

The Jungle Drum

NMBVA Newsletter

March 2022 Issue No 6 Spring Edition



Contents:

Chairman's Message

Secretaries Message

Presidents Message

Sgt Yogi Bear

Arboreritum Reunion

David Kerr 23 PFA

Farewell Arthur Payne

Fort Auchry Visit

Aboretum Reunion

Save the Scarf VC

Lest We Forget

.....and finally



Pingat Jasa Malaysia

Message from the National Chairman, John Measham



I hope this finds you all in good health and spirits.

We are delighted to receive an acceptant message from our New President, Lt Colonel Tex Pemberton OBE, and welcome him on-board.

After a quiet few months since Christmas, the NEC are coming out of hibernation, and our Secretary Gillian Bowtell is organising a visit to the

National Memorial Arboretum, please read the details below in this edition.

We have also been in talks with the RAF Butterworth & Penang Association, regarding holding a joint reunion in October this year, although we agreed this was the way ahead for our associations, with memberships falling due to declining numbers every year, however, it was too late to arrange a reunion this year, as the hotel was already fully booked. We will now look forward to 2024 Reunion with our veteran brothers and sisters.

Another milestone for us, as Malay veterans this year, it is the 60th Anniversary of the "Borneo Confrontation" which started on the 20th January 1963, in which I'm sure that the majority of our ordinary members took part in, remembering "Hearts and Minds" and "Operation Claret"

Looking forward to the summer and warmer weather, I hope our branches have enjoyable days out and events, that showcase our their branch and the association.

Happy and warmer days ahead, to all our members.

Message from the National Secretary, Gillian Bowtell



Hello everyone. spring is here and hopefully our Branches and members will be out and about in Some warmer weather. You will note from our Chairman, I am organising an event at the National Memorial Arboretum in June for our members. Information has already been sent out to branches via their secretaries and our postal and standing order members will be

receiving hard copies of the same in the next week or so.

I have been having a few problems with my NMBVA email address recently so I must apologise if you have sent me messages and I have not replied and equally so if you haven't heard from me although I have been sending mail out. Hopefully I have now sorted out the gremlins in the system.

As you all are aware we now have a new President Tex Pemberton since Sir Garry Johnson stepped down at the last AGM. Tex has kindly sent all members a message as follows:

Message from our President Lieutenant Colonel Tex Pemberton OBE



I am humbled but deeply honoured and delighted to have been asked to replace General Sir Garry Johnson as your association President. As one of your former National Chairman I am aware of the quality of our members, their wide experience, and the spirit of comradeship that exists in our association.



We are widely well considered and would aim always to raise our profile at every opportunity in support of our able Executive committee.

General Sir Garry served us so well over many years and his boots will be hard to fill, but I vow to dedicate my efforts once again in support of our splendid forum.

I wish all our Members and their families good health and good fortune at this difficult time with cost of living and exceptional energy cost. I look forward to meeting you all again at some opportunity in 2023 renewing our true bond of friendship and happy memories of yore.



Sgt Yogi Bear Tampin

The history of the photo with Sgt Yogi Bear. 22 AD Regiment RA Equipped with L70 40 MM Bofor Guns were stationed in Llanelli Barracks Hubbelrath near Düsseldorf.

In 1965 the Regiment was informed they were posted to Malaya and Borneo to take over from our sister Regt 12 Regt RA who were there.

The whole Regt including families would fly out from Düsseldorf to Kuala Lumpur 53 (Louisburg) Bty RA was to take over in Kuching, 42 Bty RA would go to Singapore HQ would be in Tampin. We travelled by Caledonian Airways and it took 24 hours to fly there stopping off for refuelling in Turkey and Ceylon.

On arrival at KL. we were taken by coach to Tampin and there allocated MQ. there was not one available for me and Eileen we were put up in the Tampin Rest House a Bamboo building in the jungle, we stayed there until friend put us up in his MQ. until me and Eileen eventually got one in Seremban on Rahsa Road.

I flew from RAF Seleta in Singapore to Kuching and helped the BQMS took over the Guns from the other Bty. When peace was declared another Regiment took over from us so our stay was cut a bit short.

Yogi Bear in the picture(below) was rescued from the jungle as his mother had been killed.

The Regiment allowed us to make him a Bty Mascot and a L/Bdr looked after him, we returned to the UK and were posted to Tonfanau Camp in North Wales near Aberystwyth. Yogi became too angry to control and we did not have the correct food for him or accommodation so it was decided to give him to Wrexham Zoo, Blue Peter team was there to see the hand over.

In the newspapers it was shown as Lt Simon Smith and his Dancing bear at Wrexham Zoo.



Sgt Yogi Bear(4th from the right)

Sgt Clive Boyles(top right) who had sent in this article.



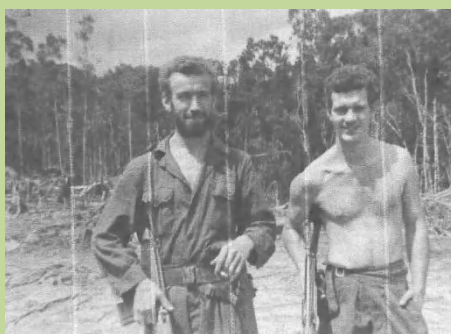
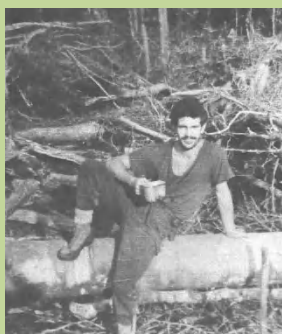
23 Parachute Field Ambulance

Prior to our posting we were sent to civilian hospitals. We were treated like medical students and taught procedures such as lancing, suturing and nerve blocks. Dentistry was taught in a military hospital and was invaluable to the amount and conditions in which I had to extract teeth. We watched hours of films which were pertaining and relevant to our 'Hearts and Minds' operation in Borneo. Our training did not include any information relating to gynaecological conditions or with pregnancy issues (sign of those times). Information that would have helped me when I was the only medic in the village and a local woman suffered a miscarriage in the night. Although I provided care and issued her with analgesics and antibiotics it was a radio to base to confirm my course of action.

Prior to being stationed in Borneo, I was attached to the Independent Paratroop Guards Unit, they were sent training with the SAS. As I was attached to the SAS I also received weaponry training. I was a medic so only to use those skills if needed.

I removed toe nails with nerve blocks and at one point was threatened with disciplinary action until the M.O. said I had performed an excellent job!

I was with The Punan Tribe who were hunter gathers, they had no contact with civilisation. I soon spoke the language helped by the local children and a guide book.



*Submitted by David Kerr (above)
Treasurer of Pontypridd Branch*



Farewell to Arthur Reginald Payne

Our Secretary, Gillian Bowtell attended the Funeral of Arthur Payne, at Barry Crematorium South Wales. Arthur signed up at the age of 21 and was in the Royal Marine 40 Cdo and served for 9 years. The Pontypridd Branch secretary, Ken Terry Paraded the Standard and former QA Nurse, Malayan Veteran and NMBVA Member, Maria Kerr also attended.

Arthur's nephew, Steve, kindly supplied the photos below of Arthur's time in Malaya/Borneo.



Fort Auchry Penang, a trip down memory Lane, by Roger Thomas

Looking back, life as an army child was fascinating. It took us to amazing places we would never have seen, exposed us to different races, religions and cultures and gave us a lifelong love of travel.



In 1958, when Dad was posted to the far east from the ranges of Inchterf in Scotland, our adventures began. A troop ship took us to Singapore, where after a short stay in Nee Soon, we travelled onwards to Penang. Arriving in Penang we were put up at the Eastern and Oriental Hotel for a few days before our married quarters were ready.

*Left. Roger, Dawn with their Father
WO1 Thomas RA, in the 1960's*

Fort Auchry was designed and built as a Counter-Bombardment Battery and was almost completed in December 1941 just as the Japanese arrived and overran the Malayan peninsula. The gun emplacements never received the guns they were going to get and the tunnels and magazine beneath the emplacements were never used. It never became operational and after the war was over, the camp was used as married quarters to house both UK and ANZAC families. The block we were given and occupied was originally designated as the Sergeants Mess. As a family we spent a very happy 18 months there before Dad was posted to Singapore. During the time my sister and I spent there we had a wonderful time. Growing up in what we considered a tropical paradise. Most days we spent down on the beach after school, swimming and playing without a care in the world. It left a lasting impression on the both of us and we often talked about returning to see the place that held many special memories

As is usual, life got in the way and it wasn't till we both retired that we started to plan a trip back to the far east together to see what had become of the places we lived in, particularly Fort Auchry. Plans were made for the trip in April 2020 but they were abandoned due to the ravages of COVID. Once that settled down, we looked to go back in February 2023. We started planning the trip and what it would encompass, how many days in Singapore and how many days in Penang. We have many memories of both places but Penang always stood out as the place we would most like to see. Since the withdrawal of UK forces from the far east, Fort Auchry had become a Malaysian Army base and was now known as Markas Staf Stesen Pulau Pinang. Realising that we would need permission to enter the base we looked to the Malaysian High Commission in London. We contacted them explained what we wanted to do and why and asked for help. We were advised to write to the High Commission and an email address was given. We had no response and further calls and a visit to the High Commission in London didn't render any further help. Having recently found and joined the NMBVA to explore the times we had spent in the far east and look for information about the territory, I turned to John Measham for help. Through his contacts at the High Commission in London, the ball started rolling that would eventually lead to my sister and I being granted permission to visit, and this we did on Wednesday 8th February 2023.

I was given a point of contact, Major Sidiq, the camp commander, with whom I made contact on our arrival in Penang to confirm the visit. As we arrived at the camp at 10:00 on the day we were met by a welcoming party and a photographer. Once we had produced our ID and signed in at the guardhouse, we met the Major and his team and started what would be a very enjoyable time there, something we will remember forever. After the formalities of meeting each other were over, we were given the run of the camp. It quickly became an informal group as we walked around the camp rediscovering the paradise we had spent time growing up in. The Major and his team had only been there for two years so happy to point out what they knew of the camp but were very interested in what had changed since our time there over 60 years ago. The guard house and the block attached to it remain unchanged. The block we lived in remained unchanged. Several other blocks were also unchanged, it was a wonderful surprise for us that we could recognise so much. We walked through the camp and looked at the tunnels which were unlocked for our visit. Passing through the centre of the camp we found some new buildings and a large car park that had been built over the old gun emplacements. The private beach has been fenced off as a security precaution, although we could walk down the

original steps we did as children and look at the beach beyond. We walked all around the camp again talking as we went and asking questions of each other, it was a great exchange and we all enjoyed the time we spent together. We walked back to the Major's office where he had brought out several aerial photos of the camp from 1957 up to the present date.



The house in 1960

From this we were able to show them the gun emplacements that had been built over and we could see where the new buildings had been added. We were then invited to sit and eat with the men which was a really nice touch. Roti, dhal and sambal plus really good nasi lemak were consumed and washed down by some teh Tarik.



Maj Sidiq(centre) share aerial photo's of the old camp

After more talking and a lot of laughter, we thanked the Major and his team for a great visit, great company and excellent food and took our leave, but not before more photos were taken.

It was a wonderful day for us, certainly emotional, just seeing very little had changed was astonishing. We made new friends and now have new memories to cherish together with our old ones. To thank the Major and his team, the following day we delivered a selection of local kuih muih for them to enjoy with a kopi. It was a great day.



The author (centre) Roger Thomas, with his sister, Dawn and CO Maj Sidiq (left of the author)



Arboretum NMBVA Reunion 9th June 2023

Our Secretary, Gillian Bowtell has organised a reunion at the National Arboretum Memorial. Starting at 10.45 for all members, this will included a service at the NMBVA memorial, conducted by our Padre, Archbishop Paul Miles-Knight, followed by a cold fork buffet lunch. Booking forms and information for the June NMA event have been sent to all Branch Secretaries by email for distribution to their members. Postal Members have the information and booking forms by Royal Mail which should be received by members in the post by 31st March. The cost to members is £7.50 inclusive, members may bring one quest. This would be a good time to meet up after the last 3 years, you can also and meet our new President Tex Pemberton, also Malaysian Defence Advisor, Brig General Safwan Ismail has been invited, who we hope will attend.

For details and an application form, please contact **Gillian Bowtell** by email ymbva.gmb@gmail.com or by telephone on **07767425119**.

Save the Scarf VC

**We need your support to raise
£250,000 by 30 April 2023!**

Without your help, Arthur Scarf's medal will
be sent overseas and lost to the nation.

Arthur Scarf was the recipient of the only Victoria Cross awarded to the
Royal Air Force during the fighting in the Far East in the Second World
War. The medal has been sold at auction, but we have been given the
opportunity to fundraise and match the
sale price. This will allow the Royal Air
Force Museum to display the medal
and share Arthur's amazing story.

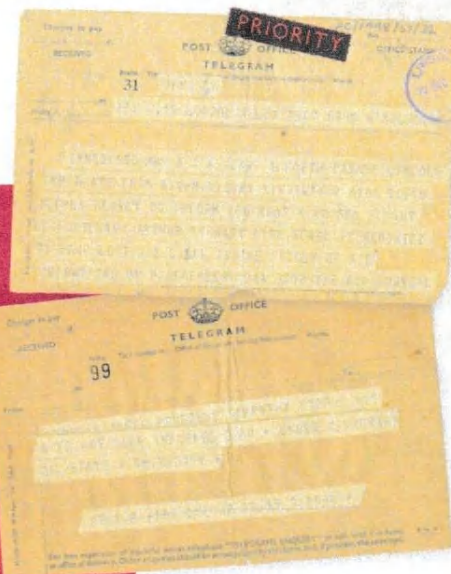


Help us save it for the nation!



Donate now by
scanning the QR
code or head to
rafmuseum.org to
discover more.

#SaveTheScarfVC



fundraising@rafmuseum.org

The Royal Air Force Museum is incorporated by Royal Charter (RC000922)
and is a charity registered in England and Wales (1197541).

**ROYAL
AIR FORCE
museum**



60th Anniversary of the Borneo Confrontation

The Indonesia–Malaysia confrontation or Borneo confrontation also known by
its Indonesian / Malay name, *Konfrontasi*) was an armed conflict from 20th January 1963 to 11th
August 1966 that stemmed from Indonesia's opposition to the creation of state
of Malaysia from the Federation of Malaya. After Indonesian President Sukarno was deposed in
1966, the dispute ended peacefully and the nation of Malaysia was formed.





Lest We Forget

Maj. General Anthony Meire CB OBE_(Retd) 17 Sept 2022

Stanley Anderson 30 January 2023 Postal South

Arthur Reginald Payne 9 February 2023

Cyril J Dixon 20 February 2023 Postal North

Edward (Ted) Jones 3 March 2023 Solent Branch

William (Billy) Jameison March 2023 Northern Ireland

Rest in Peace



.....and finally

