPOW

Prayer and the Kohima Epitaph. We ended our service with Jim Tribble playing the "Largo" from Dvorak's New World Symphony as Richard Brown collected the wreath to take it to our Memorial Garden.

The whole service had taken around an hour as the readings were somewhat lengthy and had not been helped by the absence of a

microphone! However the encouraging size of the congregation and Jim Tribble's perseverance with the recalcitrant organ resulted in an appropriate commemoration and celebration of V-J Day. We packed up our altar cloth, collected the unused Orders of Service and made our way to our Memorial Garden.



The garden was in much better shape than last year with the plaques refurbished, the paving repointed, the new replacement seat in place and the area generally looking trim. We assembled around the Memorial for Richard to lay our wreath and for Alison to lead us in prayer for all those memorialised there. Many conversations were then had as Sandy first searched for her father's plaque in the bamboo, finally resorting to her nail scissors to expose it in the undergrowth. Another plaque commemorating Captain Hay, 1SSVF was also revealed. Many then returned to the cafe to enjoy more conversation and lunch.

In Memory of Lincoln Page

BUKIT ROTAN POST OFFICE, KUALA SELANGOR DISTRICT

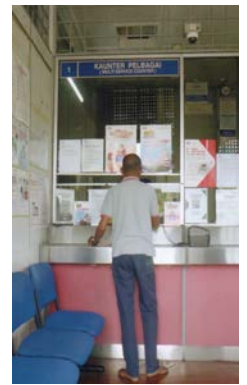
Elizabeth Moggie



On Tuesday 17th July 2004 I travelled from Kuala Lumpur down the winding old road to Kuala Selangor. I was careful to keep a look out for the old Bukit Rotan Post Office as the road is now extremely busy and it is easy to pass it. The New States Times (NST) article of 31st August 2023 noted that the building began life as a Police Station from 1920 to 1926 and it was only in that year that it became a Post Office. Perhaps it was necessary in view of the growing acreage of rubber estates in the area. I don't know where the Police Station went.



As I entered the building I saw the customers remove their footwear as they would do on entering a Malay house, no doubt because the wooden building has the form and appearance of a house. The interior was spotless, but the walls were covered with the usual plethora of notices of services provided, as is the case in any 21st century post office in Malaysia.



I cast my mind back to the Pre-WWII days and the place of a post office in the thriving plantation community of the time. Bukit Rotan is situated near an important road turning off towards Kampung Kuantan. This road passes the Golf Club of the same name. It is right in the middle of what

was formerly a well-established estate area. The Bukit Rotan Post Office is under 10 miles from Kuala Selangor town, but the journey would have taken much longer than it does nowadays. A post office was no doubt very important in the life of the community, both local and expatriate, at that time. Telegrams were a vital form of communication, and these were sent and received at a post office, and of course letters kept people in touch.

I thought of some of "those men of the district" whose names appeared on the WWII bronze plaque of the Kuala Selangor War Memorial. Near neighbours of the post office included **Finlayson**, who was assistant planter on the Bukit Rotan Estate, **Park**, who was the manager of the nearby Rothiemay Estate, and **Christopher Thompson** (father of MVG member Michael Thompson) who was posted to Bukit Rotan Estate in the late 1930s.



It was good to see that the Bukit Rotan Post office still functions as a post office and is well patronised. I produced my envelope for air mail postage to the UK and was served by a smiling young lady assistant who was well aware of the historical significance of the building. Long may it continue to function as it approaches its 100th year. Perhaps some MVG members have much treasured letters whose envelopes bear the postmark of the historic Bukit Rotan Post Office.

The World War II Plaque on the Kuala Selangor War Memorial - Part 2

Elizabeth Moggie

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Following my article about the Kuala Selangor War Memorial which appeared in the July 2023 edition of The Planter a further note may be of interest. The first article gave the “bare bones” of the Kuala Selangor Memorial and emphasised the memory of the seven Malays of the district whose names were inscribed on the World War II plaque. It was hoped that this would elicit information through their descendants and kampung neighbours. Below is the full list of European names (nearly all of them planters) that were inscribed on the WW2 plaque. The notes have been kept deliberately brief though much more is known about some of the men.

ABDUL RANI BIN MALMUDIN

ALEXANDER, D.A.

Douglas Adam Alexander. Came to Malaya 1923. Manager Scottish Malayan Estates Ltd, Pahang; Manager Strathairlie and Sungei Tekal Estates and Bukit Cheraka Estate, Jeram. Pte 5400 2FMSVF Liaison to Army in February 1942. POW Singapore. Went to Thailand with F Force, 28 April 1943. Died in captivity 26 August 1943 (aged 41) at Songkurai, Thailand. Reinterred at Thanbyuzayat War Cemetery, Myanmar, B3H.17.

ATKINS, A.P.

Alfred Percival (“Admiral”) Atkins. Came to Malaya 1926. Manager Caledonian (Selangor) Rubber Co. Ltd, Batu Arang. Lt 2 FMSVF. Died 24 January 1942 (aged 40) in Singapore of wounds received in Selangor. Buried at Bidadari, reinterred at Kranji War Cemetery, 35.F.18.

BUSU BIN HAJI KUSSIN

CURRAN-SHARP, T.A.

Thomas Abraham Curran-Sharp. Manager and Engineer Raja Musa Estate [Raja Musa (Selangor) Rubber and Coconuts Ltd], also Manager Ichamaran Estate, Batang Berjuntai. Pte 147 Kuala Selangor Platoon, Selangor LDC. Interned at Palembang, Sumatra where he died (aged 50) 4 February 1945. Grave now at Jakarta War Cemetery, 2.A.14.

FINLAYSON, G.A.

Graham Alexander Finlayson. From Vancouver, B.C. Assistant Planter Bukit Rotan Estate. Emergency Commission 16724, 2 Lt FMSVF attached to 3rd Batt. 16th Punjab Regiment. Killed in action (aged 24) 10 February 1942 at Jurong, Singapore. Commemorated on Kranji Memorial, Column 28 D12.

HENDERSON, K.G.

Kenneth Gerald Henderson, Assistant Manager (Scottish Malayan Estates Ltd) Bukit Cheraka Estate, Jeram. Captain 132442 Royal Scots. Died 2 April 1943, presumably in action in Burma. Commemorated on Rangoon Memorial, Face 4.

HENVILLE, L.A.

Laurence (Laurie) Arthur Henville. Came to Malaya 1929. SOCFIN Manager Estates staff. Acting Manager Sungai Rambai Estate. Batang Berjuntai. Pte 6866 2FMSVF. Seconded to the RASC. POW in Singapore (Changi/Blakang Mati). Went to Thailand with H Force, 13 May 1943. Died at Hintok River Camp (aged 36) 26 August 1943. Grave originally at Hintok, reinterred at Chungkai War Cemetery, No. 9J8.

IDRUS BIN MOHD YUNUS

INGLIS, J.G.

John Grant Inglis. Came to Malaya 1925. Planter (Selangor Oil Palm Company) Elmina Estate, Sungei Buloh, Cpl 7666 2 FMSVF. POW Singapore. Went to Thailand with F Force, 28 April 1943. Died (aged 30) 26 August 1943 at Songkurai. Reinterred at Thanbyuzayat War Cemetery. B4G.6.

ISMAIL BIN MAT

Pte 1086 1st Batt. Malay Regiment. Son of Jem'ah binti Momin of Jeram. Died 14 February 1942. Commemorated on Kranji Memorial. Column 387.

LOVEWELL, F.D.

Francis Douglas Lovewell. Came to Malaya 1929. Manager Coalfields Estate, Remfield Rubber Estate Ltd, Sungai Buloh. CSM 6805 Signals Batt. 2FMSVF. POW Singapore. To Thailand with D Battalion 12 October 1942. Later, worked on the Mergui Road 1945. Died (aged 44) 3 July 1945 at Tagri Camp, Thailand. Commemorated on Kranji Memorial Column 390.

NAPI BIN AHMAD

L/Cpl 241, 2nd Batt. Malay Regiment. Killed in action at Buloh Kasap, Johore, 8 January 1942. Husband of Sapiah binti Kulop of Kuala Lumpur. Commemorated on Kranji Memorial Column 386.

PARK, H.H.

Hugh Herbert Park. Manager Rothiemay Estate, Bukit Rotan. Pte 152 Selangor L.D.C. Interned at Palembang, Sumatra, and died (aged 58) in Palembang Hospital, 26 May 1942. Commemorated on Kranji Memorial. Column 402.

PAXTON - HARDING, P.

Philip Paxton-Harding. Came to Malaya 1930. Assistant, Bousteads, Penang. 1935 Assistant Planter Selangor Rubber Estates Ltd Kuala Selangor. 1940 Manager Selangor River Estate. Captain of Selangor Rugby Team in 1935. E.C. (Emergency Commission) 11156. 2nd Lt 2FMSVF and attached to 5th Battalion 14th Punjab Regiment. Killed in action (aged 36) on 13th February 1942 at Paya Lebar, Singapore. Commemorated on Kranji Memorial Column 242.

RICHARDS, H.G.L.

Harold George Lorn Richards First came to Malaya 1911 and was Assistant Planter Holmwood Estate, Batang Berjuntai. He saw W.W. I service as Pte 2111 B Company, MSVR. Well known golfer and cricketer. Manager Kempsey Estate, Kuala Selangor. Pte 156 Selangor LDC. Died (aged 60) on 23 March 1942 in Miyako (formerly Mental) Hospital, Singapore.

ROSS, A.J.

Alfred James Ross. Came to Malaya 1937. Bukit Cheraka Estate, Selangor Oil Palm Co. Ltd, Sungei Buloh. Sgt RAF Volunteer Reserve 19.12.1941. By 1943 Flying Officer 117646, 37 Squadron RAF. Killed in action (aged 26) 6 February 1943. Commemorated on El Alamein Memorial, Egypt.

ROWE, W.T.

William Treza. Came to Malaya 1930. Assistant Planter on Merlimau Panjang Estates, Malacca. Then Manager Bukit Ijok Estate, Kuala Selangor. Pte 13679 2FMSVF. Killed (aged 33) in an air attack, 7 February 1942 at Changi, Singapore. Buried at Temple Hill, Changi Barracks area, then reinterred at Kranji Cemetery, Grave No. 13.A.7.

SMITH, J.C.

John Charles Smith. Assistant Planter Elmina Estate, Sungei Buloh. Cpl 13179 2FMSVF. POW in Singapore. Went to Kuching with E Force 1 April 1943. Presumed to have died (aged 36) on Labuan Island 6 Aug 1944. Commemorated on Kranji Memorial, Column 391.

SULONG BIN SUDIN

Pte. 234. 1st Batt. Malay Regiment. Died 15 February 1942. Husband of Wok binti Mohammad Taib of Sungei Buloh. Commemorated on Kranji Memorial. Column 390.

THOMPSON, C.

Christopher Thompson. Came to Malaya 1938. Assistant Planter Selangor River Rubber Estates Ltd. On Bukit Rotan Estate, then on Sepang Estate. L/Cpl 13218 2FMSVF. POW in Singapore. Went to Thailand with F Force 28 April 1943. Died (aged 32) at Chaungghala-ya, Thailand on 16 June 1943. Grave now at Kanchanaburi War Cemetery, Sp. Mem. 9 M4 for cholera victims.

WOLDE, B.

Bernard Wolde. Came to Malaya by 1914. Bukit Selangor Rubber Estates (1920) Ltd, Batang Berjuntai. Recorded as 'left' on the Jeyes List so he may have been lost at sea while attempting escape (aged approximately 67).

ZAKARIA BIN MAT YUDA

Contact has been made with family members of A P Atkins, L A Henville, P Paxton-Harding and C Thompson. Should any reader be in contact with anyone connected with any of the other names commemorated, I would be very grateful for any further information. Unfortunately, the records of all the Malayan Volunteers (and these men were mainly Volunteers) formerly held in Kuala Lumpur, were destroyed when the local office closed down in about 1956, hence the difficulty in tracing information. What information there is, occurs mostly in the papers of the late Tan Sri Mubin Sheppard (himself a former volunteer) whose papers are held at the Malaysian National Archives. The three Malay Regiments (the Royal title was awarded post-war)...Attached is as much information about these three men as is presently known. Although their names are commemorated on a memorial at the Port Dickson Armed Forces Depot, further details are not recorded in the Museum there. Disappointingly, repeated letters to the Armed Forces Veterans' Department for records of these men have had no response.

Lance Corporal NAPI BIN AHMAD

No.241, 2nd Battalion, A Company. Killed in action 8 January 1942. Husband of Sapiah binti Kulop of Kuala Lumpur. Commemorated on Kranji Memorial Column 390. He was one of the 1935 intake into the Malay Regiment when it was established in battalion form. He appears to have been one of those chosen to provide a foundation for the establishment of the Second Battalion in December 1941. In all likelihood he was deployed to Kelantan in defence of the airfields and then was part of the retreat following the railway line to Kuala Lipis. There, his company entrained for Buloh Kasap in Johore where they occupied defensive positions from 5-8 January, facing the enemy across the Sungai Muar. They faced constant bombing, shelling and strafing by aeroplane. He was killed as a result of howitzer bombardment. Sapiah remarried on 2.8.1948. In 1949 Napi's brother, Che Sam'aan bin Ahmad was living at Permatang, Kuala Selangor.

Private SULONG BIN SUDIN

No.234, 1st Battalion. Died 15 January 1942.

Husband of Wok binti Mohammad Taib of Sungai Buloh.

Commemorated on Kranji Memorial Column 390. He was one of the 1935 intake into the Malay Regiment when it was established in battalion form. He was a bandsman and is likely to have been a stretcher bearer when hostilities commenced. In a casualty list of 4 March 1946, he is listed as "missing". Possibly this date of death (the last day of the Campaign) was supplied in view of a lack of any other confirmation. In all likelihood he lost his life sometime during the very last days of the action on Singapore.

Private ISMAIL BIN MAT

No.1086, 1st Battalion, A Company. Died 14 February 1942. Believed killed in action at the "Opium Factory", Pasir Panjang Ridge. Son of Jem'ah binti Momin of Jeram. Commemorated on Kranji Memorial Column 387. Probably joined the Regiment in either 1938 or 1941. Likely to have been a younger man and presumably not yet married as no widow is named. The Federated Malay States Volunteer Force (FMSVF) 2nd (Selangor) Battalion. Research to the present time indicates that the following four Malays were FMSVF, 2nd (Selangor) Battalion volunteers. However, this is tentative and confirmation would be very much appreciated, especially as to the very late (some years after their deaths) award of the Efficiency Medals.

ABDUL RANI BIN MALHMUDIN

BUSU BIN HAJI KUSSIN

The Planter, Vol. 99, No. 1171, October 2023

IDRUS BIN MOHD YUNUS ZAKARIA

BIN MAT YUDA

It is possible that these men enlisted under names different from those used by their families, thereby making recognition difficult. I strongly suspect that they were, in all likelihood, in the employ of the civilian Selangor administration of the time, i.e., late 1930s/early 1940-41. The Four (Non-Malay Regiment) Preliminary notes (as at September 2019) confirm that three of these men were members of the Federated Malay States Volunteer Force (FMSVF).

ABDUL RANI BIN MALHMUDIN

11139 Private, FMSVF

Efficiency Medal awarded 4 January 1951.

(Federation Malaya Government Gazette)

BUSU BIN HAJI KUSSIN

10929 Corporal, FMSVF

Efficiency Medal awarded 19 April 1951.

(Federation Malaya Government Gazette)

IDRUS BIN MOHD YUNUS

8131 Sergeant, FMSVF

Efficiency Medal awarded 5 December

1946. (Malayan Union Government

Gazette) Clasp to the Efficiency Medal awarded 1 September 1949.

(Federation Malaya Government

Gazette)

ZAKARIA BIN MAT YUDA -

as yet no information.

SERGEANT IDRUS BIN MOHD YUNUS

There are two accounts, which complement each other, of how Sgt Idrus met his end. Both are contained in the papers of Tan Sri Mubin Sheppard held at Malaysian National Archives. Firstly, the account of Cpl Mohd Razi bin Hj Mohd Yunus (Were they brothers?). He writes not only about Sgt Idrus but also about 2 Lt Atkins. The latter, wounded in the same action on 10 January 1942, later died from his wounds and his name is also inscribed on the WW2 plaque. The account written in 1976 by MCS (Malayan Civil Service) officer, Philip Wickens, confirms Cpl Radzi's report of the wounding of both Idrus and Atkins. He describes how the units were retreating from the Japanese "north of the Klang Road in Bukit Raja Estate" towards a rendezvous point in the vicinity of Batu Tiga. The accounts of the bravery of these men with much more detail are held in File No. 2000/0006725 at Malaysian National Archives. Tracing the history of the names on the WWII plaque of the Kuala Selangor War Memorial has taken a number of years and the picture is still unclear. Unfortunately, relevant records are either missing or unobtainable. What remains clear is that in 1951 people in the civil administration and the community of Kuala Selangor knew who these men were and how they had lost their lives. Their names were inscribed on the WWII plaque as being "men of the district". We should not forget them. The writer would be very grateful for any further information, confirmation or amendments, as well as pointers towards any further sources.

"GOD'S LITTLE ACRE" CEREMONY REPORT

Elizabeth Moggie

A heavy shower on the afternoon of Friday 21st cooled the air for the service on Saturday. Leo and I decided against staying the night in Ipoh and booked ourselves in at a fairly comfortable hotel in Batu Gajah itself. This meant that we had time (after the rain had stopped) to walk around Batu Gajah town and, more importantly, meant that we didn't have a troublesome drive from Ipoh in the very early hours of Saturday. Traffic even in the "outstation" towns of the Peninsula has become hectic. Sadly, Batu Gajah town, once the hub of the tin mining days, is now a little run down but there are still handsome buildings to be found in side streets. Batu Gajah is now the centre for the Railway Workshops of the Peninsula and other income and employment opportunities are planned.

This year's Commemoration was held a little later than usual owing to a public holiday which fell on the Saturday nearest to 16th June, the date of the Declaration of the Emergency in 1948 following the murders of Walker, Allison and Christian. MVG was represented by Leo, me and Christie Thomas (formerly with the Malaysian Navy) who came from Penang with a large group from the Penang Veterans Association. It was appropriate that this group had made the effort to come from Penang specially for the service. Richard Parry remarked in his report on the service carried in the July 2023 edition of Apa Khabar that numbers were lacking and we found that so for this year.

The Commemoration took the usual form of a religious service being held in Holy Trinity Church which is adjacent to the cemetery. This was followed by the Memorial Service in the cemetery adjacent to the church. Chairs had been arranged for us to sit on in the cemetery and smartly uniformed police mounted a guard of honour at the four corners of the Memorial Stone. It was the police who in the Police Week Celebrations of 1980 had initiated the Commemoration by arranging a clean-up of the cemetery where some of their former colleagues were buried.

The service itself is arranged by the Malaysian Palm Oil (Perak Branch) Association and the MC for the Memorial Service was a competent woman member of staff. Mr Joseph Tek, the chief executive of the MPOA, spoke on behalf of the association and this year's speech was given by Mr David Wallace, the Deputy British High Commissioner. Then followed the traditional wreath-laying by representatives of the Police, the Army, various Commonwealth High Commissioners, some of the larger planting companies and lastly on behalf of various individual supporters of the event.

At the appointed time Mr Christie Thomas laid a wreath on behalf of the MVG. A police trumpeter sounded the Last Post and two minutes silence was kept to remember those who had laid down their lives during the Emergency – policemen, planters, miners and others. Some of these had been pre-War Volunteers.



Until 2011 "others" had included three Iban trackers who were buried in the cemetery. Altogether, the remains of 21 trackers including those who were buried in other Peninsula cemeteries were repatriated to the Heroes' Grave in Kuching, Sarawak, on 27th July 2011. The remains were transported in aircraft with full military honours as well as following traditional native custom. Iban had been recruited from Sarawak longhouses in the late 1940' and early 1950s as their jungle tracking skills were extremely reliable. They accompanied British patrols, usually two to a patrol, where their outstanding powers of observation were used to locate hidden jungle camps or follow CT routes.

Following the Commemorative Service some people wandered among the graves pointing out those of special relevance, such as those of the Malayan Police (as it was) all of which have distinctively shaped headstones. Others mingled while they enjoyed a light breakfast at the side of the Church.

Most of the attendees then retired to the nearby Kinta Golf Club where lunch was served on the usual round tables. It was then that we had an opportunity to talk and exchange views in a more relaxed environment. Mr Joseph Tek gave a very interesting talk on the Emergency which I hope will be made available to MVG members in some form. It was a real treat and quite different from the usual luncheon speeches given in past years.

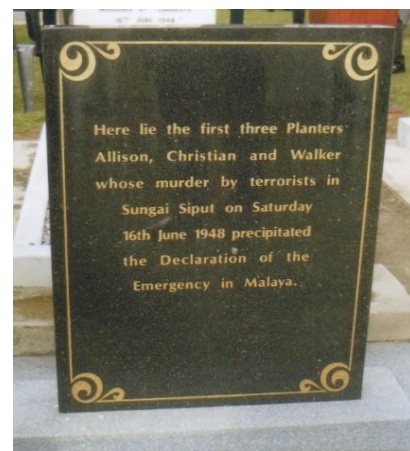


Mr Tek took the opportunity to inform us of a disturbing possible change of location for future commemorations. It has been decided that future commemorations should be held at the Memorial near the Ipoh Railway Station. I believe that a service is held there every year but as I have never attended I do not know what form it takes.

I understand that perhaps a service in the Church may not be appropriate in this day and age, but I feel strongly that the Commemoration in God's little Acre should continue. After all, this is where

Walker, Allison and Christian are buried as well as members of the Police and others who died carrying out their daily duties. Mr Joseph Tek, CEO of the MPOA has undertaken to appeal for the Commemorative Service to continue to be held at the Batu Gajah Anglican Cemetery, known as God's little Acre.

Perhaps members can email Colin Hygate directly so he can forward a concerted appeal from the MVG.



Our Royal Family

We continue to be reassured that both the King and Princess of Wales are progressing well with their cancer treatments. The King is certainly becoming more active with an increasing number of engagements and holidaying at Balmoral. The recent message from the Princess of Wales that she has completed her chemotherapy and will be returning to some public duties was also most welcome news. Her video provided an insight into a more open and personalised method of conveying such news. We continue to wish them both well.

Life President

Many of you may know that Rosemary has needed to have hip surgery which has meant that for the first time she was unable to attend our V-J Day Service and does not expect to attend our Annual Lunch. I am sure every member wishes her a complete and speedy recovery to full mobility.

Potential New Memorial to the Dahan/Poak Camp in Sarawak, Borneo

Our proposal is under discussion with the local authority and Tourism Organisation in Kuching for a memorial and Information Board to be installed at the location identified last year on the Dahan Estate near Kampong Seropak. The proposal has been met with enthusiastic support and is being developed by Edward Mansel locally with support from Dr Peggy Day and Liz Moggie.



In discussion with a local sculptor the preferred image of this memorial is as shown here. We are now waiting for local confirmation and an estimate for the memorial.

National Memorial Arboretum MVG Memorial Garden

You will read elsewhere of our V-J Day service, and this gave many members the opportunity of seeing our refurbished Memorial. The main plaques have been repainted, the paving repointed, the new bench is in position and the garden generally was in good order. As we and our forebears were all aware, bamboo can be a most invasive and prolific plant. It took some time for Sandy Lincoln, armed with some nail-scissors to uncover her father's plaque and another one as well! We have since uncovered all six plaques that were placed with the original bamboo in the garden. It is obvious they need refurbishment, and one requires a new support stake but at a cost of just under £1,000 we will need to obtain funding for this work.



Kuala Selangor War Memorial

We now have permission to replace the missing plaques which are to be made from etched stainless steel at a cost of around £2,000. Some donations have already been received but more is required. Jonathan has produced the following as the explanation of the appeal.

FUND RAISING FOR THE RESTORATION OF THE KUALA SELANGOR WAR MEMORIAL

In 1924 an obelisk war memorial was unveiled in the town of Kuala Selangor. Inscribed on its bronze plaque were the names of Europeans, mostly planters and mostly members of the Malay States Volunteer Rifles who in 1915/1916 volunteered to join Imperial Forces in Europe and never returned.

Following the Second World War a second bronze plaque was added to the memorial commemorating 23 local Europeans and Malayans, mostly members of the Federated Malay States Volunteer Force and the Malay Regiment who lost their lives 1941-1945. Annual commemorations were held on this site.

You will see on this link to the memorial as found in 2009 by our then-MVG Malaysia Secretary:

<https://www.malayanvolunteersgroup.org.uk/kuala-selangor-memorial.html>

Although the obelisk was intact, the bronze plaques had been removed and are still missing.

See these two images of the memorial as it was in the 1950s on photos taken by MVG member Ann Evans whose father's name was on the World War II plaque. Ann is one of four MVG members whose father's name is on the plaque.

The restoration of the plaques has been earmarked for MVG funding since 2011 but because of the delicacy of negotiating and the pace of local decision making other successful fund-raising projects have gone forward ahead of this one. Most of our highly successful fund raisers such as Saving the Scarf VC, Saving the Thailand-Burma Railway Centre and supporting the Muntok Peace Museum have not been directly to do with the Malayan Volunteer Forces.

This will be the first fundraiser in support of a Malayan Volunteers Memorial in the former Federated Malay States of WWI and WWII. As the 80th Anniversary of V-J Day approaches we feel now is the time to restore the memorial as it once was. We now have local official approval for this following extensive research and negotiation by Puan Sri Elizabeth Moggie. We hope you will generously support it.



Letters to the Editor

Although a number of members have and are preparing longer stories for publication in Apa Khabar I wish to encourage Letters from Members who may have brief information, requests for information or comment on published content. Please send those letters or emails to me in the first instance for review and clarification before I send them on to Sally for inclusion in the Letters Section.

Membership Matters

We have ten new members joining us this year so far and our world-wide membership currently stands at three hundred and fifty-seven (357). We are most grateful to all those who have set up standing orders for your payment of your membership renewal as following up with those who overlook their renewal proves very time consuming.

We ask any members who have stories of their Volunteer predecessors which we have not yet published in Apa Khabar to please send copies to Colin Hygate.

SELAMAT PAGI
THE BANGKA ISLAND NEWSLETTER
<https://muntokpeacemuseum.org>



EDITION 3
SEPTEMBER 2024

Please note the third edition of this newsletter which is being distributed to those whose relatives were interned by the Japanese as civilians in Muntok on Bangka Island, and on the mainland of Sumatra, during WWII. We hope to do more research into those who were captured in Padang and imprisoned there and in the Bankinang Camps.

Contents:

Frank Brewer oral history tapes

To the Jungle Camp in Bangkinang

A Broad Perspective of Banka Island by Michael Pether

Repairs to the Muntok Peace Museum by Judi Balcombe

Dame Margo Turner by Arlene Bennett

If you feel able to contribute an article for future editions, please send it to **Rosemary Fell**, who is producing the newsletter. Her contact details are given below. We hope you find this second edition of interest, but if you do not wish to receive any more newsletters, please let **Rosemary** know.

Rosemary Fell, Millbrook House, Stoney Lane, Axminster, Devon EX13 5EE

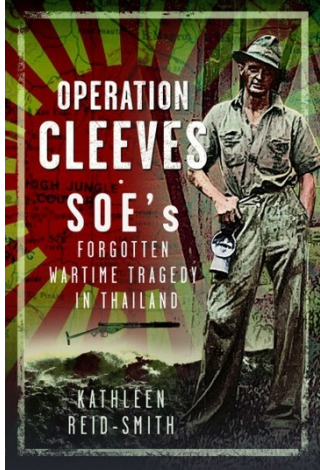
Tel: 01297 33045; E-mail: rosemaryfell11@gmail.com

Operation Cleeves SOE's Forgotten Wartime Tragedy in Thailand

Kate Reid-Smith

Pen and Sword, November 2024

<https://www.pen-and-sword.co.uk/Operation-Cleeves-SOEs-Forgotten-Wartime-Tragedy-in-ThailandHardback/p/51603>



KATE REID-SMITH is an MVG member and military historian focusing on covert operations in World War II in Southeast Asia. A former military officer and polymath graduate, some of her areas of expertise include international relations, politics and history across British Malaya and Thailand from 1941 onwards. Having spent decades living, working and travelling extensively across the region, Kate combines her first-hand knowledge, experience and cross-cultural expertise with her specialist language skills in providing valuable insight into and uncovering wider perspectives of shared clandestine wartime experiences.

The book traces the development of the oriental mission's small-scale sabotage tin mine denial operations along southern Thailand's Singora line, and the disastrous consequences in their aftermath.

It provides insight into collaborative civilian and military covert operations in Southern Thailand on the eve of Japan's invasion and outlines select concomitant 11th Indian Division roles, including Krohcol and Laycol forces, the 3/16th Punjabi Regiment and others, across shared areas of operation such as in the Battle of the Ledge.

It brings to light numerous war crimes committed within the first few weeks of occupation, including the Sadao, Singora and Kampong Toh massacres and exposes some of the reasons as to why operation Cleeves and the wider majority of associated SOE personnel were literally written out of conventional postwar historical accounts.

Southern Thailand, 1941. This is the story of Operation Cleeves. A daring and long forgotten SOE Far East mission, where a handful of tin miners risked their lives fighting against the onslaught of Japan on the eve of World War II in Southeast Asia. Using declassified documents, previously undiscovered records and extensive original research, Kate Reid-Smith provides an intimate yet harrowing look into a most secret and turbulent operation shrouded in mystery. Vivid and powerful accounts of tremendous courage in the face of resilience and redemption uncover how an eclectic mix of European civilians and Indian soldiers all marooned amid danger, violence and bloodshed, were suddenly confronted by unspeakable survival choices, as the circumstances of war catapulted them into an unimaginable world of horrific atrocities. Some of their stories are told for the very first time in this revelatory book, uncovering perilous undertakings requiring daring and sang-froid bravery, and how using only their wits for survival, all bore the full brunt of Japan's initial invasion.

The Tigers of Trengganu

Lieut. Col. Arthur Locke

Charles Scribner's Sons, NY, 1954

Foreword by the Rt. Hon. Malcolm MacDonald



"I was posted to Kemaman as government administrative officer in January 1949. I had not been in Kemaman very long before I realized that I would have to do something to check the depredations of the local tigers which were killing a great many cattle and other domestic animals. In common with other game, these tigers had multiplied during the Japanese occupation. The Emergency had prevented those Malays who possessed shotguns from hunting them. The losses suffered by the villagers were considerable.

"The Malay district officers made it unnecessary for me to look for tigers myself. They organized an intelligence system through headmen (Penghulus) of all kills in the inhabited parts of the area. This information was either relayed by telephone often through the police or was brought in by the headmen.

"I have rarely shot a tiger without a pang of regret that another courageous, strong and graceful creature had died. To me they will always be by far the most fascinating and magnificent specimens of our Malayan wild life."

www.amazon.ca www.ebay.com

www.ebay.co.uk

Dates For Your Diary 2024/5

Bataan Legacy Historical Society events

<https://www.bataanlegacy.org/index.html>

The Battle of Leyte Gulf, 80th Anniversary

17th September 2024, 5 p.m., Marines' Memorial Club, San Francisco

Film on War Crimes: **The Pursuit of Truth and Justice** (9:46 minutes) <https://www.bataanlegacy.org/index.html>

Examines how war crimes of the past continue to resonate; focus on Japanese war crimes in WWII, how military documents were destroyed and why Hirohito and certain war criminals were not held to justice.

Joseph R. McMicking (1908-1990) biography

Leyte Landing 20th October 1944; The Battle of Leyte Gulf 23-26th October 1944

<https://www.bataanlegacy.org/uploads/3/4/7/6/34760003/battleofleytegulf-josephmcmicking.pdf>

Saturday 19th October 2024

Annual General Meeting and Reunion Luncheon, RAF Club, Piccadilly, London. 12 noon to 5 p.m.



Our speaker this year will be John Tulloch who will be talking about his book "The Borneo Graveyard". This recounts the Japanese invasion of Borneo and the subsequent four 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. Please ensure you book early for the luncheon as there are sure to be many who

will wish to meet fellow descendants of those who served. Please also ensure to bring contributions for the raffle that raises funds for MVG. The lunch will take place in The Sovereign's Room.

Please let Colin Hygate (secretary@mvg.org.uk) know before 30th September if you wish to attend with the names of any guests you would like to bring and any dietary needs. The menu this year is one of the RAF Club's "All Year Favourites". Starter: Melon. Main: Roast Breast of Chicken served with new potatoes. Dessert: Vanilla and Raspberry Crème Brûlée, followed by coffee or tea and petit fours. The cost is **£53** per person and **payment is due by 30th September** (BACS Payment to Account Name: "Malayan Volunteers" Sort Code: 40-22-09 Account No. 42728532 referencing your payment "Lunch" or cheque by post to either Roger Willbourn or Colin Hygate).

Thursday 7th November 2024 Cross Planting Ceremony, Westminster Abbey's Field of Remembrance



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

Sunday 10th November 2024 Remembrance Day Cenotaph Parade



We have had a most wonderful response to our exhortations for members to join our contingent. We have actually managed to secure fifteen tickets. A huge thank you to all those who will be marching and representing MVG.

The National Service of Remembrance, held at The Cenotaph in Whitehall on Remembrance Sunday, provides the nation with a physical reminder of all those who have served and sacrificed, with British and Commonwealth soldiers, sailors, airmen and women represented, together with members of the emergency services and civilians, ensuring that no-one is forgotten.

Members of the Royal Family will pay tribute alongside Members of the Cabinet, Opposition Party leaders, former Prime Ministers, as well as the Mayor of London and other ministers.

Representatives of the Armed Forces, Fishing Fleets and Merchant Air and Navy will be there, as well as faith communities and High Commissioners of Commonwealth countries.

Royal British Legion: <https://www.britishlegion.org.uk/get-involved/remembrance/remembranceevents/remembrance-sunday>

Remembrance Day Kranji War Memorial and Cemetery Woodlands Road, Singapore



MVG Member, Martin Foakes, will be laying a wreath on behalf of MVG at this service. Any members wishing to join him should contact Peter directly to arrange to meet.

Monday 11th November, Toronto, Canada



Vice-Secretary Kathy Halliday and her family will attend on behalf of us all.

Remembrance Day, Veterans' Memorial Wall, Queens's Park

2025 WILL BE THE 80th ANNIVERSARY OF THE END OF WORLD WAR II

A number of commemorations and celebrations will be held around the world and the Malayan Volunteers Group will endeavour to play a significant part during the year.

Any member aware of an event in their area please let Colin Hygate know (secretary@mvg.org.uk) for inclusion in January's Apa Khabar to enable as many members as possible to commemorate this significant anniversary in their location.

Sunday 11th May 2025 12.30pm FEPOW Service at Our Lady & St. Thomas of Canterbury Church, Wymondham, Norfolk



MVG lay a wreath during this service every year. As this year is likely to be well attended please advise Peter Wiseman by email to fepow@wymondhamrcchurch.co.uk of your intention to attend. Peter maintains a Book of Remembrance at the Church.

RFHG

Save the date – RFHG Conference 2025, 14-15th June 2025 The Researching FEPOW History Group is delighted to announce that our conference will be returning to Liverpool to mark 80 years since liberation. Registration will open soon; signing up to our mailing list will secure your place before we open registration. The email will provide details of the conference and a discount code for hotel bookings. Venue: Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine.

In the meantime, do you have an idea for speaking at the conference?

We're now calling for papers for the 2025 conference. Please submit a short abstract for what you would like to present by Sunday 28th July to be considered as a speaker.

Friday 15th August 2025 12.00pm Annual V-J Day Service, National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas, Staffordshire



We have the Chapel booked and our Memorial Garden will be in good order for this service. The Royal British Legion are holding an event to commemorate V-J Day, and we will advise members of the details once they are known. For those who have not previously attended please read the report of this year's service to understand what to expect. As parking is controlled it is important to book parking well in advance. If necessary, car sharing from the railway station can be arranged.

15th September 2025 Kuching, Sarawak
Batu Lintang Prisoner of War Camp Liberation Celebrations



It is my intention to represent MVG at this celebration and I have been in contact with Michael Eastwick, the grandson of the Australian Brigadier who took the surrender of the Japanese. He has advised that his family will give an original signed surrender document to the Heritage Minister and the people of Sarawak and there may be the opening of a memorial Light Tower or similar at the side of the river closest to where the surrender took place. This is being undertaken by the South Kuching City Council I have been told. He is also planning a five- or six-day list of things to do in Kuching including a banquet at the Sarawak Club – Colin Hygate

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