

On Researching - The Borneo Graveyard 1941-1945

By

John SM Tulloch MBE

Introduction

I grew up in a military family. The family postings were India and Pakistan during Partition, Germany in the early '50s, Malaya during The Emergency and the UK. My father fought in the NW Frontier pre-war and during the war in NW Europe. His cousin, Derek Tulloch DSO MC who was Orde Wingate's COS, asked him to join the Chindits as the Chief Signals Officer. My father refused stating "he had a war in Europe to attend to, ask me after it!" And my Uncle Ben Morton, 1/14 Punjab Regiment, was captured in Singapore, and then the Burma-Siam Railway and Changi. I grew up to the history of the war and had a fascination for it. It was my oxygen for reading history and I had a love and fascination for the jungle and SE Asia. As an 11 year old in Malaya I was taught how to use a .38 Webley revolver, a Sten/Stirling SMG and a jungle carbine. As my father explained "just in case of an emergency Johnny!" Life was exciting.

I joined the New Zealand (NZ) Army in 1965 and initially the Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment (RNZIR). On graduation in December 1966 at Officer Cadet School (OCS) Portsea in Australia, I was commissioned into the Royal New Zealand Artillery (RNZA). A 12 month TOD in Vietnam 1968/69 followed. My whole NZ Army career was jungle warfare and jungle warfare training. In 1973 I transferred to the Royal Artillery (RA). Postings in Germany, Holland and the UK followed with TODs in Northern Ireland (1973 and 1975), an attachment to Sultan Oman's Armed Forces (1978-1980) and the Falklands (1982). It was during my posting to HQ Infantry that my jungle warfare background was recognised. From 1994 to 2015 I was a visiting instructor and advisor to the British Army's Jungle Warfare Instructors' Course in Brunei and for 10 years I was advising on major exercises in Belize.

In 1999, my family joined me in Brunei on one of my trips and then we went and spent three weeks on leave in Sabah, climbing, trekking and 'wild-living'. I was showing my family the jungle (hutan) that I loved. But in Sandakan, my historical knowledge was challenged and fell apart. I had not heard of the Jesselton and the Batu Tiga POW Camp, Sandakan and Ranau POW Camps and the three Death Marches. In fact I was totally unaware of the war years in Borneo and quickly realised that Borneo was a bridesmaid in the war against Japan. To put it bluntly, I was embarrassed by my ignorance but rapidly realised there was a story that had to be told.

Early days

I started reading Lynette Silver's '*Sandakan A Conspiracy of Silence*'. An extraordinarily in-depth researched book of the Sandakan and Ranau POW Camps and the Death Marches but naturally it was very Australian centric. I started creating a data base of the British POWs who had perished in Sabah (formerly British North Borneo (BNB)). I was horrified to learn that over half of the British POWs were from my regiment, the Royal Artillery (RA) and its Arms and Services and the other half were from the RAF. I was determined something had to be done to remember those men.

My database developed to include all Australian and British POWs who perished in BNB in 11 columns of detail. My ultimate aim was to create a Roll of Honour for Jesselton, Sandakan, Ranau and the Death Marches. This was a task which took eight years to complete. I used the material from authors: Michele Cunningham, Lynette Silver, Kevin Smith, Don Walls and local authors. I then used the facilities of the CWGC, IWM, AWM, Java Index and the COFEPOW databases. Where there were discrepancies in details; spellings, ranks, date of death etc I used the CWGC and the AWM as the official arbitrator.

I increased my database to include Labuan, Brunei Town, Miri and Batu Lintang. With this information I was able to track individual histories from various sources. Again the sources were various, including newspapers, obituaries, personal stories of survivors and oral histories in the IWM.

An example of a working database for Jesselton, which records the 51 deaths of British POWs, is below.

JESSELTON ROLL OF HONOUR													
Serial	Number	Rank	Name	Hat Badg	Sub Unit	Unit	Place of Origin	County	Date of Death	A	Place of Death	Memorial	
1	1787581	Gnr	Auerbach, Harry Aaron	RA	48 LAA Bty	21 LAA Regt RA (TA)	South Tottenham, Middlesex		16-Apr-43	36	Jesselton PW Camp	Labuan War Cemetery Grave H. A. 16	
2	6001252	Gnr	Bareham, George Arthur	RA	95 LAA Bty	48 LAA Regt RA (TA)	Great Clacton, Essex		14-Jan-43	39	Jesselton PW Camp	Labuan War Cemetery Grave F. D. 2	
3	1481414	Sgt	Bentley, Dennis Hamlyn	RA	48 LAA Bty	21 LAA Regt RA (TA)	Enfield, Middlesex		12-Feb-43	31	Jesselton PW Camp	Labuan War Cemetery Grave F. D. 14	
4	1734012	Gnr	Blackburn, James	RA	95 LAA Bty	48 LAA Regt RA (TA)	Victoria, London		28-Mar-43	36	Jesselton PW Camp	Labuan War Cemetery Grave H. A. 4	
5	1216038	Cpl	Bond, Arthur George	RAF (VR)			Victoria, London		02-Feb-43	37	Jesselton PW Camp	Labuan War Cemetery Grave F. D. 9	
6	987409	AC1	Booth, James Bradshaw	RAF (VR)		84 Sqn RAF	Bolton, Lancashire		12-Feb-43	28	Jesselton PW Camp	Labuan War Cemetery Grave H. A. 1	

The RA Memorial Society (RAMS) paid for 10 high quality Rolls of Honour to be printed and bound. I presented a Roll of Honour to the Sabah Government on 7 March 2016 and it now lies in the Sabah Museum. On 13 November 2016 I presented a copy at the RA Service of Remembrance at the RA Memorial Hyde Park, London. This copy now lies in the Church of St Agnes with St Barbara, the RA Garrison Church at Larkhill, below the Sandakan Plaque.

In the meantime I had initiated and overall organised SABAH SALUTE, the RA Act of Remembrance. Planning started in earnest in 2008 and during various recesses to Sabah, I met the British High Commissioner to Malaysia and some of his staff, State ministers, senior Malaysian military and police, influential locals, expats and Australians who came over each year for ANZAC Day (25 April) and Sandakan Day (VJ Day 15 August).

SABAH SALUTE occurred in 2011. After Sandakan Day, 15 August 2011, the RA Marching Contingent started walking the 164 mile Death March Route. It was the first time any military had walked the complete route since 1945. They arrived at Ranau on 25 August 2011. On 27 August 2011, the Royal Artillery held the Service of Remembrance at the Kundasang War Memorial. The RA Memorial was unveiled and Archdeacon Moses Chin blessed and dedicated it. The March and the Service was a powerful statement of Remembrance. The 27 August was chosen for the RA Service of Remembrance as this was the date the last 15 POWs were executed on 27 August 1945 at Ranau.

It was after SABAH SALUTE that I was asked whether I was going to write a book about the WW2 history of the British POWs in Sabah. I informed people that I had already started my research in 2008 and my aim was to publish in time for VJ 75th Anniversary. Initially my plan was to tell the British POW story as the two Australian books hardly mentioned them. But my research plan all changed.

The Initial Research Plan

My plan, based on my database, was to research and write about the British POWs in Sabah. My plan was in chapters. So I researched about the raising and deployment to South East Asia of the five Air Defence Regiments RA, their fighting in Singapore and the Netherlands East Indies (NEI), ultimate capture and Java POW Camps, their move and short time in Changi and then their 'hell ship' voyage and transfer to the Batu Tiga Jesselton POW Camp (Kota Kinabalu), BNB and finally Sandakan, the Death Marches and Ranau. It became apparent that information on Sandakan became very limited to mainly Australian sources when the majority of the British officers and two RAF LACs were transferred to Batu Lintang, Kuching, Sarawak. After this transfer, there was no British source material for BNB. The remaining 641 British POWs in BNB all perished.

There were other strands. What happened to the POWs who were transferred to Batu Lintang in 1943? What happened to the 100 POWs who were transferred to Labuan in late 1944? And what about the internees in BNB who were all transferred to Batu Lintang and the BNB locals. They were all part of the history and had a story to tell.

The Revised Research Plan

I was well aware of Mission Creep and rabbit holes and warrens but I could not escape the fact that I had to tell the total story. My research expanded exponentially. My research of Borneo in general outline covered:

- BNB POWs, internees, locals.
- Labuan POWs and internees.
- Brunei POWs, internees and locals.
- Sarawak POWs, internees and locals.
- Dutch Borneo POWs, internees and locals.
- The Japanese invasion of Borneo and the fighting.
- The Japanese Administration 1941-1945.
- Z Force and KINGFISHER.
- The Australian liberation of Borneo.
- Recuperation in Labuan and repatriation to the UK.

I had set myself an enormous task. I created a list of general sources, which was further subdivided into sections. Also I had to travel; UK, Singapore, Labuan, Sabah, Sarawak, Brunei and Australia. I also walked 80 miles of the jungle part of the Death March route to meet locals in the interior and get a feel for the jungle on the Death March route; why, no jungle is the same. I wanted to write with that knowledge of the route taken, as I was going to write about it. These overseas locations were coordinated with our holidays. This overseas research involved visiting archives, interviewing locals and trekking in the jungle. I was very much beholden to key authors and their books, various libraries, and archives. The internet was a godsend and I found information that was buried deep. As an example, General MacArthur's briefing map showing the various Japanese withdrawal routes in Borneo. The Google translation facility was very useful, in particular when viewing Dutch papers and articles. Likewise reading old newspapers pre and post war in Sarawak. Wikipedia was a rich store of information, though its historical material is considered inaccurate. I found at the end of any Wikipedia source material the names of books and their authors. This enabled me to request and borrow books from the various libraries. A hint: get the librarians on side!

As I amassed this enormous amount of information, finding many rabbit holes if not warrens, I was well aware that I had no title for the book. To me the title is an aim, an objective, a single purpose for the book and a suitable and striking name was eluding me. It came to me in a eureka moment as I was marshalling facts and figures. The sheer awfulness that was occurring across Borneo, involving POWs, internees, locals, 'ramusha' (Javanese coolies), and indeed the Japanese, revealed Borneo as a graveyard. The deaths were truly terrible with 99.75% of the BNB POWs perishing and 16% of the Sabahan population dying through massacre, starvation, malnutrition and disease during the Japanese occupation. I had my focus and an apt title *"The Borneo Graveyard 1941-1945"*.

In 2017 I gave a talk 'On Researching Borneo' at the FEPOW History Research Group Conference, LSTM, Liverpool. I have therefore used some of my Ppt slides to illustrate my research, the difficulties, corroborating facts, inaccuracies, uncovered history and new facts. Hopefully with these slides it will make for easy reading.

Research Difficulties

There were many research difficulties which are in general highlighted in this slide.

Research Difficulties

- No unit diary or RAF log survived the fighting in Sumatra and Java. They were all destroyed
- Dependant on personal accounts. Variance in detail
- Java Party diaries were only useful for BNB up to August 1943, when majority of officers plus two ORs went to Batu Lintang
- After August 1945, there were no UK survivors in BNB, Labuan, Brunei or Miri
- In BNB, dependant upon the accounts of the six Australian survivors & local Sabahans from August 1943 to August 1945
- Perceptions of the diarist
- Inaccuracies, differing observations, opinions & interpretations of events

But the greatest variance was between a POW/Internee accounts written whilst in captivity, alongside the former POW/Internee accounts written whilst being repatriated to the UK or several years after the incident. Time mellows memories and statements or the writer or orator remembers something's but not others. Also there were diarists' perceptions of an incident that were at variance to others; a contradiction of facts or a dislike of an individual. Two viewpoints!

Undisclosed or Incorrect Facts

Once an historical book is written, invariably new information appears to invalidate a fact or situation of previous history books. Whilst researching I found several, some of which were deeply hidden in the Imperial War Museum, listening to IWM Oral Histories or given to me by relatives of FEPOWs or internees. These facts have corrected what was then considered historical fact.

I have highlighted a few instances using slides:

Historical & Diary Inaccuracies

Inaccuracies & Perceptions

- Brig Lewenden's COFEPOW article 'Gunners in Java 1942.' Two troops of 89 LAA Bty were lost at sea with only one survivor
- Gen Farndale wrote: only 12 HAA Bty were at the Battle of Kalidjati with 40 KIA & the CO 6 HAA Regt (Lt Col Baass) was 'lost in action'

Accuracies & Fact

- There was only one death, L/Bdr Spencer. The remainder got to Sumatra via Java. Harris was on board the vessel. (2Lt JB Harris RA IWM Docu 3157)
- 49 LAA Bty was also there. They lost 63 KIA or executed. 12 HAA Bty 40 KIA or executed. RAF 29 and RAAF 43 KIA or executed. The CO (Lt Col Baillie) was relieved of his command by Maj Gen Sitwell. Baass changed his name by deed poll in 1941

Historical & Diary Inaccuracies

Inaccuracies & Perceptions

- "No shot was fired in the defence of Sarawak. The Indian troops 2/15 Punjab Regiment (2/15 PR) just play football all the time and won't fight" – statement by the Rane of Sarawak on her arrival in Australia in late 1941

Accuracies & Fact

- The Miri Detachment of 2/15 PR completed partial denial of the Miri & Lutong oil fields & refineries
- 2/15 PR with HKS artillery troop, RE troop, an RAF detachment and Sarawak Rangers fought bravely in & around Kuching & the landing ground. IJA suffered KIA 374, 1122-1870 WIA.
- 2/15 PR group, then conducted an **800 mile fighting withdrawal**, through the Borneo jungle, losing half the battalion during the withdrawal. Near Singkawang II, the IJA suffered 500 – 600 KIA in one action. Out of ammo and food, 2/15 PR surrendered on 4 April 1942 at Pangkalanboen, Dutch Borneo

Historical & Diary Inaccuracies

Inaccuracies & Perceptions

There were Dutch interpretations of events. An example by Capt RA Baron MacKay KNIL, the Dutch Liaison Officer at Wavell's & then Sitwell's HQ. He writes in his report (IWM Docu 8148) that:

'on the 7 March, Sitwell's flight with his full staff, all and sundry'.....and 'General Sitwell's "elopement" and 'to submit to captivity' 'after their (British) 3 or 4 days show of resistance (against the Japanese) had been good reason for our jailors (Japanese) to punish us in their heartless way'

Accuracies & Fact

Sitwell was at GHQ Tjikadjang on 7 March 1942, where it had moved to on 6 March 1942. He was in discussions with von Oyen at his HQ

Furthermore, the British surrender on 9 March 1942, was forced on them by the DEI surrender on 8 March 1942 by the Dutch Governor General NEI

I believe Baron MacKay was a 'Blijver,' the equivalent of the South African 'Boer'

I found Captain RA Baron MacKay KNIL accounts of his time as a Liaison Officer (LO) very biased. I do not believe he knew or understand the duties of a LO. I have been a LO on occasion and it is the LO's job to find out what is going on and where HQs and units are moving from/to. Moreover it is his job to get on with the staff he is attached to. I believe his 'Blijver' upbringing unfortunately soured his attitude. The 'Blijver' attitude to the British is well recorded in diaries and post war reports.

One of the most extraordinary historical inaccuracies was the statement by the Ranees of Sarawak, claiming on her arrival in Australia, that the Indian troops would not fight, terrified the locals and only played football. Their fighting withdrawal of 800 miles is an epic story of battalion and individual bravery and courage. 2/15 PR lost half its men in its withdrawal.

Historical & Diary Inaccuracies

Inaccuracies & Perceptions	Accuracies & Fact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "No shot was fired in the defence of Sarawak. The Indian troops 2/15 Punjab Regiment (2/15 PR) just play football all the time and won't fight" – statement by the Ranees of Sarawak on her arrival in Australia in late 1941 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Miri Detachment of 2/15 PR completed partial denial of the Miri & Lutong oil fields & refineries 2/15 PR with HKS artillery troop, RE troop, an RAF detachment and Sarawak Rangers fought bravely in & around Kuching & the landing ground. IJA suffered KIA 374, 1122-1870 WIA. 2/15 PR group, then conducted an 800 mile fighting withdrawal, through the Borneo jungle, losing half the battalion during the withdrawal. Near Singkawang II, the IJA suffered 500 – 600 KIA in one action. Out of ammo and food, 2/15 PR surrendered on 4 April 1942 at Pangakalanboen, Dutch Borneo

Borneo 1941 – 1945

2/15 PR fighting withdrawal 25 Dec 41 – 4 Apr 42

Sandakan Cemetery 1945

Gunner (Gnr) AE Potter is actually Gnr AH Potter. Lance Bombardier (LBdr) SA White is actually LBdr CE White. Incorrect grave markers at the Sandakan POW cemetery, before the bodies were reinterred at the CWGC Labuan.

This is one of the major photographs taken of the Sandakan POW Cemetery. CWGC Labuan has the corrected grave stones.

Diary & Letter Variations & Perceptions

<p>Flt Lt Peter Lee RAF</p> <p><i>".....the main reason for diary writing, in my case, was to keep my mind active and enquiring"</i></p> <p><i>My secondary aim was to be a good reporter not only of events <u>but of my feelings</u>"</i></p> <p><small>from Kill the Prisoners by Don Wall and Flt Lt Peter E I Lee RAF diary</small></p> <p>Diary of extraordinary detail. Yet acerbic comments of fellow POWs. Coloured authors' perceptions of British POW behaviour in Jesselton & Sandakan</p>	<p>Other diarists at variation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capt IC Paterson RA Capt AG Threadgold RA Capt HDA Yates RAOC Lt SE Bagnall RA Lt FE Bell RA 2Lt TW Hobbs RA 2Lt JB Harris RA Sqn Ldr EE Hardie RAF (letter to Sqn Ldr Dixon RAF)
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Diary and letter variations and perceptions occurred. A prime example was the difference in opinions or reporting between Peter Lee and the other diarists. Often they agreed but at other times they did not and Lee was selective at times in his reporting and his personal feelings.

As I researched POW and Internee records, I found information in the depths of various diaries and reports that had not been written about. In addition, I was given private material which was not in the public domain. Furthermore, I was given information by locals, which again was not in the public domain. Some of the locals agreed for their family story to be told, others agreed but did not want their names attributed to the source. But the material raises many questions, which requires further research but was beyond my time or scope or resources.

Uncovered History?		Pot Pori of Local Information	
New facts?	Source	Event	Source
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30 UK POWs executed off Kuching and/or 30 UK POWs died on board the hell ship sailing to Jesselton Toss of a coin decided the Java Party fate. Russell & Hardie Jesselton POW Camp. One acre for 838 - 876 POWs, camp smelt from over 300 yards away & guards wore face masks. Raw sewage flowed Was there a plan for a Jesselton – Tenom Death March of 90 - 110 miles in Feb 43 for 200 POWs? Was there a Death March from Brunei Town to Kuala Belait 3 – 27 May 45 with UK POWs? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Philip Crosland obituary or AIF report by 3 Australian PWC & I Unit dated 24 Sep 45 Witnessed by Lt DF Campion (personal diary) Sqn Ldr Hardie RAF (letter to Sqn Ldr Dixon RAF), Lt Bagnall RA papers & Sikh elders who were in Jesselton 1942 - 43 Fit Lt Lee RAF. He writes about a possible move of 200 POWs by foot to build an aerodrome near Tenom Talks with Kok Wei Soon, BGOM chef, Brunei. In 1945, The Age, The Advocate, The Argus report of a death march to Kuala Belait 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> POWs sighted in May 1945 struggling into Kuala Belait from direction of Brunei Town Her mother & 3 month old baby hiding in jungle & caves from Japanese for 3 years. Survived Kampong near Sinian, Sarawak. Locals killed & ate a collaborator. Not an uncommon event 5 man Iban group killed over 100 Japanese with blowpipe & parang Killing Japanese by blowpipe and parang in Mulu area, Sarawak His grandmother, as a 14 year old girl, married 65 year old elder to escape becoming a comfort woman 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kok Wei Soon, chef BGOM. As told him by his grandmother. Recounted to me in 2013 Daughter, Chin Tong Boi (Beverly), a Kadazan Chinese. TYK specialist guide. Recounted to me in 2016 Christiana Lim, a Bidayuh Chinese. As told to her by her mother. Recounted to me in 2016 Zudin, a member of the group. Recounted to me in 2010 & 2016 'Uncle' Nelson Usong, a Penan guide. Recounted to me in 2000 Waiter in the STAR. His grandmother's story. Recounted to me in 2012

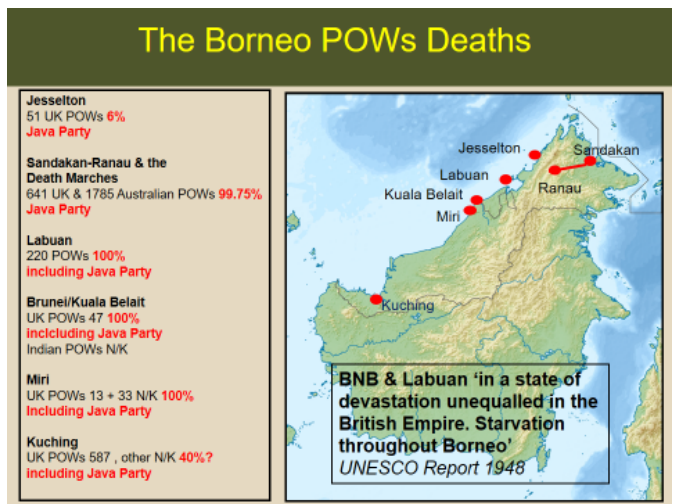
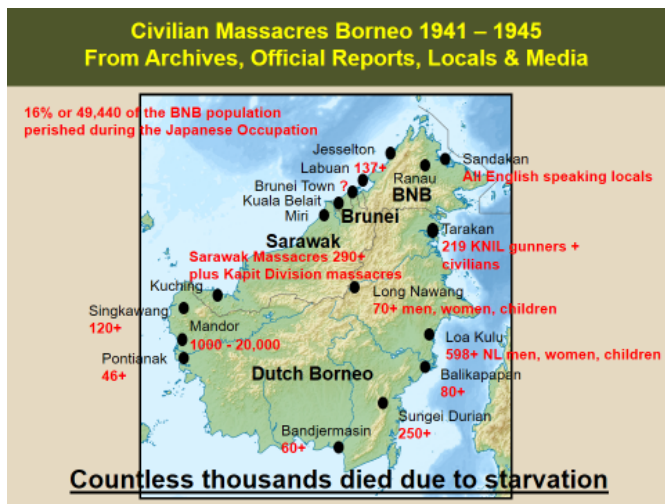
Gathered Information was like a detective story, but of a complexity and strands far greater than any fiction, but most importantly, this information involved real people not fictional characters. My white board and officer walls were covered with yellow 'stick it' notes. The above two slides are a small part of the related history and a microcosm of the whole history of Borneo.

Recorded Deaths, Executions and Massacres

Initially finding the facts of the POWs was quite straight forward. Lynette Silver and Don Wall had the death roll of the POWs. Silver with Sabah totals and Wall with the BNB POW totals. But their information was limited and so I created my database of eleven columns. There were discrepancies in name spellings, unit, date of death and location. The CWGC and the AWM often as not would give contradictory information. There was a fine line of fact when taking into consideration the details furnished by Lee in his diary, and Cummings and Smith in their books. 587 British POWs died at Batu Lintang, yet some sources quote over 600 and further sources that approximately 200 British POWs are not accounted for. I could only go for best guess.

Local details are accurate in some instances and approximation in others. As an example, Mandor in Dutch Borneo shows between 1,000 and 20,000 were executed there. And then there is the story of John Bodestyne RAMC(V) who is commemorated at Kranji on the Singapore Memorial Column 105. He was actually executed and buried in Miri on 13 June 1945. UNESCO in their November 1948 report quote only 6,000 died in BNB at the hands of the Japanese. That figure is the number who were massacred or executed after the Double Tenth or Albert Kwok Uprising in BNB. In fact 16% or over 49,000 Sabahans perished during the Japanese Occupation using the 1932 census figure as the start point.

The map displaying civilian and local massacres shows only the major massacres in Borneo. The Double Tenth Uprising where 6,000 were either massacred or executed are within the BNB figure of 49,000. There were many massacres or executions in kampongs throughout Borneo.

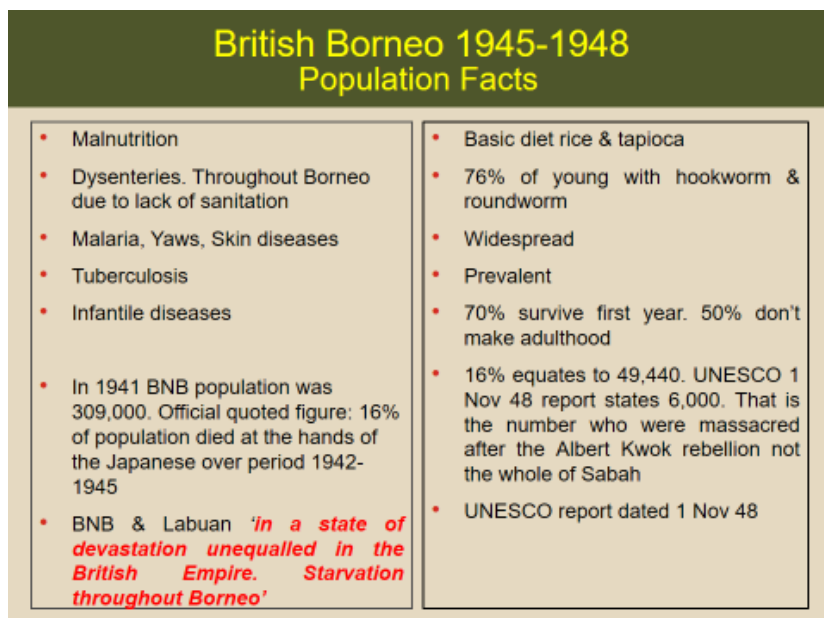


The Borneo POW Deaths map does not show the number of internees who died in captivity, nor the number of Australians who were killed in action liberating Borneo. Their figures in total were in their hundreds. The Javanese 'ramusha' estimated figure is between 4,000 - 7,500 deaths.

The Japanese figures ran into thousands, including those killed by Z Force. Their death march in BNB is estimated at between 6,000 and 8,000. There are no estimations of Japanese casualties withdrawing in Dutch Borneo or Sarawak. I unearthed MacArthur's briefing map of the various withdrawal routes during my research but there were no estimated Japanese casualties attached. I can only believe their casualties in Dutch Borneo must have been similar to that of BNB.

Local Population

The local population of Borneo suffered terribly during the occupation but the human after effects of the occupation lasted for years. Disease and malnutrition had a debilitating effect on the population as shown on the slide. These facts were for BNB only; I could not find anything about Sarawak or Dutch Borneo



What is not shown in this slide, is that there was no schooling in Borneo from 1941-1945. This had a drastic effect on the education of thousands on Borneo's young. An 18/19 year old had the reading and writing ability of an 11 year old.

This educational stagnation of the young affected the recovery of Borneo for years. Now, the young of Borneo are ardent practisers of education.

Liberation of Borneo, Labuan Hospitalisation and Repatriation.

The liberation of Borneo was a masterpiece of Australian operational planning. The three OBOE operations were brilliantly executed by the Australian forces however research showed the infighting and the manoeuvrings of the Australian and British Governments. In British Borneo, the Australian forces liberated Batu Lintang and the POWs and internees, who were then hospitalised in Labuan. The diaries and letters praised the Australians for their care. The Australian military were doing a truly magnificent job in rebuilding infrastructure, airfields, roads, the BNB railway, education facilities and all against the manoeuvring of the Curtin Government who wanted Borneo as an Australian Mandated Territory. The strands of that research were rather Machiavellian in their finding!

And repatriation to the UK. Diaries and letters showed what joy to be going home and what fears they held. The former FEPOW and internee homecoming was not a glorious part of our history. They came back to a war worn country with little interest in them. The FEPOW Researching History Group Conference highlighted that former FEPOWS and internees owed so much to Queen Mary's Hospital Roehampton and the LSTM. It was here that I was able to research further; not on Borneo but on repatriation.

And finally, my research on Lt Gen AE Percival, a man reviled by many former FEPOWs for surrendering Singapore; they were unaware of the full facts of the surrender. He was terribly let down by his generals who wanted surrender. Percival most definitely did not want to surrender. He retired in 1946 and spent the remainder of his life devoted to building up the FEPOW organisation. He was instrumental in winning £5 million (valued today at £210,981,481.48 BoE calculation) from frozen Japanese assets for the FEPOW Trust, which was a remarkable achievement. This money was used to support thousands of former FEPOWs and their families. He died in 1966 with little acknowledgment for his achievement nor for the correcting the history that blighted him for the remainder of his life.

I hope my 12 years of research and five years of writing "*The Borneo Graveyard 1941-1945*" has gone some way to updating history and bringing to the forefront the barely known history of Borneo during the Japanese Occupation 1941-1945.

Addendum:

A number of relatives of FEPOWs and Internees who have bought my book, have subsequently contacted me, thanking me for bringing to light what their relative had gone through. Some have offered further information from diaries or letters found in attics and old suitcases. But one comment stands out from a son of a FEPOW:

'I have not enough praise for 'The Borneo Graveyard'. The coverage of all aspects not only of the POW, the Camps, the local people but also the sense of history. I have read the book twice and can honestly say you have given the fallen and survivors a place in a tragic episode in military history'.

The FEPOW and internee story is clouded within a deafening chamber of silence, an Order of Silence and their reluctance to talk about what happened. I just hope I have lifted the lid of history and what they suffered.