

# APA KHABAR

Patron: Her Grace The Duchess of Norfolk

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JULY 2012



**THE MVG CONGRATULATES  
HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN  
ON HER DIAMOND JUBILEE  
AND CELEBRATES WITH HER.  
LET US NOT FORGET 15/2/1942**

The extraordinary spectacle of the Thames River Pageant taking place in the pouring rain, and the indomitable figure of Her Majesty The Queen, with HRH The Duke of Edinburgh at her side, standing stoically for 4 hours watching the 1,000 boats of all shapes and sizes pass by, was a remarkable feat of endurance, not only for Her Majesty but also for everyone who took part in the Pageant. Just over 70 years ago, in Singapore, Malaya and other parts of the Far East, the endurance of those who were interned as POWs or who lived as civilians under the victorious Japanese was just beginning. They endured three and a half terrible years of deprivation which we, in our comfortable modern lives, find difficult to comprehend fully, but which we must never forget. To-day, we owe a great debt of gratitude to those who suffered and endured such hardships so that we are free to celebrate and witness landmark events such as the Diamond Jubilee and Pageant.

At the start of the Millennium, the Roman Catholic FEPOW Church of Our Lady & St. Thomas of Canterbury in Wymondham in Norfolk, decided to extend the recording of names from only those who had died in prison camps, both military and civilian, to include those who had survived the war but died since. The names are hand written in the Memorial Books which are housed in the small FEPOW Chapel attached to the Church. The books are on view, and the pages turned every day so that new names are displayed on a daily basis. The Memorial Books are an enduring record of the names of those who gave their lives in the Far East war. It is a source of comfort to all who visit the church. Most MVG members are fortunate to know the POW details of their loved ones, thanks to **Jonathan Moffatt's** meticulous research which is recorded in "In Oriente Primus". However, the Wymondham Church does have a research facility as well, if any member wishes to check whether their relative is listed in the Memorial Books. **[N.B. Editor – I have copies of the search request forms].**

Built after the war by Father Malcolm Cowan, who had himself been a FEPOW, the Church holds an Annual Service of Remembrance in May. This year, MVG member **Ginny Fitzwilliams** attended the service, and represented the MVG for the first time since the Group was started, although several Volunteer families had attended services there before the MVG was started. We thank **Ginny** for her feedback, copies of the Service Sheet and search forms, and hope that having represented us this year, other members, who live near by, will attend future services. The annual service in 2013 is on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> May. Custodian of the FEPOW Memorial Church, **Father David Jennings**, also reminds us of 'the Debt of Honour' which we owe to these men and women POWs when he writes in the brochure:-

**"...The 'Debt of Honour we owe' has a special significance at the FEPOW Memorial Church. Day by day and week by week people come to Wymondham to offer their prayer of Remembrance at the restored and enhanced Memorial. As I can personally testify, many come to view a name recently added to the memorial books; which was omitted in the original compilation, or of those who survived their internment and died in the years that followed. All are remembered here for the suffering they endured and for the peace they now enjoy".**

Some of you may have watched the programme on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> May which documented details of material recently made available in the National Archives about **Admiral Lord Sempill's** traitorous dealings with Japan in the years leading up to Pearl Harbour and the Kota Bahru landings. Even more disquieting was the revelation that not only did **William Forbes-Sempill** and **Frederick Rutland** assist the Japanese with their flying techniques (how to take off and land on aircraft carriers) and supply them with classified information, but also **Sempill** was personally known to Churchill as a trusted member of his political circle and a Commander in the Naval Air Service employed at the Admiralty. It was a shock to Churchill, but by the autumn of 1941, it was far too late to remedy the situation. Much of the research for the programme was carried out by historians **Anthony Best** and **Richard Aldrich** who has written a paper entitled "Intelligence and the War against Japan". We are very grateful to **Jane Nielsen** for creating the superb map of Singapore, showing the positions of the POW Camps as well as other important war-time sites. It is a work of art as well as being of importance in understanding where the POW camps were throughout the island during the war. The Changi Museum owns the copyright of this map, and we thank them for giving us permission to issue it to our members. The map, together with the Kanchanaburi map (sent out in January 2010), are quite unique, and we thank **Jane** warmly for her expertise and generosity in offering them to us.

We congratulate **Bill Adamson** and **Elizabeth Bunney** on their marriage on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2012 and wish them every happiness in their lives together. **Bill** is President of the MBVA WA Inc and **Elizabeth** is secretary of MVG Australia. We also thank them for representing the MVG at the Batu Gajah Annual Service of Remembrance on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> June, together with Malaysian Secretary **Andrew Hwang**. The report on the Service, which is included with this newsletter, was written by the online Ipoh Echo, and the MVG has been given permission to print it for our members. [[www.ipohecho.com.my](http://www.ipohecho.com.my)]



## THE LAST DAYS OF FREEDOM - SINGAPORE TO SUMATRA - 15<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY TO 17<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 1942

Excerpts from the Diary of John Hedley JVE & 1<sup>st</sup> Mysore Infantry contd.

Most villages on roads in the Far East boast a rest house of sorts; **Peranap** was no exception and so we made the small rest house the headquarters of our party. There was not a lot we could do other than just wait until the floods subsided and, whilst people were most anxious, there wasn't any point in being too impatient. Some of the civilians with money went out looking for transport that they had hoped they could either buy or commandeer to get themselves further up the line that much more quickly. They were not successful.

We had to spend three nights in this temporary accommodation. The Rest House was not big enough to accommodate our numbers and so every available bit of space on the floors was taken up by people at night. The floods had subsided a little after the three days and we decided that we should endeavour to push forward. The drivers of the buses weren't too happy but I think they too had had enough so we used old sacking to cover up the front of the engines of the buses and we were fortunate to get the three buses through the floods with only a little shoving and pushing. We continued on our journey to arrive at **Sawahloento** the following evening. On arrival at **Sawahloento** we were divided up, the ladies going to the hospital and the men being directed to a warehouse down by the railway line.

There was some semblance of order here - the Dutch Military seemed to be taking on the responsibilities for the administration. We were given a meal and a space in which to sleep and told that there would be a train the following morning leaving **Sawahloento** to go to **Padang** and that we would be expected to be on that train.

**Sawahloento** in normal times would have been an attractive town - as it is in the hills. I have no doubt that those who lived in it in peace time did enjoy it as a healthy area and a nice area in which to live and work. We weren't particularly interested in that sort of thing. All we wanted to do was to get to the west coast and once there we had no doubt that we would find ships to take us away to **India** and beyond.

We embarked on the train the following morning soon after 9 o'clock, and proceeded on our way to **Padang**. In normal times this journey would be very breathtaking, for it starts off from **Sawahloento** through jungle and steep sided valleys gradually opening out into the rice fields of the plains and then to the sea. The journey was peaceful with only two stops for the engine to be re-fuelled and re-watered. At both stops we had the opportunity to obtain snacks from the hawkers who appeared to come from nowhere to surround the train. Sugar, rice, sweets, all sorts of small packets of good things to attract anyone feeling the slightest bit hungry and who had the money to pay for them.

We arrived at **Padang** during the afternoon and were formed up and marched into the town. There was quite an organization already set up in **Padang** and we had not been there very long before we were detailed off to various billets. Our group was now well split up and I suppose it could be said that the first part of the trip, that to the west coast of **Sumatra**, had been accomplished. If we were to have any further success in escaping to **India** or **Australia** the next part would depend entirely on the arrival of boats. **Padang** itself is not a harbour town - the harbour, **Emmerhaven**, was about three miles south connected by road and rail services. We hadn't been in **Padang** very long before we found our way to the harbour. The harbour itself was all right but there never appeared to be any ships in it so it hadn't any useful purpose to serve for us. It became a period of waiting and waiting and hoping and hoping - even in these circumstances extraordinary things happen. I can recall being asked if I would play football at one of the Chinese schools. I accepted. I was told to be there at 4.30pm or thereabouts. I duly arrived to find that the teams had already been picked and it was a match between the army and the navy and I was playing for the army. I don't know what it is, but games of any sort seem to bring out the best and sometimes the worst in people. What is certain is that whenever games are played, they are always played hard. There seem to be no half measures. This game was certainly no exception. I don't think I've ever played in a rougher or tougher match. No quarter was asked and no quarter was given. The football pitch was hard and the knocks received and given were plentiful. I do not remember the result but I fancy it probably should have been a draw with the score line of two all. I do know that this was one of the hardest games I had ever played and I came away very bruised.

After a few days in **Padang** it became obvious that we were unlikely to see any ships in the harbour and so this set our minds working on other means of escape. As is inevitable, in circumstances like these we began to meet friends that were of like mind and it wasn't long before we had a group together of ten of us who had decided that if no ships were coming in to the harbour then we must go and look for a boat that would take us over to **India** - a small matter of about 1,800 miles, but this didn't daunt us at that particular time. We organized it so that "Recci" parties went out to see if we would be able to get a boat. Others of us went round shops and villages to buy as much rice and food as we could. We held our 'counsels of war' in the evenings and it was at one of these that I had the misfortune to be nearly on the receiving end of a bullet which might have shattered my right hand. We were in the reading room of a school, in a room off one of the school main buildings. We were looking through the collection of arms that we still had. I had my Colt 45, **Tex** had acquired a small Webley '38'. This weapon looked like a small blank cartridge pistol but was very lethal. **Tex** accidentally let it go off and the bullet that came from its muzzle grazed the back of my hand and buried itself in the skirting boards at the foot of the wall behind me. A nasty shock and accidents do happen. I suppose we were all very fortunate that the shot had not hit anybody at all, nor had the bullet ricocheted. **Tex** apologized and said he wouldn't do it again!



The problem at this time was, of course, the boat and although the expeditions up the coast had seen a number we had not been successful in getting hold of one that we felt would stand the long trip. During this time the rumours were getting stronger and stronger that the Japanese were approaching fairly close to **Padang** and it could only be a matter of time before we were taken prisoner. As always in cases like this the end came sooner than we expected. It was a pretty ignominious end of our freedom and the date, 17<sup>th</sup> March 1942. All soldiers were told to report to a Chinese school which we did and were herded into a small area. We were surrounded by Japanese soldiery who didn't stand on any ceremony. If any of their captives didn't do what they were told they soon corrected them. It is hard to describe the feelings at a time like this. I know we had endeavoured to obtain some alcohol, I suppose with the idea of drowning our sorrows. Unfortunately, the only alcoholic beverage we could find was two bottles of Advocaat, a sticky, custardy sort of drink. Nevertheless it was alcoholic and we drank the whole 2 bottles between three of us in the hope that it would enable us to be a little more resigned to what was in store. I don't think it did this. I think it only made us feel probably that much more sickly than we might otherwise have done. The first thing, of course, that we had to do was to hand in our arms and following this we had a very long wait before being marched away from the school into the barracks which were located on the outskirts of **Padang**. We were unceremoniously marched through the town and through the main gate of the old Dutch barracks.

Thus started my "time" as a Japanese P.O.W. which lasted 3 ½ years. After a few months in **Padang** we were transported by lorry to **Medan** from where we were to be transhipped to the Burma-Siam railway's project. However, the ships that were due to collect us were sunk by the allies. We thus remained in a transit camp at **Glugor**, just outside **Medan** for eighteen months. During this time we were engaged in various manual work ranging from cultivating land; building a Shinto Temple; to unloading and loading freight wagons; and filling and emptying oil drums etc.etc.

One of the more bizarre jobs was the unloading of a Japanese brothel train – complete with girls and equipment. All presumably for use by the Japanese soldiery.

In **Padang** we had been lent a wireless set by a **Dutch** fellow P.O.W. and thus together with my colleague "**Jessie**" **Matthews**, a planter from Johore who had been attached to another army unit at the time of the capitulation in **Singapore** but who also had managed to get to **Padang**, we operated the clandestine radio together.

We were fortunate that in our two major prison camps we were able to plug into mains electricity. The radio was a pre-war set in a bakelite case which fitted neatly into a soldier's back pack. It was by no means a small thing to hide. We had no headphones so at night had to resort to a doctor's stethoscope to pick up the sound for ourselves, and do this without our near neighbours knowing anything about it. Not always easy.

At **Padang** we operated the radio in the roof space of the camp's gymnasium. **Matthews** stood guard below whilst I climbed up to listen in.

When we moved to **Glugor** there was no gymnasium, so we hid the radio under boxes and scraps of clothes at the head of our 30 centimetre bedspace.

One day we were informed that the Japanese were to perform a detailed search of the camp and that they were looking for a radio. After a hurried discussion we decided to hide it in the latrines. Latrines in **Dutch** native barracks are open drains over which one squats to do one's motions! There was not quite enough room to hide the set completely. Unfortunately for us, the Japanese medical officer, whilst others were searching the barracks, inspected the latrines, and of course found the radio. After much shouting and threats I had to own up to keeping the set to prevent mass punishment of the camp. Needless to say, I feared the worst.

I was called out later that evening to report to the Japanese Commandant in his quarters near the guard room. My heart sank, I thought this would be the end. However, through the Camp Interpreter, I answered several questions and even quoted the Geneva Convention which in one place says an officer is allowed to keep personal possessions when taken prisoner. My radio was a personal possession. The Japanese, of course, were not parties to the Convention. Eventually I was told to return to my quarters and await events. Our radio was confiscated but I heard nothing more. It was grim waiting. I feel I have to thank a young Japanese officer, **Lieutenant Takahashi**, who was present at my interrogation for the leniency shown to me.

After eighteen months in **Glugor**, 200 of us were sent on a working party to build a road in the mountains of **Atjeh** in the north of **Sumatra**. A forced march on the road back was murderous – 85 miles in 84 hours constituted an atrocity. After a spell on 'light work' in a coal mine we were transferred to the **Moera-Pekan Baroe** railway project. We were directed to the rail head of the **Pekan Baroe** leg. Grim work this, equal to anything on the infamous **Burma-Siam** railway – the story of which has been well documented. The **Sumatran** project hardly at all.

The two halves of the railway – one starting at **Pekan Baroe**, the other at **Moera** – were eventually joined together with a great fanfare of trumpets and ceremony. Unfortunately for the Japs the euphoria didn't last long for the linking of the two parts coincided with the dropping of the **Hiroshima** and **Nagasaki** atomic bombs in August 1945. The war and our incarceration were soon over. I survived. I was one of the lucky ones. In due course, after six months leave in the U.K., I returned to my old job of rubber planter in Malaya.

[N.B. The extract from "Singapore to Freedom", by Oswald Gilmour used by John, will be included in October].



## RAF INGENUITY IN SINGAPORE IN WW11 – an unpublished episode by Mary Harris.

**Mary Harris is the elder daughter of Norman Alexander who helped evacuate Carol Purdie & her family. She is preparing the biography of her scientist mother Elizabeth who, as a refugee, did fundamental radar research in New Zealand. After the war, Elizabeth returned to Singapore with Norman, where she did fundamental geological research. Mary is setting her biography in the context of what happened to women and children when Singapore fell.**

In the vast and varied accounts of the fall of Singapore on February 15<sup>th</sup> 1942, there is a great deal about the problems confronted by the RAF. Post war analyses discuss lack of co-ordinated planning, airstrips built in indefensible locations, inadequate aircraft and too few of them, and much more. There are fewer accounts of the resulting pressures on aircrews in keeping the kites in the air, of pilots who kept on going up in certain knowledge that their aircraft were no match for those of the Japanese (Harris) and of locally recruited Volunteers who flew their flimsy little wood and canvas club Trainers, on reconnaissance, or ferrying messages and senior personnel to where they were urgently needed (Humphreys).

As late as January 1942, and against all the evidence to the contrary, the propaganda still held that the 51 Hurricanes coming in by sea would soon see off the little yellow men who couldn't see properly. The Hurricanes, heavily greased, in pieces, in crates, with minimal instruction on how to assemble them, had been intended for Basra and the desert, for which they had been appropriately camouflaged and fitted with air filters. As ground crews in Singapore were to discover, the filters, designed to keep out desert sand, were integral to the engine cowling and could not be removed. Their only effect in the high humidity of Malaya was to slow them down in flight by 30 mph (Probert 56).

But there is another, more positive, though possibly previously unrecorded account of RAF ingenuity in resolving air filter problems for their Brewster Buffalo aircraft, which were seriously short of spares (Probert). Much, much more has been published about conditions in the military, than conditions amongst the civilian population, in the chaos leading up to and the fall of Singapore. Following the general public outrage in Malaya, of the whites-only evacuation from Penang in early December, there could be no evacuation policy for women and children from Singapore without further accusations of racism. The result was un-numbered deaths of women and children, as Singapore filled with refugees who had nowhere else to go while the Mems were urged by the propaganda of the time that Singapore could not fall, that help was on the way and that it was the duty of women to 'Stand By Their Man'. The message was later modified to take into account of the safety of small children, but women who were pregnant, found themselves in a particularly nasty trap.

One woman, thus trapped, wrote an account of giving birth in Singapore General Hospital on 26<sup>th</sup> January, having spent most of her labour sheltering from air-raids under her bed, not on it, and what happened to her, her new baby and her 2 year old son **Robin**, next. She was **Carol Purdie**, the American wife of **Donald Purdie**, the English Professor of Chemistry at Raffles College. Ironically, **Donald** had accepted the post only a year before, to remove his family from the bombing at Cambridge. All the ex-patriate (another word of the day for 'white') College staff, that is all the professors and senior lecturers in the racist policies of the time, were in the Volunteer Forces, and by the beginning of December 1941 had been called to action stations. The one professor who was not at action stations, although he was a Volunteer, was **Norman Alexander**, Professor of Physics, who was in the reserved occupation of Scientific Advisor to the Armed Forces and doing something very secret at the Naval Base. His own family had been evacuated in early January to his native New Zealand, probably under Naval instruction, for his wife, also a scientist doing secret work at the Base, was intending to leave their three children in safety, come back and carry on. Thus **Carol** found herself, very pregnant, in rapidly deteriorating war conditions, her husband defending the airfield at Seletar under increasingly heavy bombardment, in the care of friend and neighbour, **Norman**. She had refused to evacuate earlier in spite of the advice of the American Consul, preferring to follow the British-advised 'Stand By Your Man' vision of womanhood. By the time this duty had been modified, there was no possibility of an already scarce aircraft seat for a vastly pregnant woman with a two year old in tow, because all the passenger aircraft of the time were unpressurised which tended to bring on labour, and there would be no cabin staff to help with a birth on board because all but the minimum of seats need by operational crew had been removed to make more space for refugees. On the other hand, there were still places on newly arrived troopships but in their very swift turnabout they were filthy and there was little chance of there being a doctor on board.

And so **Diana Margaret Purdie** was born on 26<sup>th</sup> January 1942, in a first class ward (whites only) in Singapore General situated right next to the bombing of the docks, while the medical staff worked on, as they continued to do until the surrender three weeks later. With **Carol** back home in the relative safety of Raffles College, already earmarked by the Japanese military for their future headquarters, and so un-bombed (except for one stray), **Norman** set about finding **Carol** a sea passage and, under still existing administrative rules, getting her visas for any country where a female refugee, with 2 small children, might be likely to end up. He eventually found them a passage on the **Felix Roussel**, which had been bombed on the way in but was



still serviceable, and **Norman** found himself doing what he long remembered, even after surviving Changi and Sime Road camps, as the most frightening thing he had had to do in the war; firstly get the family to the docks amidst the raids, the mayhem and the traffic jams, then carry a small baby in a carry cot up the greasy steps of an un-railed gangway aligned up the side of a damaged ship in the pitch dark, with repeats for **Carol** and **Robin** (Alexander). **Carol** with her young family got away, and it is to her account of an 'unspeakably grim' journey through further raids and much more, written soon after she arrived back home in America, her sense of humour only dented, that we owe the unique piece of military information regarding the air filters of the Brewster Buffaloes.

By the end of her first week aboard, new mother **Carol** had used "a whole suitcaseful" of a certain essential commodity. There had been a shortage in Singapore, anyway, as the Air Force had bought up the town's entire supply to use as air filters for the Brewster Buffaloes. "With no apparent source of supply, I was completely at a loss, but **Mrs. D** [a fellow escapee] with great resourcefulness came to the rescue.... She produced a roll of cheesecloth and a huge one of cellulose wadding, and we 'rolled our own' " (Purdie 184). **Carol** was one of the lucky ones, (luckier than the pregnant woman who had been pushed on board the **Felix Roussel** through a port hole at Singapore dockside and immediately went into labour) though at the time, for several months before and for years afterwards her life was hell. **Donald** died on the railway, of which she could not be formally notified until over a year later.

There is a brief mention in **Geoffrey Brooke's** account of the aftermath of the fall of Singapore and the little ships that had got away, of two women, whose refugee boat the vastly overcrowded **HMS Grasshopper**, had been sunk and who had been helped ashore among the wounded and dying to an uninhabited island where they gave birth on the beach. The name of the ship's cox'n, who helped deliver them, is recorded but not those of the women or what happened to them. Their babies, both boys, were named after the Cox'n (Brooke 197). Researchers are now working on what happened to the women and children of all races when Singapore fell, painstakingly going through existing records and uncovering new ones, publishing what they find on specialist charity networks\*, gradually piecing together a story of war that has never been told. Most war history is written by men, about men, for men. It is time that the balance is redressed with something more than a brief giggle at a slight glitch in a normal fact of life for all women, everywhere.

\* [www.cofepow.org.uk](http://www.cofepow.org.uk)

[www.malayanvolunteersgroup.org.uk](http://www.malayanvolunteersgroup.org.uk) - both substantial sources for research into WW11 in Malaya.

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#### **LETTER FROM CHARLES EDWARDS – AN AUSTRALIAN POW IN PUDU GAOL**

##### **In reply to the article by Audrey McCormick A.K. 29 Ps 9-11**

38/330 Springvale Road,  
DONVALE 3111,  
AUSTRALIA.  
18-4-2012

The Secretary,  
Malayan Volunteers Group.  
Dear Sir/Madam,

I have read with great interest your newsletter of January 2012, handed to me by our very good mutual historian John Pollock of Kangaroo Flat, Victoria.

I find that there are two statements in the newsletter which in my opinion are incorrect and need to be corrected.

1. The rank of the Dutch escapee Jon Van Crevald.
2. The modus operandi of the escape from Pudu Gaol (now spelt jail).

I have a different story of how the escape was made.



### LET ME EXPLAIN

I was one of the first eleven Australians taken prisoner by the Japanese in World War 11 at Parit Sulong in the dying hours of the battle of Muar on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1942, 25 days before the Fall of Singapore.

After capture at sword point on the battle field, we were stripped of all our equipment and marched away to a point on the north south road from Parit Sulong to Muar. Here we were brutally beaten and as it was getting dark were put to bed on the middle of the roadway.

Next morning now the 23<sup>rd</sup> we were taken by truck to a padang at Muar. Here we were movie camera photographed, and learnt the first three words of Japanese. Kitoski = attention; Yasme = stand at ease or rest, and Benjo = the toilet. Also taught the hard way that we had to bow to our captors.

After being here a while a Japanese officer appeared and told us that something nice would be given to us. It was a tub of rice which we had to eat with our hands because we had been stripped of our messing gear.

After a short while another Australian was brought in. He was VX 38104 Sergeant Ken Harrison of the 4<sup>th</sup> Anti-Tank Regiment A.I.F. Shortly after this two more men were brought in. They were two Dutch airmen. They were both members of the K.N.I.L.

Koenig Nederland Indes Luftwaffe(or Luftvaart)

Royal Netherland Indies Air Force.

Their names were Jon Van Der Made the senior in rank (and years) and Jon Van Crevald.

Jon Van Crevald was half carrying and half dragging Van Der Made. He couldn't walk as he had been terribly burnt. They had been shot down in flames. Jon Van Crevald could speak perfect English. Van Der Made had no English at all.

We were now 14 men.

It was now getting dark again. We were loaded on to a truck and taken north, destination unknown.

Two days later we arrived at Pudu Gaol in Kuala Lumpur, arriving there on the 25<sup>th</sup> January 1942. We were ushered into the Women's Prison of the jail to a scene of utter distress. About 200 British and Scottish men were milling around, half starved, dirty and distressed.

The only man who seemed to be in charge was Sergeant-Major Jock McTavish of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders Regiment. He lined us up and asked for our names, number and rank. When he came to Jon Van Crevald, he replied Brigadier Jon Van Crevald. When McTavish heard this he snapped to attention and saluted this "brigadier" ... Jon then said "in the Dutch Air Force brigadier is equivalent to a corporal".

This was to the amusement to all of us, the good humour that kept us going.

Jon had down graded his rank to corporal in case he would be interrogated. He was the equivalent to our (Royal Australian Air Force) Flight Sergeant. He was an N.C.O. not an officer as shown in your report.

Van Der Made would have been the equivalent to our Flight Lieutenant.

This was borne out later on when we were shifted to the main jail. Van Crevald was quartered with all the other ranks in the Australian wing of the jail. Van Der Made was quartered in the officers' wing.

Of this I am absolutely certain, Flight Lieutenant Van Der Made recovered from his burns and learnt to speak broken English.

### THE ESCAPE

After the Japanese had achieved their objective, the capture of Singapore, we were shifted to the main jail into the respective wings as shown in the plan drawing. [Ed: this is too large to be included]

Sometime (we had no appreciation of the exact time without calendars) about the end of April, we had a new Camp Commandant. We were told that he was a naval officer (your report says that he was an Air Force Officer) but that's beside the point. He was much more lenient than the old one.

He introduced better benjoes, sit down instead of squatting over a trench with a "night man" service to empty them. He also introduced a canteen, and also an officers mess.

There were a hundred officers, ten of whom were Australian. The Senior Australian Officer, Captain "Roaring Reg" Newton, always insisted that what ever percentage of the camp was (made up of) the Australians, they should have that percentage of the good jobs.

Ten Mess orderlies were to be appointed. He had ordered Warrant Officer Sam Cameron, who was the Pudu Quarter-Master to appoint one Australian man to be a mess orderly and that was to be me. So I packed up my meagre possessions and moved to the officers' wing.

Here I came under the command of 3321549 Corporal Tom Barnfather of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlander Regiment.

Tom was a very likeable N.C.O. and commanded his small squad of nine more by his personality than by his rank of corporal.

As well as we ten mess orderlies, there was one other man quartered with us. He was 3323242 Private Jock McCulloch also of the A. & S.H.



He was the camp typist, and his work place was in the Japanese Commandant's Office near the entrance to the jail. Just inside the office was a large key board with the keys to all the locks in the jail. We were never locked in the wings of the jail so the keys were never used. Jock was often left alone in the office for long periods of time and in the desk drawer were other key rings. So he made another set of keys.

One day about the end of July, Jock came to see me and held up a key. He said to me, something is going to happen soon and if I'm caught I'll be executed, so I want someone I can trust to tell the tale. That's all I can tell you, but keep it a secret, which I did.

I don't know why he trusted me above two of his own unit.

This was the key to the garden gate which by a process of elimination he had found, always keeping the key board full with his made up key.

On the night of the 13<sup>th</sup> August the accomplice officer would have gone forward and turned Jock's key in the lock. It would have taken less than 15 seconds at most for the escapees to have exited the jail. The accomplice officer could have let them out, snapped the lock shut. The next morning he could have returned the key to Jock. Jock returned the key to the key-board and the Japanese were none the wiser.

YOUR REPORT SAYS:- That the accomplice officer sawed through the hardened steel shackle of a Yale lock. To do this he would have held the lock in one hand and with a hack saw blade, sawed through the shackle in the dark. I strongly doubt that they would have had a hack saw. Hack saw blades would have been relatively easy to smuggle into the jail.

Since reading your report I have taken a Yale type lock (a Lockwood) and gripped it in a vice and with a hack saw with two hands and in daylight could not make an impression on it.

So why would the accomplice officer have attempted the impossible task to cut through a hardened steel shackle, when he could have simply turned Jock's key in the lock. After all they had 12 to 14 days (or nights) to check whether Jock's key fitted the lock and the gate would open.

So now we have two differing stories. I still think Jock McCulloch's is the more plausible and is the correct one.

After the hue and cry after the escape had died down Jock told me how he had managed to "find" the key to the gate.

#### THE COUNT FIDDLE

Before the escapees left they had asked the British Commanding Officer Colonel Hartigan to fiddle the twice daily count for 48 hours, so they could get well away before the Japanese knew that they had gone.

That meant that each wing had to account for two men, the British, Scottish, Australians and the Officers.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> August Tom Barnfather and I were standing near the mess orderlies cells when Captain Newton came on the scene. He said, Barnfather I have a clandestine request to make to you. It's not an order you can say no if you like, but Tom said yes. There is going to be an escape (and this was the first that I knew about it) and the C.O. has asked us to fiddle the count. I want you to nominate one man, and because I was there, he nominated me. I want you to move your beds to the far end of the first floor. The officers were spread over the ground and first floors.

I don't know how the other ranks fooled the Japanese counting party. They were always paraded in three ranks and counted. The Japanese were terrible counters quite frequently having to count on their fingers.

But the officers and the mess orderlies were different. We had to stand outside our cells and be counted and if an officer was sick he could stay in bed and be counted "sick in lines".

Each day a different counting party would be on. They would start at the doorway near the mess orderlies' cells and make their way down the corridor towards the gallows. The four colonels Hartigan, Deacon, Collins and FitzGerald were quartered in the gallows. When the counters had their backs turned counting the colonels, Tom and I would sprint up the short stairs jump into our prepared beds and be counted again as officers "sick in lines".

So this is my reply to your 2012 report.

I have enclosed a small map of Kuala Lumpur showing the location of Pudu Gaol, a list of the officers, a list of the mess orderlies, photos of four of the men mentioned in my story, also two plan drawings of the jail, one intact in case you want to make copies of it. There is no copyright on it. \*

The second plan drawing showing places in the jail mentioned in my story. Also in this drawing I have shown the location of the officers' solitary confinement cells and Prayer Corner. These two are disassociated from the 2012 report, but if you are sufficiently interested they are crucial to a further story about some facts that took place in Pudu which you may not be aware of. I would be only too pleased to supply these facts in another instalment if you wish.

Yours with kind regards,

Charles Edwards

[Charles Edwards is now in his 94<sup>th</sup> year. The MVG is very grateful for his interesting reply to Audrey McCormick's article]

\*The maps have not been included due to lack of space.



## LAST DAYS OF SINGAPORE – By kind permission of Guy Scoular who says:

“This is an extract of an account written in pencil by my father James Murray SCOULAR [FMSVF] in Changi jail in 1942 for my mother. The Ernie referred to is his brother Ernest Matthew SCOULAR. The writing was difficult to read hence the question marks”.

### 11<sup>th</sup> February 1942

On the morning of the 11<sup>th</sup> (February 1942) at 8am we were told that the situation was critical. We were to be organized rallying stragglers and checking enemy infiltration. Strangely enough the position we took on is known to you quite well, it was a ditch in River Valley Road close to the house where you took shelter during the first air raid you experienced in Singapore. Australians, recruit reinforcements to the garrison streaming through us, also some Indians but no British left in this Sector. Some R.A.S.C. lads staying with us but the others just pushed into the town. The R.A.S.C. dumps had been blown up in Alexandra Road. That night was spent in St. Joseph's Institute hard by the ANZAC Club.

### 12<sup>th</sup> February 1942

The town was heavily shelled, machine-gunned and bombed all day long. The morning was spent in Boy Scout antics in the River Valley Road Area trying to find snipers. The previous evening there had been considerable patrolling activity both in this area and Orchard Road. At dusk advance brigade H.Q. moved up to Bukit Timah Road to a house a couple of hundred yards up from Newton Circus one of the hottest spots in the island as we were about to discover for ourselves. Practically all the houses round about and the one we were in were hit by shells. One death in our party of a dozen, **Shrimpton of Cumberbatch**. He caught his packet at 2am on Friday 13<sup>th</sup>. I was on guard from 2.30 to 4.30am and heard the 15pdr Battery from Telok Paku out Changi way putting up a tremendous barrage.

Had some bombers come over instead of a Jap recce plane at 5am the tide may have turned in our favour. The troops were heartened by the Jap plane, thinking it was one of ours and the barrage I heard cheering from the tired troops. About the only time I really got goose flesh.

Imagine my surprise when the following morning **Ernie** appeared at the H.Q. as a liaison officer, he was out most of the day in all strife, without I am glad to say turning a hair. All day long the town was shelled and mortared, the shells make a sound like this – Pop-Pause-Pop-Pause-Pop Pop no pause, then Wher-Wher-Wher overhead followed behind us by Zoom-Zoom-Zoom-Zoom. The civilians suffered about 8 - 10,000 a low estimate, casualties at least on the last three days by shells and bombing – very tragic.

### 14<sup>th</sup> February 1942

E and I shared a bed and I slept reasonably well for the first time for three nights. On the morning of the 14<sup>th</sup> things got a trifle too hot for H.Q. We moved to what we thought was a quieter locality, Bideford Road, near Orchard Road about 150 yards from Seramos's (I can see you smile Darling). E and I together with a lad called **Mackie** shared a mattress on which we rested at times when not required. At 8pm a shell hit the house we were in and holed our mattress. Luckily we were all engaged elsewhere. I was next door having a drink with the Brig. He had made me o/c water. All water, it was decided, had to be boiled and drunk sparingly and I was responsible to see that this was carried out.

### 15<sup>th</sup> February '42

On guard during the night we thought we heard Fifth Columnists calling out a howl thus:-

Hoo-Hoo-Hoo-pause Hoo-Hoo-Hoo-pause Hoo-Hoo. The call was picked up and, as we thought, repeated nearer Jap lines. Probably spotters for the Jap batteries, but we were unable to verify this. E indicated to the Brig. where he thought the sounds came from. A platoon of anti-infiltration troops surrounded the house and collected a handful of Malays both native and from Java. Significant that the money they had in their possession was Siamese Ticals.

### Capitulation

The Agony of the capitulation was on us. Somehow one felt it could not be much longer. I read an article by a writer in the American magazine "Life" predicting that the Jap might attack Singapore from the north and then went on to say that "bullets in the streets of Singapore would be the death rattle of the British Empire". Perhaps the temporary death rattle of Malaya as a peaceful and prosperous country. I heard the B.B.C. at 8-30pm. We knew then it was all over.

Everything was so final it was the end of a saga **E.A. Mohtagh** gave his weekly commentary which reported to **Bevin** and **Beaverbrook**. Singapore was only mentioned by the commentator not that it matters much.

We pulled out of Bideford Road about an hour after the capitulation. The day had been one long succession of high level bombing, dive bombing, accompanied by machine gunning, field gun and mortar fire into the densely populated city; the threat of tanks, indeterminate shelling and street fighting. Our ack ack and artillery, though they never gave up, were of little avail. **Bobbie Moir** and **Pat Heywood** set a high standard of courage.

### Capitulation Night 16<sup>th</sup> February 42

The night was spent at Raffles Girls School which is a stones throw from the "Oranje". The following morning I saw **Beverly Clifton** in a flat in "Bricourt" and knew that he was O.K. He is in Changi jail presumably. I called at Bousteads and **Ball** had been injured. Bousteads' male population had all been extremely lucky but the same cannot be said for the wives.

### B & Co's staff

1. **Cherry** – Changi Jail. Wife said to have sailed in the "Kuala" which was sunk, no news. (Dead 25/9/42)
2. **Esson** – Changi. Wife said to have sailed on the "Kuala" (Padang)



3. **Frankie Walker** – Changi. Wife said to have sailed on the “Kuala” - interned Padang.
4. **Jimmie** – Changi. Wife said to have sailed on the “Kuala” – (Interned Padang?)
5. **Anderson** – Changi. Wife said to have sailed three days before, interned Palembang?
6. **Prescott** – Changi. Wife said to have sailed – no news (safe)

News may easily have come in about the four wives in the interim.

#### POW Changi

**GR (3)** and **Harry Roper-Coldbeck (4)**, **Naylor (5)**, **Oldham (6)**, **J.L.M. Boyd (7)**, **L.C. Smith (8)**, **Allan (9)**, **Edmiston (10)**, **Bill Hannay (12)**, **Carruthers (13)**, **Blandy (15)**, **Self (16)**.

[Note from Guy – does anyone know what the significance of the numbering is?]

#### Interned Changi Jail

**Perry (5)**, **Poyntz (6)**, **Roberts Marshall (7)**, **Hughes (8)**, **Ball (9)**, **Brooke (10)**, **Crosey (11)**, **Leech (12)**.

No dates to-date 28.8.42 or serious illness.

**Dick Wyhole?** **Wyndle?** And **Horrie Fyfe** made a break after capitulation. No news **Dick Wyhole?** Safe **Nobby Clarke** left originally before the (?) capitulation no news.

#### News mostly bad of our friends.

**Ginger Miller** safe in Pudu jail – previously reported missing – and **Ken Archer**, **Bill Dunn** (rubber planter) and **Gus Stafford**. **Diana Stafford** died on the “Kuala”

**Andrew Carruther's** wife and ?baby (July) in Palembang. **Peter Lucy** was wounded at Kuantan 4<sup>th</sup> Jan discharged hospital 25<sup>th</sup> Jan. Engaged to **Tommy Hawkins** (Cameron Highlands School) 29<sup>th</sup> Jan, married as I told you in my last letter on 7<sup>th</sup> Feb. Was wounded again on the 13<sup>th</sup> Feb and sleeps hard by at present. We share almost everything.

**Rowe and Tatham** (Bunopad? Estate) killed during air raid at Changi 10.2.42

**Villiers** missing on Tiger Patrol no news.

**Tommy M** missing on Tiger Patrol turned up in Sumatra now POW Padang.

**Vanrenen** missing on Tiger Patrol Pudu jail (believed shot)

**Berwick** missing on Tiger Patrol believed to be alive still somewhere in Malaya.

A number of Police including **Ian MacPherson?** **C? Fenner** and **Wylie** left without leave also have been dismissed the police force no news.

**John Stafford** killed by a mortar shell on 13<sup>th</sup> Feb Hee Soon Village near the Naval Base.

**Paxton-Harding** missing on the last day, no hope of him surviving – bad day for all the **Ferguson family**

**Coombs – June Ferguson's** boy friend also killed last day.

[Guy notes that **Philip Paxton-Harding** was father of **MVG member Ann Evans**. He married Joy daughter of **J.M. Ferguson**. Joy's sister was **June Reeve-Tucker**.]

A sad day for **East Anglia** – 3 Battalions Norfolks; 2 Battalions Suffolks; 1 Battalion Beds & Herts; 1 Sherwood Forresters; 2 Cambs all captured plus divisional units. The Essex Battalions in this division were luckiest – turned into Ack Ack detachments and left in England.

**Deaths to date in Changi Jail** – **Hampshire** (March), **Abbang? & Braddon** (April), **Doc English & Dusty Rhodes** (July), **Hedde** (July). While it is reported that **Tim Dennison Smith** has lost his mind, it is possible that thereby may hang a tale.

**Sutherland** died 22nd April of dysentery in Changi.

#### Padre Webb April '42

Webb is here and I think it amuses him to see his congregation doubling, trebling and quadrupling ad infinitum. It certainly must please him also, but he spares nobody. He has found his vocation giving hope to those who care to take it and allowing nobody to have any illusions regarding his failings to measure up to elementary Christian standards. I should say about 25% of those who hear **Webb** have only been to church for Weddings, Christenings and Memorial Services while about 40% may be C of E.

The great thing is the little man is doing a great job of work and explaining to us that our trial here is fitting us to do better things in the reconstruction of the world when all this is over. The services are all held in the open air and never once in the ten weeks has it rained. I have been once to a combined C of E and Presbyterian Service in the evening, but I find that **Webb's** Sunday morning service is all that is necessary to buoy one up for the week.

#### April '42

The health of the camp is still bad. Dysentery is more or less static at present – two admissions a day per 1000=90 of which 2% die or about two deaths per day. Beri Beri is on the increase and after 10 weeks 100 cases or two in a thousand. This is only a start and figures will continue to increase ad infinitum unless diet deficiencies are made up there will be thousands of fresh cases. Apart from feeling a little off the mark as a result of a T.A.B. injection my health has been extremely sound. We are all weaker than we were when we came in for the obvious reason that we are on extremely short rations.



THE HOSPITAL ORDERLY – By kind permission of Peter Bampton

Grandson of Major Donald Honey GRIST and Isobel Jeanne (Vimmie) GRIST. Both interned as civilians 1942 – 45. Grandfather was Deputy Registrar-General of Statistics FMS & SS, and author of "An Outline of Malayan Agriculture" and "Rice" among other publications. In Changi he was a volunteer orderly in Changi Hospital and kept a detailed diary of life. His wife painted and created other items while interned.

"Orderly! Orderly!

A patient from the far end of the Acute Ward needs my attention. I am on night duty. The ward is a long wooden building with a narrow verandah along one side. It is over-filled with patients – there are three rows of beds where there should be two, and as many patients as can be accommodated on the verandah. There is no moon and the small pilot light in the centre is quite inadequate for a ward so over-filled with really sick patients.

I make my way from the duty room, situated at the end of the ward, stubbing my toe against a bed on the way. I find the patient who is in distress; he lies shivering with a rigor attack. He asks me to do something for him. He lies on a wooden bed, with an inadequate and uneven mattress and covered with a rather thin and very much repaired blanket. The night is damp and chilly, but I have no spare blankets. I creep down the ward till I find a sleeping patient; quietly I remove his blanket and give it to the distressed patient. There are only two hot water bottles in the hospital and they are in use. But wait! I have a patient in the Convalescent Ward who actually owns a rubber bottle. I find him awake and he lends his bottle. Gleeefully, I give it to the patient who is so much in need of it, and feel like the conjuror who has produced the rabbit from the hat. I make him a cup of tea (no milk or sugar) which he gratefully drinks.

An hour passes when, going round the ward, I find one of our permanent patients shivering under his blanket – his teeth chattering with ague. Can I do something for him, he asks. He is the fortunate owner of a couple of bath towels, not too dry and not too clean, but they must serve as blankets. I spread them over him, then I go to the rigor patient.

"How do you feel now, old man?" I enquire.

"Oh! Much better thanks, I think the rigor has passed."

"Good", I say. "Then would you mind awfully if I took the hot water bottle? 'Our Permanent Patient' is in about the same condition as you were in about an hour ago."

He laughs. "Yes, go on, take it".

Refilled, (thank Heavens I've plenty of hot water) I give it to "O.P.P", take him a drink and a couple of Aspirins, and leave him, hoping for the best.

Later I go to the Convalescent Ward. The hot water bottle owner is wide awake and in great pain.

"I think," he says, "I shall feel better if I can put the hot water bottle on my tummy, it always eases the pain".

Back I go to the O.P.P. Fortunately I find him asleep. Cautiously I put my hand under his mosquito net and manage to remove the bottle without awakening him. Replenished with hot water I bear it triumphantly to its rightful owner. First thing next morning I receive a complaint from a patient that his blanket was stolen during the night. I retrieve the blanket and he is so relieved to get it back that he is profuse with his thanks and asks no questions.

Amusing perhaps in retrospect, but a very real and poignant problem at the time. It is but one illustration of the very great difficulty we experienced in nursing with inadequate equipment. This inadequacy, which the Japanese did nothing to relieve, was not confined to beds, bedding and so forth, but extended to food and drugs.

"Can you admit So-and-so at once?" one would be asked at any time of the day or night.

"Yes, I can squeeze him in, but you must bring his bed and bedding." They did; and brought his bugs too!

There was a constant war waged against bugs. "Visitors must not bring their stools into the hospital", read one notice.

Reason: the stools were full of bugs.

The hospital staff was voluntarily recruited. In the earlier days, at Changi Jail, a hospital orderly took his turn at all hospital duties, but it was not long before a system of specialization was adopted, which later was extended to all hospital duties.

There were dressers and orderlies attached to the operating theatre and out-patient department; a group of orderlies who looked after the T.B. patients during the day; another group for the Dysentery Ward; day nursing orderlies; night orderlies; orderlies for general duties, bed-bathing, laundry, mattress and blanket repairs, sweeping, and hospital diets distribution. Nursing orderlies did six hours duty daily, until shortly before the end of internment when it was found that on the inadequate diet they were losing weight too rapidly. The number of orderlies was increased to allow for four hour spells of duty.

Despite repeated requests to the Japanese, we had to wait nearly three years before they would permit trained nursing sisters from the Women's Camp to assist in the Men's Hospital. We orderlies welcomed the innovation as much as did the patients.

The sisters confessed that they were at first apprehensive that the orderlies would resent their intrusion. Their fears were groundless, for we were only too well aware of our lack of knowledge of nursing; only one of our number was a trained male nurse. The sisters proved a great help and encouragement to us in our work, and by example and lectures taught us a good deal. The Japanese had ordered that nobody was to talk to the nursing sisters except the orderlies and patients, and that conversation was to be restricted to nursing matters. What a hope! Some of our number had not spoken to a woman for three years – while some of the patients would have talked to them for three years, given the chance opportunity! Anyway, the "Nips" rarely paid surprise visits to the hospital so were blissfully unaware of the feeling of good fellowship which existed, the assiduous visits of some of the doctors to the duty room, or the quiet jokes and the cups of coffee and tea that were shared. And many patients will remember with gratitude the careful and cheerful nursing they received at the hands of the sisters, or how, over the small hot plate in the duty room, the sisters succeeded in preparing appetizing dishes from the camp fare to tempt the invalid's palate.

At a few minutes before eight in the morning, two sisters in immaculate white uniforms (we always wondered how it was done;



we went on duty wearing nothing but a pair of shorts and shoes) would be seen walking from the Women's Camp to our hospital. In four-hourly shifts, they were on duty from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Morning nursing duties were carried out in an atmosphere of rush. The Senior Orderly took over from the Night Orderly, orderlies brought over breakfast from the kitchen and served the Patients. The bed-bathing orderlies started in almost before the patients had time to swallow the last mouthful – the hurry caused by the fact that there were only four wash basins (two of which were usually hidden for the sisters) and last arrivals had to use pails.

Sisters and orderlies washed patients and made their beds; the wash-up orderly cleared away patients' plates and after washing them endeavoured to return each to its rightful owner. General duties orderly swept down the ward, cleared away soiled linen for the laundry orderlies and cleared down the bathrooms and passages. Similar work was in progress in the Dysentery, T.B. and Convalescent Wards, where the day orderlies allotted to these sections had taken over from the night staff. About 10 o'clock the doctors and surgeons went round the wards, each accompanied by an orderly to make notes regarding changes of diet, treatment and so on.

By the time this was done, it was time to collect and distribute the mid-day meal. This done, things quietened down and it was usually a peaceful ward that was handed over to the afternoon orderlies who came on duty at 2 o'clock.

Afternoon duty was, by comparison, a light one. Tea was at 5 o'clock, usually the best meal of the day, and the last. At least there were fine-sounding names given to the simple dishes. The kitchen staff of the hospital did, in fact, a fine job of work in turning out the meals, and this one in particular, using the very restricted materials supplied to us.

The Night Orderly – the Night Man as he was called – came on at 8 p.m. He first collected the night drugs from the Dispensary, then he and his "Number Two" took over from the Senior Orderly and from the orderlies in charge of the Dysentery and T.B. Wards respectively. The doctors usually paid informal visits and advised on night drugs. Then the two orderlies, with a junior for odd jobs, were left to look after the patients and convalescents till 8 o'clock next morning. Patients had to be made comfortable for the night, drugs administered and injections given – the latter usually in semi-darkness. Throughout the night, the night man had the three wards to tend. The doctor was called only if considered necessary. Furthermore, the night man had perforce to perform all the duties of Undertaker should any patient die in the night. This was sometimes a particularly painful task as it frequently meant that one had these duties to perform on a very old friend. And between times, the night man had to prepare and eat their own food. Night orderlies, of course, slept during the day, and their mid-day meal was therefore kept for them to eat during the night. Sometimes it was found that the food was no longer edible having gone sour in the heat of the day. Eventually it was arranged that they should draw their rations uncooked and cook it on the hot plate in the duty room during the night. The best meals the present writer had in internment were those cooked and eaten in the duty room at night, as there always seemed to be one of our number who knew just how to cook it to get the best results.

Night work was arduous but interesting. One was on one's feet most of the time. Realizing this strain, the night men were allowed 2 oz. of protein per night. In practice, this meant about one small tin of corned beef for the week.

The first two or three hours usually passed quickly, for there was so much to be done. The hour or so before dawn was the worst, sometimes one could hardly keep one's eyes open, one was so weary. As soon as it was light the night man made up his report, cleaned out the duty room, dealt with any patients requiring special attention (which some of them certainly did!) took temperatures and pulses, all ready to hand over to the morning orderly at 8 o'clock. Going off duty, he handed night drugs to the Dispensary, drew and ate his breakfast and settled down to sleep (if he could) for the day. Duties changed weekly; the night orderly was given a week's leave after a week of duty. He needed it too!

Should the ex-internee have had the patience to read thus far, he will be saying to himself: "What was the racket?" for one assumed that one never volunteered for a job unless there was something to be got out of it.

A few of the patients, I fear, suspected that the orderlies ate the patients' food. This suspicion was without foundation.

Those who seek the racket are invited to peep into the duty room at 8 p.m. The duty room contained a small hot plate and an electric water heater. Amongst the notices in the room he will read:

"Orderlies not on duty are not allowed  
to use the hot plate before 8 p.m."

The night man coming on duty meets a milling crowd of orderlies "not on duty" in the duty room who wait their turn to use the hot plate. Some merely want to heat coffee while others have prepared weird and wonderful dishes from ingredients better known to themselves than to the writer. Others merely want to heat up some of their day's rations which they have saved for their supper. The use of the hot plate was a privilege that was very much valued. The crowd was good tempered – noisy and cheerful would be the right description. The cooking rush was usually over in an hour or so. The night man now had the place to himself, except for the occasional visit of orderlies who wanted a spot of hot water, or to enjoy a smoke after lights out. (Smoking was not allowed after lights out. The orderly room was the only place in Camp with lights during the night and the night staff were allowed [or anyway did] smoke in this room).

Well, not a very startling racket, was it?

We orderlies were a mixed bag, drawn from very varied walks of life. Its individuals volunteered for the work for reasons best known to themselves. Some, I know, joined from a sense of duty, others that they might render some help and encouragement to friends who were patients and likely to end their days in these depressing circumstances. Others again, joined because they thought the work would be light and food plentiful – these were soon disillusioned and resigned. It is not for the present writer to seek for motives in his fellow orderlies, but to remember with gratitude that amongst them he found so many good friends whose willing co-operation in the work helped him over the more unpleasant aspects of the day's work of the hospital orderly.



## SINGAPORE ISLAND - FEBRUARY 1942

By kind permission of Alison Brierley (nee Mowat) who writes:-

"This extract was the original unpublished introduction to the Revd. Geoffrey Mowat's account of the Capitulation and his escape. It is taken from the original typescript (Geoff later photocopied it) which he adapted when he came to write "The Rainbow through the Rain" in the 1990s. I think it adds extra information and interest to the fabric of the accounts from military and civilian personnel on the ground in Singapore, which is why I offer it for inclusion in *Apa Khabar*".

"After an interval of nearly four years, it is hard to know where to begin. I do not mean to make much of the time before the Capitulation, because it is such an awful muddle, and besides my memory of those last few days is rather hazy. What does remain, however, is the imprint of disjointed episodes, and those happened so long ago that they do not matter at all; I only record some of them to satisfy your curiosity about what befell me in those terrible and hazardous times.

Perhaps you will remember how I was stationed at **Tanjong Rhu** (beach defences on Singapore harbour) during January '42. At the beginning of February I was promoted and given one stripe (arf! arf!), and moved up to the Swimming Club where I spent a hectic week as 2 i/c the M.G. post looking down the road. Mine was a pillbox manned by panic-stricken Malays who went scatty every time a drove of 'planes came over - poor things. Before the week was out several of them trickled off - deserted, if you like, and everyone was very much happier. About this time I spent my last leave in Singapore. It was a silly thing to do, really, as I failed to do anything - even to having a meal, because of the continual raids. I remember visiting the Information Bureau, and trying to contact **Mr. Barger**. I was told that he was in **Chungking**. Sensible chap. I went to Thorneycrofts to collect a gasket for the car, but when I fitted it on, I got no further use out of it, as some scoundrel pinched the accumulator, and the car was left to the tender mercies of the incoming Japs, or to some lucky Chinese, I guess! I bought a lot of toffees which were a great consolation at times: I remember sitting quite happily in a drain by the Swimming Club and getting through a few of them while waiting for the usual bevy of bombers to clear out of the way and finish being nasty over the docks. Earlier on in the month I was at Tanglin Hospital visiting the dentist when Jap planes came over. It was my first real baptism of bombing, and I was glad to find myself still alive after a nice bit of pattern-bombing which blew holes all round me - the nearest being about 50 yards away.

The important date for me is 12<sup>th</sup> February, for one reason best known to **Louise**. Besides that one, it marked the end of our carefree stay on the beaches, our transfer to the front line, and the beginning of the end. The food at the S.C. had been awful - no-one was taking an interest in it, and on that momentous Thursday, I offered to take charge of it. By that time **Kallang** 'drome, opposite was in an awful mess, and the flames from the burning RAF huts were blowing right across the road. The 'boys' had all beetled off from the Club and apart from the aged Secretary who stayed there gamely to the end, the Volunteers were in sole possession. My one effort in the kitchen was to make a wizard shepherds pie out of all the remnants in the refrigerators - every cold meat imaginable put through the mincer, and abundantly lined and covered with mashed tinned potato! Alas! We were destined to be hustled away before we could enjoy the *plat du jour*. At 12.00 hrs. as I was sitting in the pill-box, about to compose a billet doux in commemoration of the 12<sup>th</sup>, we got orders to move out of the S.C. In a few minutes, we were away by M.T. and rushed off to Tanglin. There after one false start, and being nicely mortared by some nearby Japs, we settled in near the top of Scott's Road - an absurd position for a M.G. but nice from the point of view of looting the neighbouring houses whenever we were hungry; I was naturally made the cook of the section, and I have some good memories of fried sausages and piping hot coffee liberally sweetened with demerara! Have you ever tried cooking in a gas-mask? I assure you it is quite a handy thing when there is a lot of smoke blowing about!..."

The account of the surrender of Singapore was directly transcribed in "The Rainbow through the Rain", published in 1995. **Geoffrey** continues the tale as the Volunteers are given the second and final order to surrender and then gather for the march to Changi gaol. The night of the 15<sup>th</sup> February is spent initially discussing possible escape plans then 'five of us on **Elliot's** gun slept like piglets in a row under a big tarpaulin on the lawn.'

The story of **Geoff** and **Bob Elliott's** escape was pieced together in a lively account by **Geoff**, who kept a diary on scraps of paper which he somehow preserved until the end of the war and then typed up on the sea voyage back to England, after he was reunited with **Louise** (his wife) in Australia. Betrayal by Malays and capture by the Japanese led to the escapees' incarceration in Pudu gaol and the beginning of four years of captivity. **Geoff** movingly relates his part in camp life and on the railway with H Force. He volunteered to be a medical orderly during the cholera outbreak and survived the stint up country, returning to a more peaceful POW life in Changi gaol in 1944. His involvement in organizing camp services and at St Paul's Church in Changi began to develop into a call to ministry in the Anglican Church which only came to fruition when he retired from the Malayan Civil Service in 1957.

"The Rainbow through the Rain", by **Geoffrey Scott Mowat** is distributed by **Alison Brierley**, price £10 inc. p & p.

Please contact **Alison** if you would like a copy on:-

Estria, Fosters Booth Road, Pattishall, Northamptonshire NN12 8JU e-mail: [albrierley@btinternet.com](mailto:albrierley@btinternet.com)



EXTRACTS FROM NOTES MADE BY JEAN HEMBRY IN 1981/82  
as a companion piece to her husband Boris's memoirs entitled "Malayan Spymaster"  
by kind permission of her son John Hembry.  
(N.B. the information in italics have been added by John)

On the 8 December (1941) I had gardened and was under the shower when *Mary (Rawson, wife of John, manager of Chankat Salak Estate, who was staying as he and Boris H had been embodied in the FMSVF)* said the phone was ringing and should she answer it. She came back looking white-faced and said that it was *Babs (Chrystal, wife of Bob Chrystal the manager of Kamuning Estate, Sungei Siput)* saying that the Japs had bombed Singapore and had invaded the north-east coast of Malaya.

*John* had come in and had overheard and said he was frightened that they would kill his Daddy. We tried to reassure him that this wouldn't happen and tried to act normally. Then the school (*Tanglin School, Cameron Highlands*) rang to say that they were re-opening as it was thought the children would be safer up the hill surrounded by jungle, so, if I wanted *John* to go, there would be an escort on the day mail train stopping at Sungei Siput, and all care would be taken. In view of our vulnerable position, close to the main road and railway line, I decided that he should go. He was a good little chap, leaving with no tears and wearing a discarded FMSVF forage cap of *Boris*. *Ayah* was in tears though. He was thirteen before she saw him again eight years later. We went over to see *Bob* who not only was continuing to run the estate single-handed, but was also in charge of the local ARP, and said we were to black out as much of the bungalow as possible, and to have a panic bundle ready in case of a sudden evacuation of women to jungle camps. My bundle included a mosquito net, pillow, light blanket and a saucepan – all, with the exception of the mosquito net, eventually came home with me to England. I used the saucepan for many years.

*Bob* also told me to load our revolver and keep it in a locked drawer, easily available in an emergency. *Mary* and I did wonder what emergency would require two women to use a revolver. *Bob* also asked whether we would do a 'light' patrol around the estate at nights to see that the labour force were not showing too many lights. So we two women in housecoats drove around the estate before reporting back to *Bob* what we had seen.

A few nights later *Mary* and I were sitting in the hallway between the verandah and dining room (as it was the easiest area to blackout, albeit stifling hot, with no air coming through the shutters) when we heard noises coming from around the car. It was locked, loaded with cans of water and spare petrol, plus emergency rations and light blankets. Not only did it sound like stealthy footsteps but we thought we heard the door handles rattled. I got the gun out of the drawer as *Mary* lifted the phone to phone *Bob*, when we heard load 'miaows'. It was our cats playing on the car. We collapsed into laughter, and helped ourselves to a stiff stengah. Then we turned on the wireless and heard the terrible news. The *Prince of Wales* and the *Repulse* had been sunk with great loss of life. We put our heads on each other's shoulders and wept. It was then we realized we were in a hopeless position. We were obviously worried stiff about our husbands and children and I wondered how to get *John* down from Cameron Highlands.

We had volunteered for ambulance duty in Ipoh, but everything was happening too fast for this to be organized. The Japs were advancing too quickly. A very shaken *Marjory Kitchener* phoned. From their bungalow in Kedah she had seen the airstrip at Sungei Patani bombed. She had just received instructions to evacuate at once but as she didn't drive, the syce had agreed to drive her down as far as Cameron Highlands where she intended to stay with her children. All she had saved was some cutlery from their canteen, which gave me the idea to do the same. It is still in use to this day.

*Mary* and I decided that we would reassure our parents in England that we were alright, so on the 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> we sent them cables. Mine said "Good Wishes for Christmas. Don't worry. Everything normal here". They didn't receive these until mid-January when, of course, everything was far from normal.

We then put a few things which we thought might be useful into a couple of cabin trunks, took them to the station and consigned them to Guthrie's, Singapore.

Late on the 15<sup>th</sup> I received a phone call from Tanglin School to say that the children were to be evacuated to Singapore. Shortly afterwards *Marjory* phoned from Cameron Highlands saying that her syce had agreed to bring her down as far as Tapah but would then go back to Kedah. If she brought *John* down from the Hill would I meet them at Tapah and then drive south? Of course I agreed.

*Boris* then rang, I think from Sitiawan, saying that he had heard that we all had to leave within the next 2 hours as the Japs were only 50 miles away. *Boris* rang again shortly afterwards to say goodbye and that I must shoot our



adorable golden Labrador **Gay**. Or get **Bob** to do it. But fate was kind to me. When **Bob** came round to do it he found me sitting on the lawn in tears. **Ayah** had seen **Gay** on the main road, had called her and she had come, running straight into a convoy of ambulances and killed instantly. **Ayah**, **Mary** and I carried her up to the house and got **kebun** to bury her. He was already digging another latrine for the servants as some puff-adders had nested in the old one.

**Bob** then ordered us to leave immediately for Singapore and said that he had spoken to **Midge Laffan**, who was south of us, and she had said that she intended to get out of the country with her children as soon as possible and that we should do the same. As **Boris** had already told me to follow **Bob's** advice in everything, I decided to do just that. He raided the estate office petty cash and gave me some money. I then said my sad farewells to **Ayah** and **Supan**, all of us in tears. **Supan** was to die on the Railway but **Ayah** returned to work for us again after the war. Just before Ipoh we were stopped at an Army roadblock and an officer told us to get out of the car and lie in the ditch as there were Jap planes overhead circling Ipoh, presumably preparing to drop their bombs. After a little while we got back into the car and went on our way. I wanted to get to the bank to collect my passport and deed box, but stopped off at the **Reynold's** bungalow where I found **Mollie** and her children **Mary** and **Tony** under the dining room table, as there had been an air raid on Ipoh aerodrome which was nearby. We decided that **Mary** would go south with **Mollie**, as she was on her own and maybe I would be delayed at Tapah waiting for **Marjory** and the children.

The bank was in a state of great disorder, but I managed to get my passport, but left the deed box as the manager assured us that everything in the strong room would be transferred to Singapore under escort almost immediately. That was the last I saw of our 'treasures' except for one silver egg cup and a cigarette case which **Boris** identified in Singapore after the war. We always suspected that the majority of valuables belonging to us planters and miners went home to England after the war in the luggage of senior British army officers. **Boris** always maintained that the British army were looters non-pareil. I also transferred what money there was in our account to Singapore, although only after an argument with the assistant manager as the account was in **Boris's** name and the bank hadn't his authorization.

**Mary** and I had bought as much food as we could carry from the Singapore Cold Storage, drinks, and a Meccano set as a Christmas present for **John**, so we split this up and headed south.

I was very late getting into Tapah because of the heavy army and RAF traffic and us refugees being sent on a diversion for several miles around Gopeng. Also, I had had a puncture and had been ignored by everyone except eventually a fine old Chinese who stopped and changed my wheel for me. They were beginning to give up on me, thinking I might have been injured in an air raid, or worse, and wondering what to do with **John**. **Marjory** was very worried that the Japs would come over the Gap and cut us off so was anxious that we pressed on south immediately.

By now I was very weary and hungry, as I had not had anything to eat since lunchtime and we had not stopped at Tapah. When we did eventually stop I found that I had all the drink while **Mary** and **Mollie** had all the food. So every now and again I would have a sip from the whisky bottle. I didn't think it affected my driving, but I am sure I reeked of alcohol by the time we reached KL. We did have to stop and pull to the side of the road on several occasions as Jap planes were flying up and down the road, but they seemed to be only shooting at army convoys. We passed several burnt out lorries and a few covered bodies laid out on the roadside presumably waiting for burial.

At KL we stayed with **Forbes** and **Aileen Wallace**; I forget why we went there. **Forbes** was in the police and **Boris** had first met him through rugger in his Johore days, and he had since moved up to Kuala Kangsar, so we saw quite a lot of him. The idea was that we would stay there until KL had to be evacuated and then we would take **Forbes's** large American car and drive down to Singapore, leaving our car behind. **Marjory** was frantic to go at once. I was torn all ways. In search of advice I came across our friend from Sungei Siput, **Helene Morford**, in a nearby bungalow. She advised leaving as soon as possible. I did the following day in our car. I forget why we changed our plans to go in **Forbes's** car. Jap aeroplanes swooped low overhead on a couple of occasions but did not shoot at us or drop bombs. Nevertheless, it was very scary.

We must have presented sitting targets at the Causeway from JB as there was a massive traffic jam at this bottle neck which the military police were sorting out by giving priority to anything military. I made for our friends **Len** and **Rosina Ogier** as they had offered us beds while I tried to find a passage away from Singapore. **John** and **Anna** were at school together and we had all met up at Brown's River in Tasmania on our previous leave. **Len** wanted **Rosina** and **Anna** to leave with me but **Rosina** was getting over a major operation and had not sufficiently



recovered to travel. Adding to her problems was the fact that only a few days after the operation she was awakened by the noise of falling bombs and then the windows were blown in all over her.

**Len** took me round the shipping agents but none could offer me a passage Home or even to South Africa. Our only chance was to Australia, changing at Batavia. We were in a Dutch shipping office when I heard a voice say, "If it isn't my old curly-headed friend", and I turned to see **John** sitting on the counter having his hair ruffled by a large Dutchman who, it turned out, remembered us from a previous meeting at the Netherlands Consulate when we had called in to get visas. He was now helping to get wives and children away. He said he could get us on a ship leaving the next day.

I remember one or two air raids, but no one seemed to take much notice of them. At least, when the warnings went, we didn't all rush to find shelters.

I had heard that A.P.C. (*Asiatic Petroleum Company*) were paying the fares of wives and children of their staff and helping them get away, so I went round to Guthrie's who were now housed in one of their go-downs as their offices had been bombed. I found **Dawson** the General Manager far from helpful when I explained my financial position. He asked me if the company usually paid my fare. I said that they had for the first time earlier in the year, to Australia. He replied, "Isn't it a bit unusual to have to pay it again so soon?" I lost my temper, thumped the table and said, "Damn it, isn't the world war a bit unusual?" At that, **Bertie Essen**, from the Guthrie's Penang office and a friend, came in and asked if he could help. He said he would take me to the K.P.M. (*the Dutch shipping company*) office and vouch for my fares. Poor old **Dawson** was killed in an air raid a few days later.

I then drove to the station on the off-chance that the luggage had come through – and there it was; our two trunks sitting all by themselves on the platform. I delivered **Mary's** to her friends the **Del Tufoes** with whom she would stay. He was MCS (*Malayan Civil Service*) and would become very senior post war. My trunk contained a blanket, bed linen, clothes for **John**, a suit of **Boris**, and a new dinner dress which I had grabbed as an after-thought. I had never worn the dress which **Boris** had bought me in Perth, but I got it Home and lent it to **Rosina** on several occasions, and it was known as 'our dress'. I eventually cut up the suit for myself.

I forget where I met up with **Charles Martine**. He had been caught up in Singapore where he had come over to on business and to collect **Virginia** from her school, the convent in Cameron Highlands. The news from Sarawak was grim and poor **Charles** was grey with worry. **Charles** and **Bertie** drove us to the docks and left us with a crowd of other escapees, mainly women and children, and drove away in our car which he later handed over to **Boris** when they met quite by chance, after **Boris** had escaped back to Singapore after his spell in the jungle. The Japs were circling Kuching and the Governor had sent a ship to Pontianak in Dutch Borneo in the hope that the women and children could walk to there through the jungle. This **Pat** did, carrying **Patty** on her back, although she had broken out in terrible sores because of the prickly heat. The ship sailed to Batavia where **Charles** joined them with **Virginia**, before flying back to Singapore to join his unit. Our stay in Batavia overlapped although we were unaware of it. **Pat** and her daughters got down to Australia. Dear **Charles** was captured and spent three and a half years in Changi where he had a very bad time. He was badly beaten up on the 'Double Tenth' – the tenth day of the tenth month – along with **Bishop Wilson** of Singapore and others, and was to be in pain for the rest of his life.

**Mary** had opted to stay in KL, hoping to do some nursing as she was a trained VAD with no children. We had had a sad parting in KL. She was evacuated with everyone from KL, and had continued nursing at the Alexandra Hospital in Singapore, the scene of terrible Japanese atrocities when they butchered everyone, patients and staff alike, even bayoneting patients on the operating table. She had been wounded in an air raid and eventually left Singapore on a stretcher, clothes-less, penniless, and with nineteen bomb fragments in her back. Her husband **John** had been assured that all patients would be evacuated so had obeyed orders and escaped on an ammunition ship to Colombo. The hospital ship had arrived in Colombo but with no women on board. He was, of course, frantic with worry but was ordered on to Bombay. **Mary** eventually arrived in Colombo on the *Plancius* but was so ill that she had to stay several weeks to recover enough to be able to catch another ship to England. She and **John** leapfrogged each other at various ports before meeting up in England.

Coincidentally, the *Plancius* was later converted to become the submarine depot ship from which **Boris** went on several of his submarine trips to Malaya and Sumatra.

We had an uneventful journey down to Batavia. Nonetheless, it was not exactly a luxury cruise. The *Kramer* had been on the China run. Not only was she filthy dirty and full of cockroaches, she was very crowded. We were three women and three children in an officer's cabin designed for one. All the children had been at school together up at Tanglin.



But our getaway was a piece of cake compared to those who left later, many being bombed and torpedoed and sunk and rescued by other passing ships. We only knew personally one person who was unfortunate to be on the *Kuala*, where she had been repeatedly raped and then murdered by being thrown overboard. Small wonder I have hated the Japs ever since.

By a stroke of luck, as I was preparing to leave Kamuning, I had seen some stores which I had swept up into a box to take with me down to Singapore. I had jettisoned a lot to make room for the **Kitchener** children, but had kept a large tin of dried milk, likewise of malted milk and of glucose, and a bottle of Dettol. The last proved invaluable as one look at the bathroom and lavatory facilities made me rush for the disinfectant and a scrubbing brush. Then I went down to the galley to collect food for us all. I immediately returned to the cabin to tell the others that my child was not having anything but boiled water from there, and if they liked to share the milk etc they were welcome. I think our three children were the only children to get off the ship as well as when they boarded. We reached Tanjong Priok, the port for Batavia, on the third day. The British Consul and all the Dutch we came in contact with were marvellous, all very helpful and organized to receive us refugees. It is so sad to think that most of these kind people who had helped us to escape did not do so, and many would have perished in captivity. I know that 'Aunty' Hannay had been stranded in Java and had died early on. She had managed to get her daughter away, and I was to see her occasionally in England where she was a WAAF officer stationed at North Weald. I know that **Donald Gray's** elderly parents were also stranded in Java and did not survive. Incidentally, **Neville Shute's** story, "A Town Like Alice", actually happened, but in Java not Malaya where he set the book.

We were billeted with a charming Dutch couple. **John** was happily playing with the Dutch children - they all chatted away in Malay. We were made members of the swimming club which was in lovely surroundings and even though the water was brackish the children had great fun. Our Dutch hostess was involved with the local Red Cross and I was able to help out by acting as a sort of dispatch rider cum delivery van, driving around Batavia in her large American Ford. I was constantly getting lost, but always managed to find my way back to the KLM building to start out again from there.

After what seemed a lifetime, during which all the news from Malaya was bad, we evacuees were told to be ready to leave. We were given no destination, presumably for reasons of security, but only that we were being got away to safety. Only **Mrs. Fyfe**, whose Christian name I forget, and her son **Graham** from the previous party were to be with us, most of the others with smaller children having been flown out down to Australia. **Mrs. Fyfe's** daughter **Margaret** had been sent off from Singapore earlier and was in India. **Boris** was to meet up with her later in the war when she was one of his cipher officers. The British Consul organized lorries to take us and our barang out to Tanjong Priok to board our ship, the *Rhuys*. Just as the ship was about to pull away from the quay, a Dutch woman started yelling for the Javanese dockers to send up her pram which was still at the dockside. Next to it was my sewing machine. I bellowed down for them to put it in the pram and it was hauled up and swung on board by a derrick as the ship pulled away. **Linda** (my daughter-in-law) still uses the old machine 45 years later. The *Rhuys* was in ballast and rolled appallingly and there was much sea-sickness amongst the passengers. Otherwise, our journey was peaceful; we did not attract the attention of Japanese bombers as we steamed out of Tanjong Priok and through the Sunda Strait into the Indian Ocean, little knowing that **Boris** would be following the same route only a few weeks later, but heading for Ceylon. We had a cabin to ourselves. **John** and **Graham** played together, although the latter was a very spoilt child and constantly giving trouble. He would lie on the deck and scream until he was given a ginger beer. One night as I was bathing **John** I saw several bruises on his arms and legs which he said **Graham** had caused. Until then I had turned a deaf ear to **John's** complaints about **Graham's** bullying, but enough was enough. I told **John** to hit **Graham** back as hard as he could as **Graham** was bigger than he was. Next morning on his way to breakfast **John** met **Graham** and promptly lammed into him. All hell was let loose, with **Mrs. Fyfe** bringing two yelling children to my cabin complaining what **John** had done to her son. I said, "Yes, I told him to", but did not mean him to do so unless **Graham** had hit him first. **Graham** never bullied **John** again.

One day, the Captain asked whether I was the lady who wanted to get to Perth. When I said, "Yes", he said well, if I dived overboard and swam forty miles in 'that' direction I would get there. He still would not tell us where we were headed, but a few days later we were pulling alongside the quay in Melbourne.

[To be continued in October].

[Note: Bob Chrystal's wartime service behind enemy lines in Malaya is recounted in a book by Dennis Holman called, "The Green Torture. The Ordeal of Robert Chrystal"].



**SRA[V] REUNION, FLETCHING, FRIDAY 3<sup>RD</sup> MAY 1985**

(Photograph kindly supplied by Audrey Holmes McCormick)



**Back Row L to R:**

**Cecil Colchester, Eric Henton, George Keyzan, Tommy Thompson, Lincoln Page, John Hosgood, Joe Potter, Frank Lane, Dickie Laird, Chas Bullerfield, Bill Dobbs, James Barton, Arnold Thorne, Ted Chaplin.**

**Front Row L to R**

**Pat Sladder, John Richardson, Johnny Johnston, Tiger Coltart, Pat Shaw.**

**PORTRAITS OF PALEMBANG MILITARY POWs 1942 – 1945 -- Information supplied by Bill Bourke in New Zealand**

My late father, **Lt. W.A. Bourke RNZNVR**, completed a number of portraits and caricatures of fellow internees while in the various POW camps in Palembang, Sumatra, including Mulo School, Cheung Hwa and Sungei Geron.

These are part of a collection of some 150-200 drawings, many of them cartoons commenting on camp life plus other miscellaneous sketches. Recent research, with the assistance of another researcher, plus information from relatives of survivors, has enabled me to put additional "names to faces", as a number of the drawings were unnamed.

Listed below are those for whom there are completed portraits (P) or caricatures (C) which I have been able to identify. If family relatives or friends of family recognize those named and can pass on my contact details, I would be most happy to provide a scan of the original with my compliments:

Bartlett, F.G. Capt. Indian Army (C)  
Carey, H.R. Capt. A & SH (P)  
Chapman, R.P. Engr. Captain RN (C)  
Colquhoun, I.M. Capt. Ghurkas (P)  
Corcoran, J.P. Surg. Lt. RN (P)  
Eccles, G. C.P.O. RN (C)  
Finlay, A.N. F/O RAF (P)  
Hawkins, R. Lt. (S) RNVR (P)  
Howell, F.R. S/Ldr. RAF (P)  
Kemp, J.C.W. Lt. MRNVR (P)  
Lang, W.E. Capt. RCOS (C)  
Lyons, G. Lt. MRNVR (P)  
Peal, E.E.F. Pay/Lt. RNVR (P)  
Patterson, C.G. Lt. (S) MRNVR (P)  
Ringer, M. Lt. Dogras (P)  
Reed, A.N. C.P.O. RN (C & P)  
Stubbs R.S. Writer RN (P)  
Wood, W. S.S.M RASC (P)  
Williams, J.E. Sub/Lt. RNR (P)  
Williams, J. RM (P)  
Wills-Stanford, W.R. W/Cdr. RAF (C)

Contact should be made in the first instance to: [billbourke@xtra.co.nz](mailto:billbourke@xtra.co.nz)



## TRAITORS AT THE HEART OF WARTIME GOVERNMENT

The programme entitled "The Fall of Singapore: The Great Betrayal" shown on BBC 2, was put together by historians Richard Aldrich and Anthony Best, from material recently released at the National Archives. This material was about treachery at the heart of government during World War II. An astonishing and very disquieting piece of research by its very nature - it is hardly surprising that the information has not been released until now. It would certainly have raised questions about security in government circles, and even led to speculation about how much Churchill himself knew of these traitors, and what information they had leaked to the enemy.

Due to the supply of secret intelligence to the Japanese by a peer of the realm and a First World War naval pilot hero, the planned attacks by Japan on Pearl Harbour and Malaya, culminating in the victorious seizure of Singapore, were made possible. William Forbes-Sempill (later the 19<sup>th</sup> Lord Sempill) and Frederick Rutland are named as the two traitors who gave Japan the information they were seeking.

Sempill was pro-Japanese and an ardent admirer of Hitler. In 1920, he moved to Japan, at that time an ally of Great Britain, and in his capacity as a first rate pilot, advised the Japanese on how to build aircraft carriers. He established a military base which was handed over to Isoroku Yamamoto, who later became the brilliant Admiral and Commander in Chief of the Combined Japanese Fleet which attacked Pearl Harbour and later mounted a devastating attack on Darwin. Sempill also trained Takijiro Onishi (later Rear Admiral Chief of Staff of the 11<sup>th</sup> Air Fleet of the Imperial Japanese Navy) who initiated the "kamikaze" idea, sending hundreds of pilots to their deaths. Frederick Rutland (nicknamed Rutland of Jutland due to his expertise as a naval pilot in WW I) was instrumental in training Japanese naval pilots how to take off and land on aircraft carriers. These Rutland-trained pilots mounted the attack on Pearl Harbour in which 8 US battleships, 3 cruisers and 3 destroyers were either sunk or damaged. Luckily for the Americans, their carriers were at sea and escaped damage. Luckily for us, the raid was instrumental in bringing the USA into WW II.

Although the alliance between Britain and Japan ended in 1921, Sempill continued to supply Japan with all the latest technical details concerning aerial warfare, from bombs to the development of new planes and engines. Indeed he went on passing on sensitive and secret information to the Japanese after he returned to Britain. Intelligence gathering by Japan during the 1930s indicated that the defence of Malaya and Singapore, in particular, was seriously flawed. Japan's conclusions were not only based on intelligence gathering, but also on information received from the numerous '5<sup>th</sup> column spies' who had lived and worked in Malaya and Singapore for many years, possibly from as early as the 1920s. They were able to see exactly what defence measures were in place on the ground, and even photograph them quite openly and legitimately. In October 1940, Japan formalized her intelligence gathering co-operation with Germany by signing a treaty and the Axis Powers were established.

In November 1940, a sinking in the Indian Ocean took place which was to have serious consequences for the Allies. The incident became known as "Mrs. Ferguson's Teaset", and the story is told in the book by Eiji Seki entitled "Mrs. Ferguson's Teaset, Japan and the Second World War". It tells how the location of a British Blue Funnel merchant ship called the *SS Automedon* was detected by Italian intelligence units in Africa, and the information passed on to a German merchant raider, disguised as a Dutch merchant vessel, called the *Atlantis*. According to Eiji Seki, but for Mrs. Violet Ferguson's insistence that her precious teaset, which was locked in the secret strong room, should be saved, the German crew would never have discovered the 'most secret' papers about the deficiencies in the defence of Singapore, together with six million dollars of new currency for Singapore. The story is based on Eiji Seki's interviews with some of the crew in England. He also met Violet Ferguson's sister (but not Violet herself) and saw the precious teaset which had been saved.

Professor Richard Aldrich tells a different story. In his paper "Intelligence and the War against Japan", based on the material newly made available at the National Archives, the sensitive papers were stored in special weighted canvas bags on the bridge, ready to be thrown overboard if the ship was attacked. The shelling by *Atlantis* unfortunately killed or disabled everyone on the bridge, and the bags fell into the hands of the Germans. As well as the bags, they found an envelope addressed to Brooke-Popham containing a War Cabinet report dated 5<sup>th</sup> August 1940, in which the deficiencies of Singapore's defences were detailed. The information was initially passed to Berlin but was later given to the Japanese. The consequence of receiving such sensitive information helped to confirm the suspicions that Japan had about Singapore's invincibility, and possibly changed the whole course of the war in the Far East, because it encouraged Japan to think the unthinkable and risk the simultaneous attacks on Pearl Harbour and Malaya.

By early 1941, it became apparent in London that there were serious security problems. American codebreakers had detected a flow of high level diplomatic messages from the Japanese Embassy in London to the Japanese Foreign Ministry in Tokyo, which had been passed on to and read by the British. One message in particular gave Churchill a nasty shock because it gave information about his immediate political circle. Anthony Eden was asked to investigate this breach of confidentiality, and came back with the information that 5 men had close contacts with the Japanese Embassy, including the now Admiral Lord Sempill. At this time Sempill was a trusted member of Churchill's political circle and a Commander in the Naval Air Service employed at the Admiralty. Another was Commander McGrath who was also personally known to Churchill. A tap was put on Sempill's phone, and in one conversation with Captain Kondo at the Japanese Embassy, Sempill warned that he should not be contacted at the Admiralty. However, instead of exposing and sacking Sempill, Churchill was mindful of the political repercussions of such a move, and he was quietly retired a couple of months before Pearl Harbour. After the fall of Singapore, there was a secret Commons debate on what went wrong, but Churchill blocked an enquiry - perhaps because of revelations of Sempill's treachery at the heart of government.

[For further information see: <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/pais/people/aldrich>

Thanks also to Yvonne Wurtzburg for her information about Mrs Ferguson's Teaset story. See: "Mrs. Ferguson's Teaset, Japan and the Second World War", by Eiji Seki. Published by Global Oriental. ISBN 978-1905246-28-1]





AIR VICE-MARSHAL C.W.H. PULFORD,  
C.B.; O.B.E.; A.F.C.  
Caricature and photograph below  
kindly supplied by the Imperial War  
Museum, which holds the copyright.

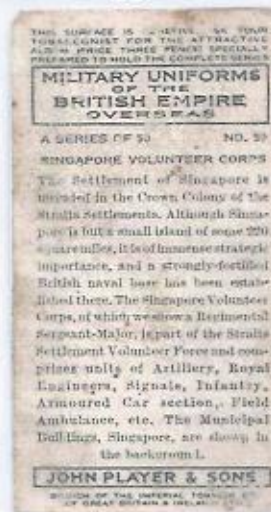
Air Vice-Marshal  
C. W. H. Pulford, C.B., O.B.E., A.F.C.

Caricature from RAF  
*Eagle* magazine by Sid  
Scales. AVM Pulford is  
holding a Buffalo plane.

AVM C.W.H. Pulford, Air Officer Commanding  
Inspecting MAAF trainees at Sembawang



Players Cigarette Card of a member of  
the Singapore Volunteer Corps.  
Kindly sent by Elizabeth Moggie.





**USS WEST POINT: PASSENGERS EVACUATED FROM SINGAPORE – 30<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 1942**

List compiled by Henry Langley,  
following his report under "Information Exchange" in April 2012 (P.13 in A.K. No: 30)

**1. List provided by Bill Lee, USS West Point Reunion Association**

**D = known to be deceased**

**A = known to be alive in February 2012**

- 1. Mrs. Edith Eastwood Sheldrake (D)
- 2. Mr. Leslie Alfred Sheldrake (D)
- 3. Peter Westpoint Leslie Sheldrake (born on ship 4<sup>th</sup> February 1942) (A)
- 4. Surgeon Lt. Comdr. I.S. Robertson Bain, RNVR (attending physician)
- 5. Mr. & Mrs. Rattle (met by Westpoint Sheldrake on the occasion of the ship's last departure from England in 1977 - nothing else known about them)
- 6. Mrs. Annie Rosina (Rose) Watts (D)
- 7. Mr. Edmund Charles Beresford Watts (D)
- 8. Rebecca Leslie Watts (less than a year old, at the time) (A)
- 9. Mrs. Beatrice Maud Bardens (D)
- 10. Mr. Herbert William Bardens (D)
- 11. Sheila R. Bardens (12 years old, at the time) (D)
- 12. Ralph Stobart Robson, RN (enlisted signalman) (D)

**2. Action on this list**

*A. For Jonathan Moffatt, Malayan Volunteers Group (MVG)*

Very grateful if you could advise if you have information already on Nos: 1, 2, 3, 6, 7,8 and 12. If not, Bill Lees should be able to provide some details in due course.

Bill Lee has no information on Mr. and Mrs. Rattle (No: 5) Are they on the MVG list?

*B. For Bill Lee*

To provide, in due course, information on Nos: 9, 10 and 11 for inclusion in the MVG Evacuees List. Possibly also No: 4.

**3. Names to be added to Bill Lee's list**

The following names have been taken from the **MVG Evacuees List** and are shown as having left Singapore on the **USS West Point**:

Ms. H. Bockler

Mrs. A.H.G. Farnan

Mrs. Col MacNab

Mrs. Dorothy Kennaway (D)

There does not seem to be much more information on the Evacuees List about any of the first three. Is any further information available or is a contact available on any of them whom Bill Lee could contact? Dorothy Kennaway – mother of Anne Scott (evacuated on the Duchess of Bedford) and Susan Whitley (evacuated on the Aorangi) – is mentioned in Anne's book "Journey by Candlelight". Bill Lee would like to have more information about Dorothy's history for his records

Names taken from the **COFEPOW List** (supplied by Mary Harris) include 3 teenagers:

Leslie Butler Madden

Sheila Butler Madden

Vicki Proust

The Woolacott Family (Henry's sister met Betty Woolacott in Uganda in the 1960s – she would have been 6 or 7 in 1941 Her father was a civilian at the Naval Base). Does anyone have any other information about this family?

The Langley Family – Henry, his parents and 3 sisters

Details about any of the above or their relatives is also sought by Bill Lee

**[Please let Henry Langley know if you can give him any information about other evacuees on the West Point.**

**E-mail: [hclangley@btinternet.com](mailto:hclangley@btinternet.com) ]**

**THE BLUE BOOK (Directory of Malaya) – Information from Andrew Hwang who says:-**

All this while, we have been referring to the Buku Merah or Red Book (Singapore & Malaya Directory). I recently found a very useful alternative which provides more information than the Buku Merah, (this is) the Blue Book or the Directory of Malaya. Three copies exist for public reference in Malaysian National Archives – for the years 1929, 1932 and 1941 (2 copies). All the Volunteer officers for each of those years are listed, even those who had passed to the Reserve. I will have to look for the other years. MVG members should be informed of the availability of such an important source of information. The 1941 edition essentially listed all the Volunteer officers who were mobilized in December 1941, except those from the Kelantan Volunteer Force.



## THE CHURCH OF ST. GEORGE the MARTYR, PENANG – Information supplied by Andrew Hwang.

I found the following records in the Malaysian National Archives under reference: AU/23/V. These are Church Registers deposited in 1984. Those available are:-

1. Marriage, Baptism & Burial Register: 1799-1818
2. Burial Register: 1849-1978
3. Baptism Register: 1849-1962
4. Marriage Registers: 1848-1854, 1946-1957

The records from 1819-1848 are lost, and the Marriage Register from 1854-1945 is also lost. I can help in searches if they fall within the years stated above.

## BOOKS

**"THE QUIET HEROES: BRITISH MERCHANT SEAMEN AT WAR, 1939-1945".** By Bernard Edwards. Amazon Books, paperback £8.44. **Audrey McCormick** writes in recommendation::

I have newly read a history (published some years ago) which recounts the wartime lives and exploits of merchant seamen – greatly worth reading as a tribute to their courage, and the appalling suffering for so many of them, dying unknown deaths at sea. It was remarkable that supplies to keep Britain going still got through at all, even as early as in the first year – and the seamen bringing them home suffered appalling deaths in their merchant shipping. Anything that could float had to be used, fit for purpose or not. And the enemy submarines were plentiful and very well prepared...

This book is very well written: with knowledge and compassion ... and very moving. (I now understand, too, why some of the men who came home from that service, did so sometimes as alcoholics ... with the tension they endured, and the memories that had to carry.

I returned to Singapore as a 9 year old, with my mother, from the UK in February 1940 on a Glen Line ship – the Gleniffer (well known small merchant ships on that route, and from Singapore to Australia too). In convoy during appalling weather in the Bay of Biscay, when collision looked more likely than a torpedo, our larger neighbour was, in fact, torpedoed, with ensuing chaos, when it seemed we (on deck at the time in my mother's and my cases an anti-dote to sea-sickness) would collide with her in truly mountainous seas. (We were told later that an escort destroyer had, in turn, "got" the sub). Civilian vessels in convoy did not stop to pick up survivors, which would be down to one of the escorts.

At Israel, where (memorably) the docks were piled up with oranges for export, we bought bibles in carved olive-wood covers... Thereafter the Captain paced the deck daily, reading or clutching his: always carrying it – which some passengers thought uneasily dispiriting, - especially as the rumour then was that a large German destroyer was in the vicinity ..... By Suez, we had collected a couple of young seamen on board, for firing the ship's one popgun: but unfortunately for us on this occasion they weren't tested. However, what happened on other convoys *should* be remembered, and "The Quiet Heroes" covers this, in honour of those civilian crews (with some vessels also heavily loaded with passengers) who set out in rickety and ancient cargo boat, or tankers that would (just about) float to "fetch home the goods", but were sunk and vanished, often in unknown events and conditions.

Bernard Edwards is a very good writer, handling well in sound, forthright detail, the honourable and heroic stories of the crews of the (named) merchant ships and tankers (those where someone lived to tell the tale) – vessels which were even being taken out of uncompleted repairs in dry dock, to send to sea – and to places at first other than across the Atlantic – to bring back food and war material for Great Britain – when our ration supplies in GB at times were down to only enough for a few weeks – and in the face of well-prepared German and then Japanese U-Boats they could barely defend against, until our bombers and warships were able to cover the Atlantic voyages more fully and at last retaliation set in.

It is a very moving story of men's bravery in the face of fear: and excellently told: easy to read, except for one's terrible pity.

**"THE BARBED-WIRE UNIVERSITY".** By Midge Gillies. Now available in Paperback from AURUM. Price £8.99. Contact: Emma O'Bryen on [eobr@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:eobr@blueyonder.co.uk) Tel: 020 7619 0098

This book was reviewed by **Jonathan Moffatt** in July 2011 (A.K. No: 27)

## BOOKS RECOMMENDED BY MVG MEMBER NEAL HOBBS IN THE AUSTRALIAN NMBVA NEWSLETTER "BERITA".

**"SANDAKAN: A Conspiracy of Silence".** By Lynette Ramsay Silver. The horrific story of the Sandakan POW Camp during the closing years of WW 11. Only 6 Australians survived. It details the bungled rescue attempt, where almost all the men died because of mistakes within the senior ranks.

**"Destiny Malaya".** By Peter Stock. Nexus Printing Ideas Together, Brighton. Tel: 01273 702525

**"Log Across the Road".** By Sheila Ross. A very good story based on fact, climaxing in Malaya in the 1950s.

## A MESSAGE FROM LYNETTE RAMSAY SILVER RE: UK distribution of her books.

My publisher advises that the latest edition (4<sup>th</sup>) of **"Sandakan: A Conspiracy of Silence"** and **"Deadly Secrets"** (the Jaywick and Rimau raids) should now be available in the UK through Gazelle Book Services. This may be more cost effective than purchasing via the internet and a lot cheaper than buying in Australia and paying for air freight.

Details of the distributor:

Gazelle Book Services Ltd., White Cross Mills, Hightown, Lancaster LA1 4XS. E-mail: [sales@gazellebooks.co.uk](mailto:sales@gazellebooks.co.uk)

Tel: 01524 6876 or Fax: 01524 63232



Lynette went on to say that she was in Singapore for the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the infamous "Fall" – to attend the 15<sup>th</sup> February commemoration service and the launch of a wartime heritage trail that included an historic marker (at the execution site on Dover Road) to the Rimau men. It also acknowledged the many local people, who suffered as a result of then Double Tenth Massacre, the terrible price paid for the Jaywick and Rimau raids.

She said that she began her campaign to have the raiding party and the local people remembered back in 1993, so it had been a long haul – 19 years in fact. Although it had been slow, she said she was fortunate to have had the support of the director of the Changi Museum (Jeya), who had been an excellent advocate.

While at the service in Kranji, Lynette visited the graves of all the Rimau men and especially remembered those still "missing".

Two Pen and Sword books by **Mark Felton** have recently become available.

**"THE DEVIL'S DOCTORS. Japanese Human Experiments on Allied POWs".** ISBN 978-84884-479-7 Hardback. Price £19.99 Published 2012

This details the medical experiments carried out by the Japanese on Allied POWs in Northern China, Hainan Island, New Guinea and Japan. Called Unit 731, the experiments were carried out on US, British and Australian POWs. They resulted in loss of life and extreme suffering. More shocking is the revelation that, post-war, the British Government used the results of these experiments at Porton Down, and the Americans who captured the Unit 731 Scientists protected them from war crime prosecution in return for their co-operation.

**"JAPAN'S GESTAPO. Murder, Mayhem and Torture in Wartime Asia".** ISBN 978-1-84884-680-7 Softback. Price £12.99 Published in 2009 and 2012.

The truly shocking activities of the Kempeitai, Japan's feared military and secret police, are revealed in this book. They had almost unlimited power throughout the Japanese Empire, extorting money from individuals and businesses. Apart from the brutal treatment of POWs, their activities included biological and chemical experiments on live subjects, vivisection, and the organization of slave labour and "Comfort Women".

## OBITUARIES

### JOHN MICHAEL GULLICK – 1916 to 2012

Compiled by Jonathan Moffatt with assistance from John's daughter Sheila McClure and Dato' Henry Barlow.

**Malayan Civil Servant 1945-1957, anthropologist, lawyer and businessman and eminent historian of Malaysia.**

Born in 1916 in Bristol, to a family of limited means, John Gullick gained a place at Taunton School on the free place system, and was then awarded a scholarship to Christ's College, Cambridge, where he took a first class degree in classics. After passing the first part of his Bar examinations he joined the Colonial Service in Uganda in 1939. In 1940 he was called up for military service. He served with the King's African Rifles in the Ethiopian Campaign, and then in military administration in East Africa, Madagascar then the Middle East. In late 1945, he went to Malaya with the British Military Administration. He was demobilized as a Lt. Colonel with a Mention in Despatches. With the restoration of civil government in April 1946 he joined the Malayan Civil Service and served till 1948 as Secretary to the Resident Commissioner for the State of Negri Sembilan. He was secretary to the UK Police Mission (1949-50), which advised on improvements in police organization and methods during the Malayan Emergency. Later appointments included Executive Officer of the Rural & Industrial Development Authority and Trade Division Controller. Throughout this period, John Gullick's outstanding skills as an administrator, his fairness and his insight into the political and social complexities of Malaya, became widely recognized. In 1955, he moved to the Federal Secretariat in Kuala Lumpur as Federal Establishment Officer in which office he acted as Secretary to the Committee for the Malayanization of Government Services which was chaired by Tunku Abdul Rahman, shortly to become Prime Minister of an independent Malaya.

John Gullick's clarity of vision during Malaya's journey to independence confirmed his credibility with the British, Malay, Indian and Chinese communities, and opened the door to contacts and friendships which were to have a profound effect on his life. In this period, he began to study the history of Malaya and its culture. A degree in Anthropology, taken at the London School of Economics while on leave, led to the publication of his first book, *"Indigenous Political Systems of Western Malaya"*. He said that he had been fortunate to have studied under two renowned teachers, anthropologist Maurice Freedman and ethnologist Raymond Firth. They reinforced his belief in continuing to learn, and to share learning with others, throughout life, and he once wrote "the sheer uplift of first class teaching has to be experienced to be believed".

After leaving the MCS in 1957, John Gullick joined Guthrie & Co., then the major player in the Malaysian rubber industry. He resigned in 1962 to resume his legal career and qualified as a solicitor. He joined E.F. Turner & Sons, a City of London law firm, specializing in company law, and eventually took over as senior partner. His expertise, fairness and integrity earned him the respect of fellow professionals and clients. In 1974, he left Turner's for a career in lecturing on company law and tax, and





in 1987 published what became at the time the standard text book on company law. Through the 1970s, he continued to hold a number of board appointments with rubber and tin companies. He served for a number of years as Deputy Chairman of the Governors of the London School of Economics.

From the late 1940s, John Gullick's key personal interest was his research and publication on the history and economic development of Malaya from the late eighteenth to the mid twentieth centuries. He looked at history from the standpoint of social anthropology, the discipline in which he was first trained. Over 60 years, he published a steady flow of books and articles, the best known perhaps being a series of histories of Kuala Lumpur and Selangor. He maintained an extensive correspondence with scholars in the field, supervised a number of PhD students and lectured by invitation at universities and other institutions in London, Malaysia and Australia. For many years he has been recognized as one of the founding scholars in the field, and one of the most respected. His work has been marked by a number of awards, notably in 2001 the first Royal Asiatic Society award for outstanding scholarship, and in 2008 investiture by the Sultan of Selangor with the honour of Datuk. In retirement, John Gullick remained productive into his 90s, contributing entries to the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography and, ever generous with his time and encyclopaedic knowledge, maintaining correspondence on Malayan history and socio-economic development with students and historians worldwide, by letter and e-mail, invariably courteous, prompt and enormously informative. He had been a member of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society since 1947. One of his major contributions to the Society was his single handed preparation, aged over 90, of a complete subject and author index of the combined Journals of the Straits, Malayan & Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society from its establishment in 1878 to 2007. For this, with characteristic modesty, he requested anonymity during his lifetime.

He died on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2012 at his home in Essex and is survived by his wife Pamela and children Sheila and William, and his two granddaughters. The MVG sends them our very sincere condolences on their loss.

[Editor: I have a partial bibliography of John Gullick's books, compiled by Professor Anthony Stockwell of Royal Holloway College, if anyone wishes to have a copy.]

#### ROY THURLING – 1919 to 2012

We are also sad to report the death of Roy Thurling, aged 92, a Veteran FMSVF Volunteer and uncle of MVG member Marea Smith. He was born in Sydney in 1919, and with his elder brother Jack, went to work for Anglo-Oriental Mining Company Ltd in Malaya in the late 1930s, in the Larut Tin Fields. Both he and his brother joined the FMSVF, Roy in the Taiping section of the Perak Battalion. They were both captured at the Fall of Singapore, and in October 1942 were sent to Thailand with "D" Battalion. After repatriation to Australia on the *Circassia*, Roy returned to Malaya to continue working for Anglo-Oriental from 1946 – 1948. He then returned to Australia to work as an electrician, and retired to Brisbane.

We send our sympathies to Marea and the members of Roy's family.

It is with great sadness we report the deaths of Betty Evans and Clarissa Vowler, both wives of MVG members.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to Veteran Volunteer Tom Evans SRA [V] and his family for their loss. His daughters, Sue in London, and Joanna in Australia are both MVG members, and our sympathies are with them too.

Our thoughts are also with Bill Vowler and his family at this sad time. Bill and his daughter Nicky Bennett-Baggs are MVG members, and we learn that Bill is moving to England to be with his daughter.

The death is announced in the *Telegraph* of **Les Puckering**, aged 93, who served with the 155<sup>th</sup> LYFR in WW 11, and after capture at the Fall of Singapore, was sent as a POW to the notorious Kinkaseki Camp in Formosa. He worked in the copper mine for a year, but during one of the "thin man parades" in which the Japs picked out the men they considered too sick to work, he managed to double back to the end of the line (having been overlooked where he was first standing) and was then chosen to be sent to another camp. He ended up in a camp at Shirakawa, where he worked in local factories. During a bombing raid, a piece of shrapnel lodged in his forehead, but despite temporarily losing his sight, he survived and was liberated in 1945.

**Lionel Savery** who has died aged 82, was an intelligence officer in post-war Malaya during the Communist-led Emergency. As a Mandarin-speaker, he was posted to Bentong, an area where there was a strong CT leadership. His 3-year tour saw him mentioned in dispatches, before being posted to Cyprus, where he was awarded an MC for his tireless hunting down of EOKA terrorists under Grivas. On retirement from the army in 1963, he was moved to Sarawak as second-in-command of Special Branch during the "Confrontation" with Indonesia.

**Wg-Cdr Bill Foulsham** who died in February 2012, aged 97, was posted to military administration in Malaya at the end of the war, and joined the Malayan Civil Service. From 1949-1952 he was DO in Kuala Pilah and Bahau during the time of the Malayan Emergency. For his work at this time he was awarded an OBE. He then served as British Adviser to the Sultan of Perlis and as State Secretary in Penang. On his retirement he joined the BBC.

**Henry Qualltrough** was a bomb disposal officer during the war, clearing mines from Gold Beach on D-Day. In 1951 he was posted to Singapore during the Emergency for a 3-year tour. He then worked in Hong Kong as chief engineer, which included bomb disposal. In 1965, as a major in the Bomb Disposal Unit, he returned to Penang to survey the Japanese bomb and sea mine dumps which they had left at the end of the war. By this time, the collection of abandoned bombs and shells was in a highly unstable state. Working with Sergeant Cooke, the 2 men located tunnels and covered over trenches at 9 different sites. At great danger to themselves, they removed samples from each site for analysis and cleared the sites. Later they cleared bunkers on Betio, one of the Gilbert & Ellice Islands. For his work in the Far East, he was awarded the George Medal. He died in March 2012 aged 87.



## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### **WEDNESDAY 15<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2012 – V-J DAY SERVICE IN THE MVG MEMORIAL GARDEN AT THE NMA**

This year we celebrate the 67<sup>th</sup> anniversary of V-J Day, but also remember, with sadness, the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of the Fall of Singapore. We hope that our service will encompass both these events, in view of the various acts of remembrance in Singapore and the presentation of plaques in Sumatra and Australia in February, witnessed by members from the U.K., Singapore, Malaysia and Australia.

The service is planned to take place at noon in the MVG Memorial Garden – whatever the weather – followed by our annual picnic in the grounds. If the weather is inclement, we can picnic under the cloister arches. Please let Jonathan or Rosemary know if you can come, and bring some food with you. We share it between us all and it makes for a very varied and enjoyable lunch. As this service is advertised on the NMA website, we are required to let them know how many members are attending.

### **WEDNESDAY 19<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2012 – AN AFTERNOON AT THE THEATRE WITH THE RFH GROUP**

The Researching FEPOW History Group is organizing a one-off meeting at the lecture theatre of the Liverpool Medical Institution. It is a special 'matinee performance' featuring Emeritus Professor Sears Eldridge from Macalester College, Minneapolis, with Professor Geoff Gill and Meg Parkes from the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine. Those who have attended the RFH Conferences in the past will know that Sears Eldridge is a fascinating speaker, and we are in for an enjoyable afternoon.

The programme will include:-

**Professor Sears Eldridge** – sharing his research material for his e-book, "*Captive Audience/Captive Performers*".

**Professor Geoff Gill** – presenting a talk entitled, "*Stealing, Smuggling, Supplies and Survival*", shining a spotlight on the V-scheme & his research for his PhD thesis, "*Coping with Crisis, Medicine & Disease on the Burma Railway 1942-1945*".

**Meg Parkes** – adapting her talk, "*Tins, Tubes and Tenacity*" to include new information concerning the hospital workshops at Chungkai and Changi, plus sharing her interviews with FEPOWs.

**Place:** Liverpool Medical Institution, 114, Mount Pleasant, Liverpool L3 5SR

**Time:** Refreshments at 3pm. Lectures from 3.30 – 6.15pm. Reception & Supper in the gallery from 6.15 to 8.30pm

**Charge:** Lecture ONLY is FREE

Reception and Supper - £18 per person payable to "Researching FEPOW History"

Registration online: [www.researchingfepowhistory.org.uk](http://www.researchingfepowhistory.org.uk) click on "Liverpool Lectures"

Directions & Parking: LMI website: [www.lmi.org.uk](http://www.lmi.org.uk)

Payment send to: Mike Parkes, 'Kranji', 34, Queens Road, Hoylake, Wirral CH47 2AJ.

(Supper tickets issued on the day + receipts if requested)

Please book early – the 2-day Conference was cancelled because too few bookings were made early on.

### **SATURDAY 20<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2012 – LONDON REUNION AND LUNCH, RAF CLUB PICCADILLY**

See P. 25 for details. To date Hugh has VERY FEW bookings. PLEASE check your diaries and make your booking early. It would be sad if this major event in our calendar had to be cancelled, due to lack of interest, after all the hard work which has been done to make it such a success in previous years. **This is the last reminder for booking for the lunch.**

### **THURSDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2012 – CROSS PLANTING CEREMONY AND SERVICE AT WESTMINSTER ABBEY**

Please let **Merilyn Hywel-Jones** know if you would like to take part in this Ceremony and Service. Entry to the Service is by ticket only, and **Merilyn** can order them for us, but needs to know how many are required. Tickets are only allocated to military units and are in short supply, so you need to let her know in plenty of time.

This year the MVG has ordered an 8" cross to plant in the FEPOW Plot. It will bear the SSVF Badge on the cross itself, and attached to the stem will be a small black wooden plaque with the words "including the Federated and Unfederated Malay States" painted on it in white. This cross will be used annually.

Contact **Merilyn** on: Tel: 020 7736 6324 or e-mail: [ian\\_hj@hotmail.com](mailto:ian_hj@hotmail.com)

### **SUNDAY 11<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2012 – REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY AT THE CENOTAPH IN WHITEHALL**

The MVG has again been allocated 12 tickets for this Service. Although we have a group of regular marchers, please let **Rosemary** know if you wish to march this year. Details are not made available to us until October, and will be sent out with the tickets. Members are reminded that they are likely to be standing for at least 1 ½ hours prior to the March Past, and then marching for a distance of over 1 mile, possibly in inclement weather.

## **FUTURE DATES TO BE NOTED**

**SUNDAY 19<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2013 – ANNUAL SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE AT THE FEPOW R.C. CHURCH OF OUR LADY & ST. THOMAS OF CANTERBURY IN WYMONDHAM.** See website: [www.fepow-memorial.org.uk](http://www.fepow-memorial.org.uk)

### **12<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2015 – 70<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE SIGNING OF THE SURRENDER BY THE JAPANESE IN SINGAPORE.**

The MVG hopes to arrange a group of members to attend the events planned by the Changi Museum to celebrate this important landmark occasion.



# **ANNUAL LUNCH AND REUNION**

## **JOIN US AT THE RAF CLUB, 128, PICCADILLY TO MEET OLD FRIENDS AND MAKE NEW ONES ON SATURDAY, 20<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2012 Noon to 4p.m.**

New members will be made very welcome

Please let Hugh Chaplin know as soon as possible if you wish to attend, together with the number and names of any guests, who need not be MVG members – even if only provisionally. The Ballroom has again been booked for the event. Pre-lunch drinks and wine can be purchased at the bar, as usual. The set menu this year is pork medallions with seasonal vegetables, followed by strawberry cheesecake, coffee or tea, and petit fours. There is a vegetarian option available. Please let **Hugh** know your meal preference at the time of booking. E-mail:- [hugh.chaplin@gmail.com](mailto:hugh.chaplin@gmail.com)  
The cost is £36 per person. Cheques please to **Rosemary** by 1<sup>st</sup> October 2012, made out to:-

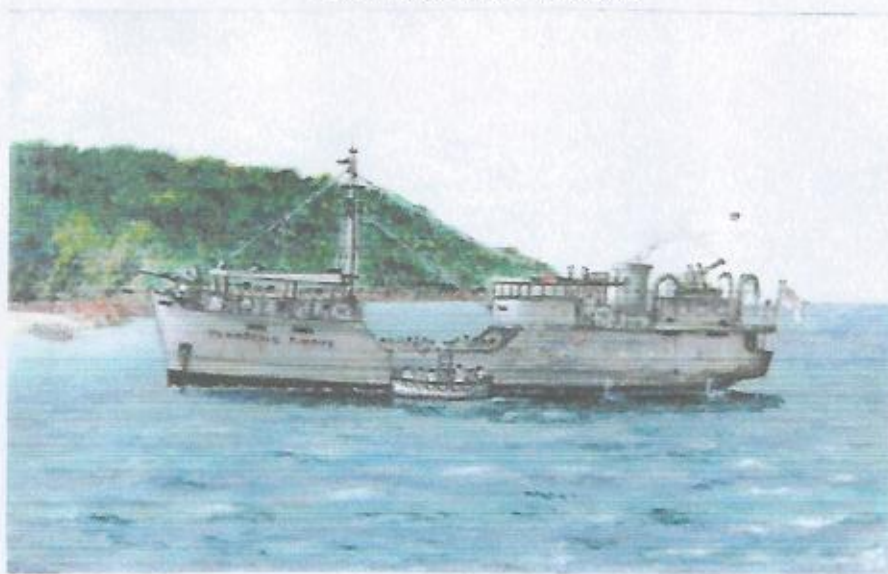
**Mrs. R. Fell Malayan Volunteers Group**

We are delighted that **Yvonne Wurtzburg** and **Imogen Holmes** will give an informal talk, illustrated with their photos, on their trip to Sumatra in February.

Don't forget to bring a raffle prize with you, please. We are also looking for volunteers to sell tickets. **A reminder** that coats and bags should be left in the cloakroom on the ground floor OR in the Ladies' Powder Room opposite the Ballroom on the first floor.

We look forward to meeting you all again at 12pm on 20<sup>th</sup> October.

**H.M.S. TANDJONG PINANG**  
Painting by David Wingate



MVG member **David Wingate** is offering a limited run of signed prints of his painting of the **H.M.S. Tandjong Pinang** to members, to mark the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the tragic loss of this small ship, and to honour those who were lost on her, including David's grandmother. The ship is shown in the painting in the early morning of 17<sup>th</sup> February 1942 off Pom Pong Island, picking up survivors from the "Kuala". **David** started his research into the appearance of the ship nearly 20 years ago. Very few images of the ship exist, and those that do are very grainy, so there is a certain amount of artistic license in the painting. However, it is thought to be a fairly accurate drawing of what she looked like. The actual image of the ship is 5.45" x 7.55" (13.7mm x 19.2mm) and the white surround is 8" x 11" (21.7mm x 27.9mm). It would take a frame size of 11" x 14" or larger. The prints will be made on Hahnemuhle Ultra Smooth Fine Art 100% Cotton Rag, 305gsm paper, on an Epson Pro3800 art printer with archival inks. They are giclee prints. If anyone would like to order a print, please contact **David** by e-mail on: [panmaule@aol.com](mailto:panmaule@aol.com) or let Rosemary Fell know on: [dinraf-millbrook@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:dinraf-millbrook@tiscali.co.uk) **Price: £40 plus postage**

**PLEASE NOTE; DAVID IS DONATING THE PROCEEDS FROM THE SALE OF HIS PRINTS TO MVG FUNDS.  
WE THANK HIM VERY MUCH FOR HIS GENEROSITY**



### **\*MVG SUBSCRIPTIONS\***

Thank you to everyone for the prompt payment of your subscriptions and for returning the tear-off section of the subscription letter. We are pleased that so many of you have indicated that you are happy to receive newsletters by e-mail. This will help to reduce the cost of postage and we may be able to keep the subs at the same price next year. However, may we remind you that the MVG is run on a shoestring – we only spend funds on legitimate expenses, and donate our office and other expenses. Our funds all go to pay for memorials to our Volunteers and civilian POWs. This means it is essential we do not have to pay for extra postage or spend time on reminding members to pay their subscriptions. We make it quite clear that subscriptions fall due annually in April, and it is very disappointing when we receive no answer after 2 further reminders. Very few clubs or associations would tolerate this situation. Their members who did not reply would simply forfeit their membership. The MVG considers itself a large extended family, and we do not feel this is the right way to act. We, therefore, appeal to you to make our life easier by paying your subscriptions without further reminders, or by letting us know if there is a special reason for non-payment. We hope that our overseas members in Malaysia and Australia are also paying promptly to their respective secretaries.

### **NEWSLETTERS ONLINE**

#### **Please note:**

The new password for access to previous newsletters on our website is “**careyisland**”. It will replace the current password (swettenham) in August. Both **Apa Khabar** and **Anak Apa Khabar** can be read online using this password. Due to some technical difficulties the newsletters are not yet up to date online, but we are hoping to remedy this shortly.

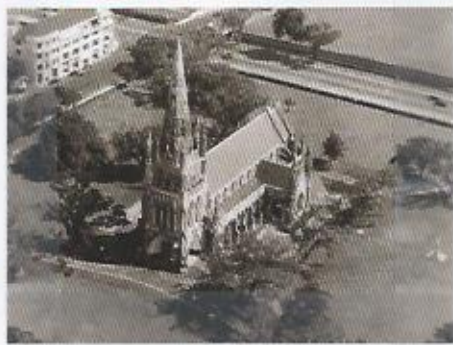
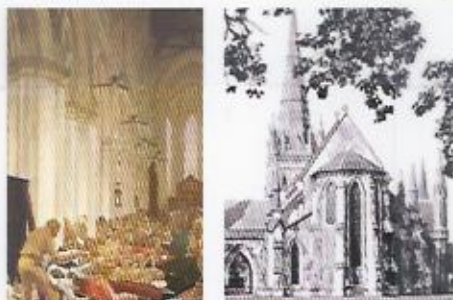
### **MAP OF SINGAPORE**

We are very grateful to **Jane Nielsen** for producing this incredibly detailed and informative map the island of Singapore, showing its appearance during the war, with the various POW camps and other places of historic importance pinpointed. Hours of research and work have gone into these drawings to identify the exact locations of the camps. Please let Jane know if you know of any inaccuracies in the map, or if you have any further information about wartime camps, buildings used by the Japanese, or battlefield areas which have not been shown.

The copyright for this map is held by the Changi Museum, but the MVG has permission to send it out to members. Jane is still working on the plan of the Sime Road Camp, which will be available in October. Contact Jane on: [janeNielsen@ymail.com](mailto:janeNielsen@ymail.com)

### **ST. ANDREW'S CATHEDRAL**

MVG members who attended the events in Singapore in February, visited the Cathedral during the Historical Tour of the Island, and some attended Services on Sunday. We saw the Volunteer plaques inside the Cathedral and the embossed stone ones outside. 2012 is also a special year for the Cathedral, which celebrated its 150<sup>th</sup> Consecration Anniversary on 25<sup>th</sup> January. The Foundation Stone was laid on 4<sup>th</sup> March 1856 by Right Reverend Daniel Wilson, Lord Bishop of Calcutta. The present building was consecrated on 25<sup>th</sup> January 1862 by Right Reverend G.E.L. Cotton, Lord Bishop of Calcutta. In 1870, St. Andrew's became the Cathedral of the Diocese of Labuan & Sarawak. As well as being the Church where so many members' parents were married, the Cathedral played a special role as a refuge for the wounded in war torn Singapore, as the Japanese pressed on to capture the island fortress.



### **HOT OFF THE PRESS!**

The Adam Park Project (TAPP) – Take 2 Newsletter – June 2012  
Work has just started again at 16, Adam Park – and includes a search for missing Suffolk men on Bukit Brown + assessment survey on an archeological dig at Sime Road Camp + “The Shrine” + search for Adam Park Chapel + “Gispert” Story (AK 30)  
See: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Adam-Park-Project/137333236283715>

### **OVERSEAS CONTACTS**

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##### **ROSEMARY FELL – Editor of Apa Khabar/Secretary – membership, subscriptions and donations**

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