

Smashing Terrorism in the **Malayan Emergency**

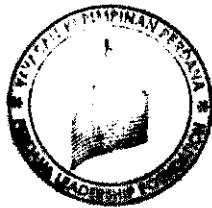
Bahan asal dari Arkib
Negara Malaysia

BRIAN STEWART, C.M.G., M.C.S.

Smashing Terrorism in the **Malayan Emergency**

The Vital Contribution of the Police

Bahan asal dari Arkib
Negara Malaysia



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*In memory of all those gallant young men in the
Malayan Police who risked, and sometimes
gave, their lives during the Emergency.*

FOREWORD

MORE USED TO reviewing rather than forewording books, the first thing to say, in either capacity, is that for me this is utterly engaging. Academic reviewers often sniff at volumes of essays or conference proceedings - 'uneven quality' etc. - but academic reviewers seldom live dangerously. Nor do they always know how it feels. This is real. The body of evidence compared to the bones or structure of scholarly argument. Some of it is delightfully inconsequential: but so is quite a lot of family history. Some of it only lifts a corner of the curtain - for example, on Nicol Gray - although far enough for inference and to modify opinions, even if one is still looking for the full Monty. At the highest-level one wonders why no one mentions Arthur Young nor, for that matter Langworthy, Jenkin or Madoc. But this, again, reveals the historian's predisposition to believe that change comes from the top rather than from the bottom.

For me and for anyone else who may still need convincing, the overwhelming importance of what happened at the bottom is hereinafter revealed. Yes, it was fortuitous that as soon as the Mandate in Palestine ended, the Emergency in Malaya began. But how kampong Malays and British police lieutenants bonded to produce the indispensable security for the rubber estates and just how much work went into creating a special constabulary from nothing is certainly something that has hardly been taken into account, at least by me.

One knows that for every soldier who was killed, two policemen died. Not a lot of people, however, would know how fraught the situation was at the beginning and that police lieutenants could be killed within days of arrival without firing a shot. And there are few who have known the eventual, awful and terminal silence of ambush as well as the mayhem and fury when it begins. These are the unaffected and understated accounts of those who were at the sharp end. There is some very fine writing. If I were to mention one or two pieces, they would be those on 'Q' operations: because the authors had more space for their nar-

rative; and because they had me dry-mouthed with fear and excitement. Also, for the historian, the revelation that half of the remnants of an Armed Work Force - admittedly down to four in September 1956 - were women and that a woman State Committee Member in Negri Sembilan had another female comrade as her second in command.

Elsewhere there is humour, pathos, and a glorious piece of near libel on visitors from Westminster. There is the unaffected charm of the animal stories and snippets, a reminder not to bounce your Sten gun on the ground and so many changing pictures, shapes and colours as to produce a genuine, old-fashioned kaleidoscope.

Presumably this is what Brian Stewart had in mind: but it is astonishing, nevertheless. At an age when he might reasonably have put on his carpet slippers, to have sought out and compiled these first-hand testimonies has given us a monument to the Malayan Police. Many of the experiences were shared. Each of these accounts is unique. I hope it is not too sentimental to see it as a remarkable family history; and I am honoured that Brian has asked me to write this foreword. May I, in turn, honour the achievements, the bravery, and the steadfastness of those who served, and especially those who died.

*Anthony Short
Crathie, Aberdeenshire*

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I HAVE A great number of people to thank for help in moving 'Operation Sharp End' from plan to reality.

The Committee of the Royal Malaysia Police Former Officers' Association (RMPFOA) without whose support and encouragement the project would never have got off the ground, particularly the indefatigable Honorary Secretary, Paddy Giles, the Deputy Chairman, Gus Fletcher, and the Chairman, Simon Hutchinson,

Tun Mohammed Hanif Omar, former Inspector General of Police, Tan Sri Mohd Amin bin Osman, former Deputy Inspector General and their colleagues in Malaysia, and other old Malaysian friends such as Datuk Amar Leo Moggie and Datin Amar Elizabeth, and Michael Thompson. My thanks also go to Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie and Tan Sri Khir Johari for their encouragement in this project.

I thank them all; particularly for the warm and generous welcome they gave me when Michael and I visited Kuala Lumpur in 2001 to seek their help and guidance.

I must express my deep gratitude to those former Royal Malaysia Police Officers who have unhesitatingly given me permission to use material from their books. Dato' Seri Yuan Yuet Leng, Dato' Mohd Pilus Yusoh, Dato' J.J. Raj (Jnr), Mr Leong Chee Woh, Mr Thambapillay and Mr Roy Follows.

It would be invidious and, indeed, impossible without devoting a chapter to the subject, to discuss the relative merits of the contributions of each individual who helped in this project. Some wrote encouragement but did not submit material; some sent photographs and documents and many submitted texts, which varied in length from half a page to 120 pages. The Bible has it that, "Many are called, but few are chosen." I hope those who were not chosen will accept my sincere thanks for their support and understand my problems.

I must also thank Professors Stockwell, Turnbull and O'Halpin, and Emeritus Professor Anthony Kirk-Green, and John Gullick for their encouragement, advice and help. There is one

other academic, Steve Hurst, to whom I owe a particular debt of gratitude as an expert on the Malayan archives and an artist.

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Last but by no means least, I must acknowledge the wonderful support given to me by Heather Hooker who has, with her cheerful efficiency, turned my dog's breakfast drafts into text, and to my long suffering wife, Sally, who proof-read after tolerating the long gestation period.

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GLOSSARY AND CONVENTIONS

ADO	Assistant District Officer.
Alliance Party	An alliance of the principal Malay, Chinese and Indian parties.
Anjing	Dog.
AO	Administrative Officer. The title given to District Officers in the Malay States.
ADSBO	Assistant District Special Branch Officer.
Anai-Anai	White Ant.
AOCPD	Assistant Officer Commanding Police District.
AP	Auxiliary Policeman.
APC	Armoured Personnel Carrier (see GMC).
AS	Assistant Superintendent.
ASAL	The organisation developed by the MCP to control the Orang Asli.
ASP	Assistant Superintendent of Police, the rank attained by a Cadet ASP after he had passed his language and law exam and completed his probation.
Attap	A form of thatching used to make roofs and walls of buildings.
AWF	Armed Work Force (MCP term for cells of armed terrorists working on the jungle fringes under CTO direction).
Babi	Pig.
Bandits	A term in vogue at the beginning of the Emergency but abandoned in favour of CT as being dangerously reminiscent of the propaganda by the Nationalist Chinese, who were being severely trounced by the Communist 'bandits' in China.
Bangsa	Race.
Basha	A flimsy temporary shelter made from jungle plants.
BCM	Branch Committee Member (of the MCP).

Belukar	A nasty high scrub growing in secondary jungle; a formidable obstacle.
Bluff Road	Shorthand for Police Headquarters that is sited on a bluff overlooking KL.
BMA	British Military Administration which took over the administration after the Japanese surrender.
Bn	Battalion,
Bomoh	Witch Doctor.
BOR	British Other Rank; i.e. a British soldier.
Bren Gun	The highly regarded light machine gun used by the British Army throughout WWII and after. The CTs loved it.
British Adviser	The senior MCS officer in a Malay State.
British Sergeant	The predecessors of the Police Lieutenants.
Buang	Bear.
Bukit	Hill.
Central Committee	Highest authority in the MCP.
CCM	Central Committee Member of MCP.
CCP	Chinese Communist Party.
CEP	Captured Enemy Personnel.
Chandu	Opium,
Cheongsam	The slinky, sheath-like, high-collared long gown worn by Chinese women of all ages. The design, a mix of Chinese and French chic, could be stunningly attractive on the right figure, and also highly seductive since it was slit up the side to a height chosen according to taste by the wearer.
CID	Criminal Investigation Department.
CO	Commanding Officer.
Commissioner of Police	The officer in charge of* the Federation Police Force.
CPM	Colonial Police Medal for gallantry.
CPO	The senior police officer in a State or Settlement.
CT	Detective Constable.
DCM	District Committee Member of the MCP.

DLB	Dead Letter Box; i.e. prearranged hiding place in which to conceal a secret message for later collection.
DLI	Durham Light Infantry
DO	District Officer. The officer charged with overall authority for a District.
Durian	A large fruit much beloved in South East Asia, but the taste is, to put it mildly, strange and not easily acquired by visitors. Its 'fragrance' is so penetrating and long-lasting that many carriers refuse to allow it on board!
DPP	Deputy Public Prosecutor (the senior government lawyer in each State or Settlement).
Dresser	A combination of male nurse and dispenser of medicines.
DSB	Director Special Branch.
DSBO	District Special Branch Officer.
DSP	Deputy Superintendent of Police.
DWEC	District War Executive Committee chaired by the DO and attended by Military Police and civilian representatives, charged with coordinating and prosecuting the counter-terrorist campaign at District level.
DZ	Dropping Zone, the place designated for dropping supplies from the air.
EIS	Emergency Information Service. The service set up in parallel with the Information Service to handle Psywar in support of the hearts and minds programmes and counter-terrorism.
FFJS	Field Force Jungle Squad.
FJC	Federal Jungle Company; the forerunner of the PFF.
Ferret Force	An improvised counter-insurgency force created at the beginning of the Emergency, led by ex-Force 136 Officers, Chinese-speaking MCS Officers and others, to hunt down 'bandits'.
Force 136	The clandestine force tasked by SOE to fight the Japanese.
Gajah	Elephant.

GM	George Medal.
G M C	Literally General Motor Corporation. In our context, the shorthand for the 'workhorse' armoured personnel carrier.
Gunong	Mountain (Malay).
Haji	A person who has been on a pilgrimage to Mecca.
Hang Kong	Supervisor of a tin mine or other workforce.
Hantu	A ghost, a supernatural spirit. (Malay).
Haram	Unclean: forbidden. (Malay).
HG	Home Guard.
HQ	Headquarters.
HSB	Head of Special Branch (State level).
Hujan	Rain. (Malay).
Hung Mo Kwai	Red-Haired Devil (i.e. a European) (Cantonese).
Imam	The religious head of a Muslim community.
IGP	Inspector General of Police; the title of the head of the Police Force of Malaysia.
ISA	Internal Security Act.
Istana	Palace. (Malay),
Jalan	Road. (Malay).
Kampung	Village. (Malay).
Kampung Guards	Equivalent of the Home Guard.
KAR	King's African Rifles.
KD	Khaki Drill (uniform).
Keling	A slang name for Tamils and others from South India. It derives from the word Kalinga. (Sanskrit).
Kempetai	Japanese Military Police.
Kenduri	Feast (Malay).
Kepala	Head (Malay) thus by extension, headman,
Ketua Kampong	Headman of the Kampong. (Malay).
KIA	Killed in Action.
KL	The commonly used abbreviation for Kuala Lumpur, the capital of Malaysia.

KMT	Kuomintang (Nationalist People's Party) - the governing party of China until 1949.
Konfrontasi	Confrontation (the Indonesian attack on the newly created State of Malaysia in the 1960s).
Kongsi	A Chinese term for a group or association and, by extension, a building or complex housing a group of Chinese workers.
Kubu	Sentry Posts.
Kukri	The legendary short curved sword used by the Gurkhas.
Kwai	Literally 'spirit' or 'devil' (Chinese). Used by the less educated Chinese to refer to all non-Chinese. Hence, for example, Hung Mo Kwai (red-haired devil) was a common slang Cantonese name for any European. Many Chinese have claimed in our PC times that the term should not be taken at its face value, but rather as a light-hearted term. Not all foreigners are persuaded.
Ladang	A clearing made in the jungle in order to grow food. (Malay).
Lalang	A type of tall stiff grass with sharp edges, which made a formidable obstacle. (Malay).
Laterite	Red clay that hardens after exposure to air: frequently used as rural road surface.
Latex	The sticky white substance tapped from the bark of a rubber tree to make rubber sheets.
Lee Enfield	The reliable and effective .303 calibre rifle used by the British Army for many years.
LZ	Landing Zone; a landing strip specially prepared for operational purposes.
Mata Mata	Slang Malay term for policeman; literally 'eyes'.
Mata Mata Gelap	The slang Malay term for a detective; literally 'secret eyes'.
MCA	Malayan Chinese Association. The Chinese Party formed during the Emergency. Led by Tan Cheng Lock (later Sir Cheng Lock Tan).
MCP	Malayan Communist Party (later Communist Party Malaya)

MCS	Malayan Civil Service; the officers, like the gazetted police officers, were traditionally recruited by the British Colonial Office.
Mentri Besar	The Chief Minister in a Malay State.
Merdeka	The Malay term for Independence.
Min Yuen	A Chinese term for the 'masses' organisation outside the jungle, which supplied logistic and intelligence support for the armed terrorists.
MIO	Military Intelligence Officer.
MO	Medical Officer.
MPAJA	Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army; i.e. the Communist-dominated guerrilla force, which collaborated with Force 136.
MRLA	Malayan Races Liberation Army, the name given by the MCP to their gangs of armed terrorists.
MSS	Malayan Security Service; the service responsible for monitoring security threats in Malaya and Singapore.
MU	Malayan Union.
New Village	A village constructed to house rural people, usually Chinese, who had been moved from the jungle fringes for their security and in order to disrupt the CTs supply system. They were provided with a perimeter fence, police and HGs, schools, water supplies, and health care, and with material to build houses.
NRIC	Identity Card.
OC	Officer Commanding.
OCPD	Officer Commanding Police District.
OCS	Officer Commanding (Police) Station.
OCTU	Officer Cadet Training Unit (British Army).
Orang	Person or people. (Malay).
OSPC	Officer Superintending Police Circle. (A Circle consisted of several Police Districts).
P&T	Post and Telegraph, i.e. the department responsible for running the Post Office and the telegraph service.

Padi	Rice in the field; (Malay),
Padang	A flat open ground in the centre of village or town. (Malay).
Panji	Sharpened bamboo stake, which used as a mantrap can cause painful wounds or, if smeared with poison, death. (Malay).
Parang	A heavy, short-bladed sword used for clearing jungle but, like a machete or panga, at times a fearsome slashing weapon. (Malay).
PC	Police Constable.
Penghulu	Malay headman of a rural area.
P/Lt	Police Lieutenant. The rank given to the European reinforcements who were hurriedly recruited in 1948.
PFF	Police Field Force; the paramilitary force organised to fight the CT in the jungle.
PKI	Party Communist Indonesia.
Prahu	Boat (Malay).
Propaganda	Generic term for attempts to influence people by words; originally used in relation to a committee of Roman Catholic Cardinals overseeing missionary work.
Psywar	Psychological Warfare; a more sophisticated form of propaganda, which the practitioners intended to be more effective than the lies of the MC propaganda machine,
PWD	Public Works Department. The department responsible for all public building.
Q Squads	Police squads consisting of government officers, SEPs and CEPS, masquerading as CTs.
Raja	The Malay Ruler of Perlis State.
Rakits	Bamboo raft. (Malay).
Resettlement	The process of moving squatters and others from the jungle fringes to New Villages.
Rotan	Cane.
R&R	Rest and Recreation. Originally a term coined by the military to cover a period of local leave, if possible amongst the fleshpots.

RMPFOA	Royal Malaysia Police Former Officers' Association.
Rubber Tapper	The worker who wields a tapper's knife to create a channel in the bark from which the latex oozes and drips into a small cup.
RV	Rendezvous; a prearranged meeting place.
SAC	Senior Assistant Commissioner.
Sakai	A generic, rather derogatory, term for the aborigines in general.
Sampan	Small boat. (Chinese).
Sangar	A breastwork built of stone to provide protection against bullets.
Sarong	Traditional cloth sheath worn by men and women. (Malay).
SAS	Special Air Service.
SB	Special Branch (Police).
SCA	Secretary for Chinese Affairs. A Chinese-speaking MCS officer working at Federal or State Settlement level on 'Chinese Affairs'.
SC	Special Constable. Police recruited specially on short contracts to provide security in the rural areas. Most were Malays.
SCM	State Committee Member; (subordinate to Central Committee of the MCP).
Semut Api	Fire Ants, (Malay).
Senoi	One of the aborigine groups. A highly successful force recruited from Senois and trained by the SAS for jungle work against the CTs.
SEP	Surrendered Enemy Personnel. A CT who surrendered.
Sitrep	Situation Report.
SOE	Special Operations Executive: organisation tasked with guerrilla warfare against occupying forces.
Songkok	Malay cap shaped like a cross between a Glengarry and a 'pillbox'.
SF	Security Forces (police and military).

SOVF	Special Operations Volunteer Force. (Consisting of SEPs operating under police command).
Squaddie	Slang term for a Private in the British Army.
Sten Gun	A crude but useful submachine gun widely used in WWII.
Stop	A party of men placed behind the objective to prevent the enemy escaping.
Sultan	The ruler of a Malay State.
Sungei	River (Malay).
Susah	Difficult (Malay).
SWEC	State War Executive Committee.
Syce	A word imported from India which originally meant a groom and, later, a driver.
Tamil	The South Indian race which supplied most of the labour force for the early Malayan rubber estates.
Tengku	Malay Prince.
Temiar	One of the aboriginal tribal groups.
Tengku Bendahara	Court Chamberlain.
Thunderer	A lorry bearing a loudspeaker system for broadcasting messages to the CTs.
TS	Tiger Squads. (Police fighting patrols).
Tin Tailing	The worked out residue of a tin mine.
Towkays	Chinese shopkeepers and businessmen.
Tuan	A polite form of address used in Malay. The term has become tarnished. It does not have to be translated as 'master'; it is the equivalent of 'Sir', the derivation is from the Spanish 'Don'.
Tuan Mat Salleh	Malay slang for expatriate officers.
Ulu	Backwoods - Up Country - Up River.
UMNO	United Malay National Organisation, the principal Malay Party led by Tengku Abdul Rahman.
WD	War Department (British).
World (Happy or Great)	The name given to Amusement Parks containing food stalls, restaurants, theatres, cinemas, dance halls etc. Post-war every large town had

one or more 'Worlds' where families could stroll, eat, drink or otherwise amuse themselves and men could enjoy the dance halls.

WOSB

War Office Selection Board (British).

WRAC

Women's Royal Army Corps.

I have not attempted to standardise the Romanised version of Malay and Chinese words and names which appear from time to time in the stories.

There have, of course, been changes in orthography over the half-century since the Emergency, but in the case of Malaya the changes have not been extreme, like Burma for instance becoming Myanmar; it does not need a cryptographer to work out that Terengannu and Trengannu are the same place.

The Romanisation of Chinese names presents plenty of scope for confusion since the official Romanisation (Pin Yin) deals only with the standard national language, and does not cover the so-called dialects of the south which are the mother tongues of most Malayan Chinese. For example, Mr Wu, a northern Chinese, would find his name being pronounced Goh in Fujian Province or Ng in Guangdong.

The Malay convention for personal names follows the Arabic custom. The given name is followed by 'bin' (son of) or 'binti' (daughter of) and then the father's name. Thus Onn bin Jaffar is Onn the son of Jaffar.

For Chinese the traditional system is to put the family name first. Thus Tan Cheng Lock is Cheng Lock child of Mr Tan. Sometimes Chinese adopt western custom when Romanising their names: Sir Cheng Lock Tan, for example, but this is rare.

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION

THE FIRST EDITION, which was published in 2003, was above all a collection of the memories of police officers who had contributed. However, although those stories continue to be the main purpose of the book I have added further material; on the four very different men who commanded the police from 1948 to 1958, on the intelligence situation, on Chin Peng's book *My Side of History* and on Loi Tak and Chin Peng the two Secretary Generals of the MCP.

These pieces, except in the Chin Peng case, draw mainly upon material in the PRO and the Bodleian Library.

One might, of course, cast the net wider, with, for example, a note on the four High Commissioners. They were all very different men, beloved by some and execrated by others. Gent, the Colonial Office Mandarin despatched to Malaya to implement the new disastrous Union constitution, castigated by the old Malaya clique for being too soft, and killed in an air accident on his way to the UK. Gurney, ex-Chief Secretary in Palestine who, like Gent, died at the hands of terrorists before the verdict of history could be pronounced. General Templer, 'Tiger' of Malaya, greatly loved by those who wanted action but not by those who wanted a quiet life, and lastly Macgillivray, a man with consummate skills as an administrator and a diplomat.

But since this book does not pretend to be a history of the Emergency (that task has already been well attended to by Professor Short). I shall not broaden the canvas further.



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PREFACE

MANY BOOKS HAVE- been written about the war which erupted in Malaya in 1948 and was known, for legal reasons, as an 'Emergency'. There have been histories by Professors Short and Stockwell, accounts by authors and journalists, academics, soldiers and by former police officers, such as Dato' Mohd Pilus Yusoh, Dato' J.J. Raj (Jnr), Dato' Seri Yuan Yuet Leng, Mr Leong Chee Woh, Mr R Thambapillay, Roy Follows, Leon Comber and the late John Slimming. But none of these authors took as a central theme the role and performance of the police in that bitterly fought war, nor did they deliberately attempt, as this book does, to record the voices of the junior police officers who fought in what General Templer was quick to recognise as a 'Subalterns' war.

Thomas Grey, the 18th Century poet, said, "Any fool can write a valuable book if he will only tell us what he heard and saw with veracity," I have tried to follow Grey's precepts.

The book is not only intended to record the voices of the subalterns and, where possible, of their men, but also to pay tribute to the many policemen who sacrificed their lives in the fight for freedom, and to all the gallant men who fought alongside them during the campaign. In 1952, the worst year for police casualties, 350 police, of all ranks, races and branches lost their lives in action. We salute their memory.

When I suggested this book, I captioned my proposal Operation Sharp End, a phrase chosen to emphasise that my central objective was to record memories of junior officers who bore the brunt of the fight on the ground. Of course, some of those junior officers who survived and continued their police careers in Malaysia, finished up as distinguished senior officers, but it is their memories as juniors, not their later reflections, which appear in this book.

In the course of preparation I received a lot of material, which was not all about battles, ambushes, patrols and operations, and tales of derring-do in the face of the enemy. The book,

therefore, has stories of events 'behind the lines' and 'off duty', even of ghosts and magic.

Although most of the text was specially written for Operation Sharp End some of it consists of extracts taken, with the permission of the authors, from articles and books, which have already been published.

I hope that the book may occasionally cast some new light on the complicated events of those far off days, but that is certainly not its central purpose. The army and the police both performed magnificently, fighting side-by-side in many cases. But whereas some of the voices of the soldiers who participated in the fight have been recorded in regimental histories, there has been no equivalent literature recording the police voices, and so this book was born of a wish to ensure that police voices could also be 'heard'.

Although I never had the honour of serving in the Royal Malaysia Police Force, I did spend the best part of twenty years working with them as a Malayan Civil Service officer, a diplomat and, finally, for four years as Director of the Rubber Growers Association, where I was in charge of 2,500 auxiliary policemen (APs) guarding the estates. I have, as a result, a lot of friends in the police force, and a very high regard for their service.

When, after fifty years or so, I returned to Scotland and was invited to join the RMPFOA it occurred to me that there was probably sufficient material available to form the basis for a book of reminiscences and anecdotes by people who had served during the Emergency. The Association agreed,

Of course, we have started Operation Sharp End very late, but better late than never; we owe it to the families and descendants of all those who served in the Emergency to ensure that the overviews should be complemented by more individual memories and anecdotes.

There is seldom a mention of the voices in the field in the books written by senior officers, whose books therefore give little flavour of the realities of action. A typical military example might be, "The advance ran into heavy resistance and it took several hours to drive the enemy out of their positions." But this passage does not tell us that the subaltern commanding the leading platoon and the platoon sergeant were both killed in the battle, that

the platoon suffered fifty percent casualties from well-sited machineguns, or how a corporal rallied the survivors and mounted a second attack, skilfully using mortar smoke to conceal his movements and, finally, led a bayonet charge to dislodge the enemy. Nor does such a history tell us that the corporal won a Military Medal. And we know nothing of the thoughts of the men engaged in the battle; and how they overcame fear of death and wounds. In short, the two-line summary tells us nothing about the human dimension.

There are few precedents for the sort of book we are attempting here. In the 1960s a British farmer, visiting the war graves of Flanders, was so moved by the thought of the carnage at the Battle of the Somme that he pulled together the memories of survivors of all ranks. I found a moving quotation from this book: The Tyneside Scottish were advancing across the moonscape of No Man's Land toward the German trenches, where, despite the heaviest bombardment of all time, the Germans were still in fighting trim, and the bullets from their machine-guns were mowing down the advancing infantry. In one company only a subaltern, a platoon sergeant and a private reached the objective. The private recalled, "We had started out as a Company of over a hundred men, but now there were only three of us; the lieutenant looked round and said; "God! God! Where are the rest of the Company?"

There are many obvious objections to this type of history; memories are selective, and fade and play tricks. The contributors are self-selecting: many people who have a story to tell will not tell it. During my efforts to collect stories from the survivors of a battle in 1944, I once asked a Jock (Scottish soldier) to tell me what he remembered of a twelve-hour battle when his platoon was constantly on the move, carrying ammunition and wounded to and from the front line. All I could drag out of him was, "Och! I suppose it was pretty rough." But although it is sometimes like drawing teeth trying to extract memories, I believe the effort is worthwhile, and I hope that the collection that follows will find merit with readers who want to know what sort of men were leading the police at the Sharp End during the Emergency, and what they thought about.

In August 2001, having received a large number of manuscripts as a result of our original appeal for anecdotes, and scoured the libraries for relevant material, I visited Malaysia to seek further material from Malaysians. I knew the visit would be fun since the Malaysians are probably the most friendly and welcoming people in the world. But I did not anticipate the astonishing kindness, helpfulness, and encouragement with which I and Michael Thompson, who kindly accompanied me, were received.

My hosts, Datuk and Datin Moggie, gave us the run of their comfortable home, and the use of a car and driver. Former Inspector of Police (IGP), Tun Hanif, invited a vast gathering of former friends and colleagues, ex-ministers, retired generals, and highly decorated police officers, to launch our 'Seminar', and provided us with an office where we could conduct our discussions.

The younger generations in Britain have been brainwashed into believing that our colonial history was shameful, and Whitehall always tended to assume that we would be *persona non grata* if we ever showed our faces in our former territories. It is a pity that none of them have experienced the reality: not just politeness, but full-blooded cooperation, warm friendship and respect.

Whatever else the Seminar accomplished, it gave me confidence that my Malaysian friends approved of Operation Sharp End,

Readers coming to this book at the beginning of the 21st Century may find our fear of the Communist Revolution bizarre. But in 1948 the threat seemed real enough. We had, at crippling cost, just won a war against Hitler to stop him dominating the world, and now the Soviet Union was sprawling over Eastern Europe and half of Germany, and boasting that Communism would bury capitalism. It is easy now to see that the giant had feet of clay, but at the time the size of the bear, his victories over Hitler's best troops, and his belligerence, could not easily be ignored. Meanwhile in Asia, Mao Tsetung was thrashing the Chinese Nationalists, the French in Vietnam were finding it increasingly hard to contain the Vietcong, and Sukarno, having forced the Dutch out of the Netherlands East Indies, had allied himself with Communist China. You did not have to be a profes-

sional cold war warrior to conclude that Communism posed a serious threat.

At a time when all round the world terrorism continues to defy civilised societies, it will be noted that in Malaya we defeated a strong terrorist force relying more on intelligence than on weaponry, and on brains as much as on courage.

I hope that readers will share some of the pleasure that I have derived from this exercise. It is an exercise in nostalgia for all of us who were involved but also, I hope, a contribution to an understanding of the young men who were plunged in at the deep end, often with minimum, or even no training, and achieved near miracles in the face of a determined, jungle-trained and experienced enemy.

I salute them. They did wonders!

INTRODUCTION

THE MALAYA OF 1948, which was about to be plunged into a bloody war, was a peninsula slightly smaller in area than England and Wales. It had a population of nearly 6 million of whom about 3 million were Malays, overwhelmingly traditional and monarchists who respected their rulers, the Sultans. They were also devout Muslims. The Chinese community of about 2.25 million were mostly recent immigrants and, for the most part, atheists: apolitical and conscious perhaps of their good fortune in having settled in Malaya and left their tormented motherland behind. If they were in some respects second-class citizens, this had certainly not prevented their prospering in their new home. The Indians, a much smaller minority, were also for the most part contented with their lot, which was certainly better for most of them than it was for the relatives and friends they had left behind in India. Some, however, had been infected with anti-British sentiments during the Japanese occupation.

Malaya was a plural, not an integrated, society. No one pretended that all the races were the same, but the *bangsa*, for the most part, tolerated each other's different cultures and beliefs. Inevitably there was some resentment at the growing economic power of the immigrants, who now represented half the population, but tolerance, not pogrom, was the norm in Malayan society.

The Malay Peninsula stretches for about 550 miles: from Thailand in the north to Singapore in the south. It is lapped on the east by the South China Sea and on the west by the Straits of Malacca. Mountains running down the centre divide the east with its stretches of golden beaches and agricultural and fishing economy from the west with its tin mines and plantations. In 1948 there were main roads running from north to south on both sides of the peninsula, the main railway line ran from Thailand to Singapore, through KL, the Federal capital.

A Department of Information leaflet of the time described Malaya as follows:

The backbone of mountains, the highest over 7000 ft, is covered in primary and secondary evergreen jungle. One fifth of the country consists of rubber estates, tin mines, rice fields, towns and villages: four fifths is trackless forest and undergrowth so dense that a man is invisible at twenty-five yards. The average noon temperature is 90° and there is torrential rain almost every day.

The primary jungle can be spectacularly beautiful with tree trunks hundreds of feet high, standing like the pillars of some great cathedral, its roof a green canopy of leaves and ferns. The secondary jungle however is quite another matter. Scrubby *belukar*, a tangle of bushes, saplings, thorny plants, tough creepers and sturdy bamboo, combine to create a nearly impenetrable barrier requiring heavy work with a *parang* (short bladed sword) to force a path. Torrential rains and the accompanying humidity rot equipment and uniform, which then rubs the skin off in the tenderest parts of the body. Leeches search assiduously for an opening in boots or clothes that allow them to get at the victim's blood, while mosquitoes, ants and midges seek his flesh. It was this trackless forest that made up eighty per cent of the country and was the scene of most operations.

Constitutionally Malaya had, since the 19th Century, been a loose association of Malay States, ruled by Malay monarchs but accepting protection and advice from Britain, linked through the British connection to the three Straits Settlements: Malacca, Penang and Singapore.

The normal tranquillity of the political scene had been disturbed after the war by a misguided Colonial Office attempt to replace the loose pre-war association of Federated and Unfederated States with a centralised system under a new constitution. The Malayan Union (MU) was designed not only to centralise and tidy up but also to improve the constitutional position of the immigrants. Although the Rulers reluctantly agreed to accept the new constitution, it was not long before the Malays began to protest publicly, London retreated and by early 1948 a new Federal constitution, which took fuller account of Malay sensitivities, had been agreed. Perhaps someone had taken heed of the Malay proverb, *Sisat di ujung jalan, balek ka pangkal jalan*: 'If you lose

your way, go back to the beginning of the road'. Malaya reverted to its normal decorous mode in which political discussion tended not to take place in riotous assembly. The immigrant interest in legal rights was much weaker at grass roots level than Britain's metropolitan reformers had imagined. This was hardly surprising since they had emigrated to Malaya for economic, not for political, reasons.

Communist ideas had been circulating in Malaya since the 1920s. In 1939, adopting the Moscow line, the Malayan Communist Party (MCP) had opposed the war against Germany and fomented strikes to damage the war effort. The Party line was, of course, changed when Hitler invaded the Soviet Union and the Malayan Communists joined the British in a temporary alliance against the Japanese invaders.

After the Japanese surrender the MCP claimed that it had been responsible for the surrender of the Japanese, a claim that many believed. The MCP then returned to its subversive ways, flexing its muscles through domination of organisations such as the Trade Unions, the China Democratic Youth League, Chinese schools and the Chinese press, all of which formed part of what they called a United Front. But their subversive activities were not limited to propaganda and industrial action: their henchmen were using torture and murder.

Although there was a small Malay element in the MCP, and also a small Indian element, the MCP was in essence a Chinese party drawing the vast majority of its members from Chinese immigrant families of relatively recent arrival, and educated, if at all, in Chinese language schools. Such people had minimal interest in integration into their host society, unlike the long resident Chinese, such as the Straits Chinese, who had learnt Malay and English, and saw themselves as Malaysians.

The MCP had been encouraged to revive their wartime dreams of taking over Malaya by the triumph of the Soviet Union in Europe and, even more, by the dramatic victories of Mao Tsetung in China where, despite massive US aid to President Chiang Kaishek and his party, the Communists were winning.

In early 1948 the Central Committee of the MCP directed that plans should be made to launch a countrywide armed insurrection. At this time, although the country had not fully recov-

ered from the ravages of war, the economy was developing well. There was a strong demand for Malaya's staple exports, rubber and tin, and in Malaya's benign environment even the poorest could find food, clothing and materials to build a simple shelter. There were no starving masses, no armies of hungry, angry, dispossessed peasants, or downtrodden, unemployed proletariat festering in city slums, to exploit. By almost any standard, Malaya was a fortunate country. The people, whatever their race, were for the most part content with their lot and there was little of the political tension, which had characterised the relations between the metropolitan power and the local politicians in India during the last years of the Raj.

The MCP, however, was determined to turn this tolerant and relatively successful society into a People's Republic, persuading the population to cooperate, if necessary by intimidation, torture and murder.

It is difficult to understand why the MCP should have thought that tolerant, prosperous Malaya was ripe for revolution. The situation in Malaya could hardly have been more different from that in China where decades of civil war, vicious corruption and runaway inflation under the maladministration of the *Kuomintang* (KMT) had persuaded the vast majority of the Chinese, regardless of their political views, that any government whatever its political label must be an improvement on the KMT. It might have occurred to men less ideologically blinkered than the MCP leadership that the population of a reasonably contented and prosperous country was unlikely to rally enthusiastically to a call to revolution. Even if they assumed that there were significant numbers of Chinese malcontents or of Chinese who could be brought to heel by intimidation, how could they possibly have arrived at the conclusion that a significant number of Malays would support a movement designed to convert Malaya from its traditional monarchic and Islamic society into a Communist republic dominated by atheist Chinese immigrants?

The MCP's strategic assessments were as bizarre as Stalin's confident assessment in 1941 that Hitler would not attack Russia, and Hitler's equally confident assessment that defeating Russia would be as easy as 'pushing down a rotten door',

It might, however, be argued that the MCP had some grounds for their assumption that Britain would not have the stomach for a fight. They had, after all, witnessed the Japanese victory in Malaya and noted Britain's departure from India, Burma (Myanmar), and Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and the Dutch and French inability to restore their authority in Indonesia and Vietnam.

Former CTs, including Chin Peng, have said that the decision to go to war was forced upon the MCP by the defection of Loi Tak, the previous Secretary-General, and his unmasking as a man who had spied in turn for the French, British and Japanese intelligence services. The morale of the Communists had plummeted and drastic action was required to restore it.

The MCP were, perhaps, also victims of their own propaganda which proclaimed that, whereas the British Army of 100,000 had been totally defeated by a Japanese invasion force of 30,000, the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA), only a few thousand strong had remained in action throughout the war, and so one MPAJA soldier was worth ten Japanese (and by extension many more British soldiers).

But, however wrong-headed the MCP may have been in their strategic assessments, they were right in their tactical appreciation that hit and run attacks mounted throughout the Peninsula at a time and place of their own choosing, would be difficult to counter. They fought on the principles laid down by Chairman Mao: never attacking unless they had numerical and tactical advantage, and always melting back into the jungle before an effective counter-attack could be mounted.

The jungle presented a difficult environment for military operations. During the Japanese occupation of Malaya, Colonel Tsuji of the Japanese Army recorded his dim view of the jungle: "The men covered in leeches and everywhere venomous snakes ready to strike. During the day an inferno of heat and at night the men were chilled to the bone." The jungle had provided the British Special Forces and their temporary allies, the MPAJA, with an excellent base for guerrilla operations and now, it was providing the Chinese Communists with guerrilla base.

I have found no description of life in the jungle written by a Communist Terrorist (CT); but Colonel Spencer Chapman (who

commanded Force 136 in Malaya during the war) gives a fascinating account of life in a CT jungle camp, which adds a dimension to the descriptions in the following stories of attacks on CT camps. The drill, leadership and efficiency of the Communists varied tremendously. At the extreme end of the scale were the ruthless and efficient professionals of the 'traitor killing' camps, highly trained and well-armed and tasked to eliminate anyone who was suspected of supplying intelligence to the enemy.

By 1948 the CTs had constructed large, semi-permanent, jungle camps, well-camouflaged, and only approachable along cleverly designed tracks, which were skilfully booby-trapped and guarded by sentries. With six years' experience behind them, many of the CTs were experts in jungle warfare and their jungle craft was often superb.

Colonel Spencer Chapman called his book *The Jungle is Neutral*, but that neutrality gave advantages to those who understood the jungle and were acclimatised to it. In 1948 the CTs were jungle-trained and acclimatised: the Security Forces (SF) were not.

Most of the CT armoury consisted of weapons and ammunition that had been air-dropped in generous quantities to Force 136 in the last months of the war. The MPAJA had gone through the motions of handing in some weapons while, in fact, caching most of their military stores for future use.

The CTs had absorbed all too well what their British officers had taught them about the importance of cultivating friendly relations with the aborigines in order to have their help for Intelligence and logistic support. The CTs had already set up a group known as ASAL for this purpose: while the SF had to start from scratch to build up their relationship with the Orang Asli (the original people). But probably the CTs greatest advantage over the SF was their freedom to choose target, place and time for their attacks. So in 1948 the CTs had a field day and the SF, particularly the police, suffered heavy casualties.

At the beginning of the Emergency there were several thousand CTs under arms in the jungle. Against this force, many of them with jungle warfare experience, the police had only about 8,000 men, but they had not been trained as a paramilitary force. The army mustered many thousands more but they were not trained for jungle warfare. In these circumstances it says a lot for

the grit and determination of all the youngsters serving in the police and army that they managed to hold the line, and even to mount effective counter-attacks in 1948.

In the twelve months before the Emergency the senior echelons of government, although frequently meeting to discuss 'the threat', had never clearly identified a threat of imminent armed insurrection. Many commentators have cited 'failure of intelligence' as a prime cause of the government's difficulties. But the documents available suggest that the faults were, by no means, all on the side of the intelligence professionals. The collectors and assessors of intelligence failed to produce a clear picture of the nature of the threat. But their customers, the senior officials and military chiefs, contributed to the problem. They grumbled loudly but took no steps to cure the weaknesses of the intelligence machine.

In any case, it is nonsense to charge the intelligence community with failure to uncover the Communist plan for insurrection, since in June 1948 the details of the plan had yet to be agreed by the Central Committee of the MCP. The increasing violence that led the government to declare 'war' was the work of rank and file CTs who had jumped the gun. The following report by a group of former senior MCP cadres, quoted by Dato Seri Yuan, makes this point clear.

The original plan of the Central Committee was to have ample time for its preparations before launching the armed struggle. It was triggered off prematurely by the inflated psychology of increased resistance it had stimulated in the working masses against the authorities as part of these preparations. Above all the accompanying over excessive emotions of anger and violence which had built up in a number of their cadres who had knowledge of an impending armed struggle, rendered them less willing to tolerate suppressive legal measures imposed and disruptive action by the government. Once issued with weapons they ignored Central Committee instructions. Although they did not attack government forces they went for European planters, police agents and running dogs.

The police were at the centre of the war. They had to travel continually on country roads throughout Malaya knowing the danger of ambush and without benefit of armoured vehicles. They and their men suffered heavy casualties as they went about their duties.

In December 1955 Tengku Abdul Rahman, Chief Minister of the newly elected Alliance Government and Head of the United Malay National Organisation (UMNO), accompanied by Sir Tan Cheng Lock, President of the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA) and David Marshall, Chief Minister of Singapore, went to Baling to meet Chin Peng in the hope of persuading the Communists to give up the armed struggle. But Chin Peng refused the amnesty terms insisting that the MCP must be allowed to operate as a legal party, and stalked back into the jungle. Although more and more CTs were surrendering and collaborating with the police, the MCP leadership remained obdurate, and a year after *Merdeka* they were still at war, although by now their army had been reduced to less than one thousand, more than half of whom were lurking in Thailand. The Emergency did not end officially until 1960.

The core of this book is the memories of the youngsters of many races, usually plunged in at the deep end with minimal training. It was these Subalterns, Assistant Superintendents of Police, Inspectors, and Police Lieutenants who held the fort in the countryside in the darkest days, and moved rapidly and successfully onto the offensive. The morale of the Subalterns and their men remained high despite the dangers and discomforts of their lives,

NO SURRENDER

Gallant Last Stand at Bukit Kepong

Dato' J.J. Raj (Jnr)

This is the story of how thirteen Malay policemen, supported magnificently by their wives, made a stand against overwhelming odds holding the enemy off for several hours and how, finally, the exasperated CTs showed their usual barbarity and threw men, women and children, some still alive, into the burning remains of the police station.

J.I, as his friends know him, finished his career as a Senior Assistant Commissioner (SAC). Tun Hanif Omar a former IGP, writing a foreword to JJ's The War Years and After, commended the book as an important contribution to the written history of Malaysia.

JJ, the local Officer Commanding Police District (OCPD) at the time, tells the story.

"BUKIT KEPONG WAS a small village in Johore, up the Muar River, and three-and-a-half hour journey by track and river from Pagoh, my OCPD HQ. I had visited the village the day before the onslaught and Sergeant Jamil's last words to me had been, "Don't worry Tuan OCPD" and a Malay proverb, which translates as 'Better white bones than white eyes' or loosely translated means 'Death before dishonour'. Sergeant Jamil lived up to his words, firing his Bren light machine-gun with great effect until he was killed.

The CT assault commenced about 0400 hours; the attacking force of 180 were from the 4th Independent Company of the Malayan and Races Liberation Army (MRLA) and, no doubt, their commanders rallied them with propaganda about liberating the masses and called them soldiers, but terrorism not soldiering was their trade

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Encik Ali Mustapha, the *penghulu* (headman), was a dynamic leader who had persuaded the people of his area to rally behind the government and many of his men had joined the AP. The police station was a traditional wooden building perched three feet above the ground on concrete stilts. The defences included trenches and sandbags, but the perimeter fence consisted of only one strand of barbed wire. The police family quarters and the *Penghulu's* office were within the perimeter.

Sergeant Jamil had thirteen regular police and three APs under his command in the village and three marine police manning the boat at the nearby jetty. There was no radio link to Pagoh so the first objective of the CTs was to kill the marine police and destroy their boat in order to cut the river link to Pagoh.

On the afternoon of 22nd February 1950 when I had left for Pagoh, I did not know that the CTs were assembled behind a nearby hill. At 0400 hours the CTs moved forward and prepared for a set piece attack. The plan of attack was in four stages: first deal with the marine police and their boat; second, enter the police station by stealth, silence the sentry and capture the police constables (PCs); third, raise the Communist flag and declare the village a 'liberated area'; fourth, attack the police on the flanks so as to guard against a counter attack by the APs guarding the *Penghulu's* office.

The assault squads began to move forward at 0550 hours but were spotted and, when they failed to respond to challenge, the police sentries opened fire with their shotguns and killed two of the attacking force. The police then took up their defensive positions and the battle started in earnest: it lasted for about four hours until everyone in the defending force had been killed or seriously wounded,

The small defending force, despite the odds against them, kept up an effective fire and their wives picked up their rifles and continued to fire when their husbands were no longer able to use their weapons.

After several hours a Malay CT called on the police to surrender. When some of the women and their children came out of their quarters they were ordered to go back and persuade their husbands to give up the battle. The sergeant and his men shouted their defiance, but eventually the CTs prevailed by sheer weight of

numbers and the police were forced out of the police station when the CTs set it alight with petrol bombs. Those who managed to escape from the burning building were shot and any wounded were thrown into the flames by the triumphant CTs.

One marine policeman, who could have escaped, remained with his boat until he too was killed.

As soon as news of the attack reached Pagoh I set off immediately through the jungle with a rescue force of ten men from the jungle squad and some Seaforth Highlanders, and forced marched to the village by. The scene was horrible; a burning police station, dead policemen everywhere, women and children who had survived were wailing and crying. Fortunately, the discipline of the police was such that any thoughts of Min Yuen-type reprisals against the local Chinese were quickly overcome.

This was as gallant a defence as any in history; the garrison had many opportunities to surrender, and the fact that their families were under fire as well added to their plight. In 1976 the IGP visited Bukit Kepong to preside over a ceremony of remembrance and rearrangement of the gravestones and the burial ground of the heroes of Bukit Kepong."

**Statement by Ching Moit Chai aged 43 years
Member of the 4th Independent Company MRLA**

The following is a verbatim statement by a CT who took part in the Bukit Kepong attack. The statement reflects the magnificent heroism of the Malay policemen and their families, the brutality of the CTs and the overwhelming odds against the defence.

"I WAS A MEMBER of the gang that attacked Bukit Kepong Police Station on 23rd February 1950. We chose this station as the target because it was isolated, it had no radio contact with other stations and we wanted to strengthen our prestige in that area.

There were 200 men in our gang and we knew that only twenty Malays manned the police station.

We encircled the station at 0400 hours. We chose that time because we thought the sentries would be asleep. At exactly 0430 hours the bugle sounded and our attack started. We fired on the

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station from all sides. We immediately received a heavy barrage of return fire. I was in the party attacking the front of the station and I could see the policemen taking defensive positions. They had divided into two sections. One section manned the defences under the station using two Bren guns and the other section manned defence posts in the charge room above. A few men, I don't know how many, defended the married quarters at the rear of the station. Most of our armament was automatic weapons but some of us were armed with rifles and grenades. The greatest resistance to our attack was coming from underneath the station where the Bren guns were. We concentrated our attack there and, after about one hour, it was silenced. We then received orders to charge the front of the station. This we did with fixed bayonets but the gunfire was so intense that we withdrew to reform for another attack. In that attack we lost two killed and several wounded.

We then called on the police to surrender promising them no harm if they did so. They refused and increased their resistance. In the meantime, some of my comrades had been attempting to break in at the rear of the police compound but they had been met by stiff resistance and suffered several casualties.

When daylight came we were able to see the damage better. I could see dead policemen lying under the station. The one in charge, Sergeant Jamil, was slumped over one of the Bren guns. We received orders to charge and we did so, time after time, but we were still unsuccessful, so we withdrew and again called on the station to surrender but again they refused. Our leader was getting impatient and so he ordered us to attack the married quarters, which was the weakest part of the defence. They could not defend that properly and we were able to break through the defences. One of the police wives tried to run to the station but my comrades caught her. They asked her to walk to the station and call on the men to surrender. She refused and she told my comrades that there were only two people left alive in the married quarters, a policeman's wife and daughter. My comrades shot the wife they had caught and called upon the one in the quarters to surrender. She refused and shouted that both she and her daughter preferred to die. So my comrades set fire to the married quarters and burnt both of them alive. Then they threw the body of the other wife into the blazing building.

NO SURRENDER

There was a boat moored at the rear of the station and a marine policeman defended that until he was killed. He could have escaped but didn't.

We had got into the compound and now charged both front and rear. We got within grenade range and threw several grenades into the charge room. Then my comrades set fire to the rear of the station. A group of several policemen came charging out of the front firing their weapons. Some of them had their clothes on fire. Their wives also came out and, as we shot their husbands, the wives picked up their guns and continued to fire at us. We were able to shoot them all and throw them into the burning building. They were not all dead when they were thrown. Just as we were leaving, we found a small boy under a bunker and my comrades threw him into the fire as well.

The attack took us five hours."

The Defence of Kea Farm

Yuen Yuet Leng

Dato' Sen Yuan Yuet Leng finished his distinguished career as an SAC, but his book 'Operation Ginger' describes his view of the Emergency when he was a Special Branch Officer (SBO) in Perak.

Tun Hanif Omar's foreword to the book, commending the author and his contribution to history, remarks "Cooperation amongst the government forces did not come naturally, given the propensity for one upmanship—but there was an unconditional acceptance of the police role and in particular SB who never let them down."

"IN PREPARATION FOR the Baling Talks (1955), the MCP made a major effort to demoralise the Home Guard (HG) in an effort to strengthen their negotiating position. The CT attack on Kea Farm was part of this effort.

The gallant SF resistance ranks with the Last Stand at Bukit Kepong in the great tradition of the Malay Mata Matas' courage and determination in the face of vastly superior numbers deserve a lasting memorial.

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In June 1955 the MCP, after a Central Committee decision, made overtures to the government for peace talks on an assumed basis of equality. This was contrary to the realities of the security situation and the strong position held by a new and elected Malayan Government, which had pledged to offer an amnesty to the Communists in order to end the shooting war. As a prelude to the oncoming talks and to strengthen their hand, a number of major incidents were carried out, notably in Johore and Perak.

In Perak, Kea Farm New Village, five miles from Tanah Rata in the Cameron Highlands, was attacked and occupied for two hours on the night of 31st October 1955 by about 100 terrorists, CTs were mainly from 27th Section and 25/29 Section of 31st Independent Platoon who normally operated in 10th MCP and 7th MCP Districts respectively. Overpowering the local HG command post a terrorist party, guided by the HG platoon commander (under duress), proceeded to an identified house where they murdered HG Chow Yip Shin, a vegetable farmer aged 41. Chow was stabbed twice in his throat and again in the chest. Other terrorists collected 35 HG weapons and 612 rounds of ammunition in a house-to-house search, and raided the village shops.

All this occurred without a shot being fired and then another group of terrorists surrounded the police station and penetrated into the compound. They opened fire when the police commanded by a corporal refused to surrender. The police returned fire and one constable, ignoring the terrorist fire, dashed out of the station to start the standby generator outside in order to operate wireless equipment, as electricity and telephone lines had been cut off by the CTs, and was captured. Soon after Constable Omar bin Mat, shooting from under the elevated police station, was hit and died. The terrorists reached the station building and splashing kerosene oil under the building, attempted to set it on fire but without much success due to the rain earlier. However, Constable Abu bin Sines, who with PC Omar had been engaging the terrorists from a trench, had to make a run from the heat of the flames and was also captured. The three remaining police personnel withdrew from the bullet-ridden station to a bund behind which they continued to engage the terrorists. One of them, PC Osman bin Kassim, managed to sneak away in the dark and ran two miles to the nearest Gurkha

camp to give the alarm. When he returned, the terrorists had already withdrawn, regrouped and moved off with their spoils.

Government reaction to the incident was fast. The previous 'Shout before your shoot,' order to SFs in connection with the amnesty offer was rescinded, and a number of the 186 'safe areas' in the country provided for terrorists intending to surrender were also abolished. The Kea Farm follow-up found the CTs camp at the edge of the local safe area and also confirmed that terrorists had actually passed through the safe area in order to reach the village."

A George Medal for an SC

Wan Amran

Three Special Constables (SCs) were awarded medals for gallantry in an action in Sungei (river) Siput, which spoke volumes for their courage and for their training and, indeed, marksmanship. Wan Amran was awarded a George Medal (GM) and his two companion SCs were awarded Colonial Police Medals (CPM) for gallantry. This stirring account is a reminder of how much brave work was done by SCs, APs and even HGs, all temporary not regular members of the SF.

Wan Amran's laconic description of the incident is as follows:

"I WAS ONE of a patrol of eight SCs moving through a rubber estate when we were tired on. The first burst killed four of us and wounded two more. I, Mat Din bin Umar and Musa bin Kamis, threw ourselves down and lay quiet on the ground while the firing continued for about ten minutes. Then the bandits shouted, "Those of you who are alive surrender and we will not harm you." We did not stir. A minute later I heard a rustling sound to the rear, and turning round saw a bandit coming towards me. He fired at me and a shot grazed my shoulder. I fired back and killed him.

The bandits then opened fire again and all three of us returned fire. Next, two bandits left their positions, which had sandbags around them, and tried to capture the Bren gun of our leading man who had just been killed. I fired at the first man and killed him. The second bandit ran away.

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Then two bandits emerged on the right and moved towards two of our wounded comrades in order to seize their weapons. I again and one bandit fell dead. All the time Musa and Mat Din gave me covering fire from their positions in front and behind me. Musa had fired 50 rounds, Mat Din 70 and I 20 by the time the bandits retreated."

The SCs had stood off four assaults by a CT ambush party numbering over 30 who were armed with Brens, carbines, Stens and rifles.

THE RECRUITS

To Malaya by Constellation
Snodgrass

The late 'Snodgrass', whom I had the pleasure of knowing over many years, was a most distinguished officer who rose to the top of the Colonial Police. Since he chose to use a pen name when he was alive, I have maintained his anonymity. Many of his old colleagues will recognise his amiable character and sense of humour.

THE COLONIAL OFFICE telegram was curt but clear

If you are still interesterd in joining the RMPF report to

Hounslow Barracks, London, next Sunday

Next Sunday was 12th September 1948

My previous correspondence with the Secretary of State for the Colonies had been in 1942 when as a schoolboy i had attended an address by a former pupil on his career in the Malayan Strait Settlement Police, from which he reited as the Chief Police Officer (CPO) of Singapore. He had impressed my schoolboy mind so much so that, there and then, I penned a letter to the Secretary of State saying that I would much appreciate an appointment in the RMPF when I left school. I received a most courteous reply. "Sir!" it said (I was suitably impressed). The Secretary of State has directed me to inform you that your request has been noted. Unfortunately, Malaya is temporarily under the administration of the Japanese Governmentt, but when this situation has been rectified, we will consider your application." I was impressed again when the squiggle at the foot of the letter begged to remain my most obedient servant.

The telegram was a surprise. Some five years after the polite official letter to the schoolboy, I had called at the Colonial Office.

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during my National Service demobilisation leave, only to be stopped at the doorway by the commissionaire and informed, in no uncertain terms, that there was a waiting list of some six years for appointment to the RMPF. And now, a couple of months later, here was this hasty communication which didn't even beg to be my servant — obedient or otherwise. I did not realise until later that a State of Emergency had been declared in the Federation of Malaya. The whole country was in turmoil as guerrilla terrorists of the MCP were in open revolt and wreaking mayhem and murder, and the high commissioner had been killed in an aircraft accident. No wonder reinforcements were being sought.

Part of Hounslow Barracks had been loaned to the Colonial Office as transit accommodation for police reinforcements being flown out to the troubled territory.

"Gentlemen, thank you for turning up so promptly," said the dapper civil servant in the gloomy, colourless assembly room in the old Victorian barracks. "We haven't much time to give you information as you are flying out tomorrow at dawn by BOAC from Heathrow. I am assured that you will be fully briefed when you land in Singapore."

After a desperately uncomfortable night (a straw palliase on a metal strip bed does not induce sleep), at dawn next morning it was somewhat of a relief to board an army truck for the airport. All of us had been issued with travel vouchers, which addressed each one as "Sergeant". "Mighty quick promotion," one of the travellers observed, "Maybe we'll be inspectors before we arrive."

A BOAC official mustered us into one of the sheds, which had over its door a pretentious sign — DEPARTURE LOUNGE. He announced that we would be boarding a chartered Constellation aircraft 'shortly' and, in the meantime, we should make ourselves comfortable. The only comforts that could be seen were some metal folding chairs and a couple of backless benches. Two tedious hours later, after several paper cups of weak coffee obtained from an ancient machine, which bore the faded letters NAAFI, we were directed to pick up our luggage and move out to our plane. "Oh! By the way," said a uniformed official, "I suppose you all have passports?" Some of us hadn't but with boisterous shouts of "Of

Course!" we were led on to the tarmac and a half-mile trudge to an aircraft that obviously had many air miles under its fuselage.

One after the other, three of the piston engines roared into life causing the rivets in the cabin fuselage to quiver and rattle. The propeller of the last engine churned and groaned but no way was the engine going to fire. All back to the Departure Lounge. Three hours later we were back on Hoard. We held our breath as the fourth propeller started to rotate. This time, the engine not only did fire - it went on fire! Back to Hounslow Barracks and another spartan night with the military. At least the meals were plentiful

Another dawn start in pouring rain. Whilst we were being marshalled, it was discovered that two of our number were missing. Much confabulation concluded that yesterday's experience had persuaded the two absentees that life in the RMPF was not for them. Or could it have been that the form of transport to Singapore had changed their minds'

With revving engines and clattering rivets, we lumbered on to the runway and, with a deafening combination of full power piston engines and cheers from the relieved passengers, the Constellation took off, climbed through the rain clouds and set its nose towards the rising sun,"

By Deckchair to Malaya
Gus Fletcher

Gus Fletcher moved from the RMPF into diplomacy where his outstanding gifts as a linguist and human relations skills continued to stand him in excellent stead

Gus told me that after the war, which he missed by a whisker, a glamorous poster attracted him on his local railway station, showing smart officers on horse and motorcycles, inviting recruits to join the Palestine Police Force. When the British Mandate ended he was still looking for adventure.

"IN THE SUMMER of 1948 I was casting about as to what to do next following my premature return to the UK from Palestine, the police force there having been disbanded. I saw in a Sunday newspaper that Malaya needed five hundred ex-Palestine policemen to deal

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with a 'Communist uprising'. I was not entirely sure where Malaya was, nor what constituted a Communist uprising, but wrote to the Crown Agents for the Colonies for further information.

In short order I found myself in Hounslow Barracks. There were about 40 of us, all ex-Palestine police, our ages ranging from old men of 40 to young squirts like me, 19 years old.

After a couple of nights in barracks we climbed into our aircraft. *Where* the seats had been were two strips of canvas for bottoms, with two more strips for backs. These were in pairs, and so cunningly designed that when you sat down your neighbour soared upwards; when he got up you sank towards the floor. This was at first mildly diverting, but after fifty-odd hours much of the fun had gone out of it.

A few rows in front of me was Col W.N. Gray, our erstwhile IGP in Palestine who was in black jacket, pinstripe trousers, waistcoat and bowler hat. As our aluminium tube lumbered eastwards to ever hotter regions, and as we climbed back after each landing into an increasingly oven-like atmosphere, our Commissioner divested himself of his outer garments one by one; eventually — I think by the time we were in Basra — being reduced to trousers and vest, with his braces over his vest. For reasons unknown, however (and it was the subject of much speculation), he kept his bowler on in the aircraft. But each time we landed, when he led the way off the plane, he was once more the picture of sartorial correctness.

And onwards, ever onwards, we flew, our yo-yoing canvas seat straps now, it felt, leaving their imprints permanently on our posteriors. And, blessed relief, Singapore finally slid under our wings and we were released from our fifty-hour torment. It was late (I think about 0100 hours) and the warm, damp air enveloped us as we trudged our way to transport that took us to the Nee Soon Barracks where we were told that we could sleep until 0600 hours. As it was 0300 hours by then this did not seem a generous offer.

By 0800 hours we were each in possession of Sten guns, three magazines, ninety rounds of ammunition, ex-Indian Army khaki shirts, shorts, slacks, a camp bed of astounding complexity and other impedimenta. Then on to the day train to KL. I remember scarcely anything of that steamy, rattling journey. Like the rest, I dozed through the long, hot, sticky day.

On the platform at KL we found our Commissioner awaiting us. Consulting his notes, he told us we were all going to the State of Pahang, where CT attacks were widespread and where general mayhem prevailed. We would, he billeted upon rubber estate managers in pairs ~ an older *man* with a younger one. I don't remember how we paired off; it was rather like waiting on the playing field to be picked by opposing team captains. My 'old' partner was aged 25 or so and had served through the recent war. Gray wished us well and hoped to visit us on our rubber estates before too long."

A Planter is 'Volunteered' to be a Police Officer

J.A.L. Carter

J.A.L Carter was born in Malaya, son of a rubber planter, served in the Navy in World War II. After taking a degree in tropical agriculture, he had barely started work as an Assistant Manager on an estate in Johore when the emergency started.

"ON 3RD JULY 1948 I was sent for by 'Bottle' Hargreaves, the Officer Supervising Police Circle (OSPC) in Johore Bahru, and was told that he intended to 'conscript' me into the police as I had proficiency in small arms and that I would be "employed" VOLUNTARILY (!) to train SCs

My protest that I had just fought one war and was now a peace-loving civilian was dismissed, but, as a sop to my feeling, I was told that I would carry the rank of Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP), without emolument

That cheered me up a bit and I went to work on some super young Malays from surrounding kampongs (villages), training them to defend rubber plantations.

The following year my planting job took me up country to Paloh. Leonard Knight, who at that time was CPO Johore, sent for me. The MfL had become the Federation of Malaya. I had lost my commission but, if I wished to continue to serve, I could do so as an Inspector. I cheerfully accepted!

Amongst the thousands of men who served in Colonial Police Officers over the years, I am, as far as I know, the only officer who

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was 'bust' because of a change in the constitution and name of the land in which he not only lived, but had been bom.

I enjoyed my service with the RMPF, although nothing very spectacular happened during my time. I was attacked at night in my bungalow a couple of times, and had the sad duty of picking up the bodies of both A.H. Girdler and G.B. Folliott, OSPC Klang, when they were ambushed in April 1950 on the Yang Peng to Paloh Road."

From Banker to Jungle Wallah

A Cochrane-Dyet

Alastair's pieces are a reminder of how, between jungle patrols and police duties, the subalterns still found time to play.

"WHEN **DID IT** all start? I thought I should settle for a steady job and secured a position as a management trainee with the British Bank of Iran and the Middle East. After eighteen months I felt this was not really my cup of tea and cast about for something more active. I discovered that the Colonial Office was looking for people to join the Colonial Police. I applied and got a formidable application form that required various references including a Certificate of Equitation.

I had to attend two interviews after which I was told that my application had been successful and that, because of my previous maritime experience, I was being considered for appointment to British Honduras Police Marine Division, but I would first of all have to pass a police training course. Then I was told that the British Honduras posting was cancelled and I would be considered for Malaya. I was then instructed to report to the Colonial Office before joining the trainees who would be going to No.3 District Police Training Centre in Staffordshire.

The London Resident Director of the Bank gave me an exit interview: I thanked him for my training but added that I felt I was not cut out for a banking career. He agreed.

The training course was the UK Constable basic training lasting for thirteen weeks after which we 'Colonials' attended the Metropolitan Police Training Centre at Hendon. We learnt evidence, law,

and procedures, and received instruction at the Detective Training School. Finally we were attached to the Metropolitan Police, a County Force and a Borough Force.

From Heathrow we flew to Rangoon, the scheduled night stop. We decided to go for a walk after dinner. Somehow we became involved in a Burmese wedding, which was quite a party. Eventually we found ourselves back at the Strand Hotel and so to bed. We seemed no sooner to have gone to sleep when there was a banging on our door and someone telling us that the bus to the airport was waiting. So we arrived at Singapore and, finally, the great day came for our journey to KL,

We were issued with a 38 pistol and six rounds just in case of trouble on the train. We noted that our fellow passengers were carrying all sorts of firearms, which seemed more serious than our revolvers. We finally arrived at Police HQ and were taken to a one-month course at Fraser's Hill, to introduce us to the Malay language, local law and criminal procedure. On this course there was an officer from a police jungle company, and I was curious to learn how this fitted in. Our training course in the UK naturally had made no mention of such matters. I was advised to ask Police HQ. The answer to my query was, "Under no circumstances will Mr Cochrane-Dyet be posted to a jungle company in the first instance." On the completion of the course a telephone call instructed me to report to Police HQ jungle companies, where I was told I was posted to No. 16 Jungle Company at Titi-Gantong, Grik."

Dato' Pilus Joins Up

Dato' Mohammed Pilus

"I APPEARED BEFORE the CPO, a slightly portly Englishman: I liked him instinctively. He told me to report to Bluff Road, "Any time you wish," smiled, and wished me good luck.

I travelled to KL by train: so Far Allah had guided every step I had made, and on New Year's Day I met the redoubtable Commandant of the Depot, who produced the recruitment forms and on 4th January I reported to the Depot. The day was full: Reveille before 0600 hours, drills and parades until 0900 hours, curry lunch and classroom work, then more parade ground drill until we became

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expert. I feel a glow of pride whenever I see our police team parading overseas. Once deductions had been made, the pay was very small. It was a tough regime and some recruits from better off families bailed out, paying three months salary to discharge their obligations.

When, on graduation I was posted to Perak, the Commandant briefed me that the Perak people were proud and unpredictable: they did not take kindly to police authority and had once bundled a policeman into a sack and thrown him into the river.

I duly reported for duty to Parit, part of the Kuala Kangsar Police District. Sergeant Major Ismail was Officer in Charge (OC) Station. Raw as I was, I could not help feeling that there was not much active police work to be done in Parit. The only theft was of a bicycle, and that case was passed to the corporal."

IN AT THE DEEP END

New Boy in Kuala Lipis

D.L Brent

David, who was brought up in Penang until the Japanese war, was commissional into the Northamptonshire Regiment and served in Trieste we haw never met but we have one common experience we both suffered at Office Cadet Training Unit (OCTU) under the formdable but most admiral Regimental Sergeant Major (RSM) Copp of the Coldstream Guards David's experience as a marksman and weapons expert stood him in good stead when he joined the police in 1952 as an ASP. He has been a most enthusiastic supporter of Operation Sharp End

David Brent description of the somewhat dauntung range of duties, which he was reported to carry end as newly minted police officer, will perhaps surprise antons of the 21st Century The last represents the typical challenges faced by the youngsters setting off in their first posting in the Colonial service. We arrived young, probably with only military experience behind us, and almost certainly without first-hand knowledge of the territory. Even without a full scale Emergency to cope with the responsibility was considerable. But, like military service it was an experience that stood the survivors in good for life. We learnt on the job, supported generously by our Malayan colleagues.

And the job usually gave a great deal of what, in modern management speak, is known as job satisfaction.. which we all remember with pleasure fifty years on.

"MY FIRST posting in Malaya was to Kuala Lipis under Wallace Kinloch, the OCPD, a broad-accented Scotsman and fine officer, who had been with the Scots Guards and then the Hong Kong Police at the time of the Japanese attack. Kuala Lipis was one of the largest police districts in Malaya, almost geographically dead centre

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of the country; it was the administrative town of Pahang and housed all the government head offices.

Wallace Kinloch acquired a tiger cub, which he kept at his home near the railway track on the edge of the township. It was quite a placid and friendly animal but I understand that it made a mess of anything it could get hold of and chew, which included table and chair legs, shoes and carpets. As it grew bigger and more destructive and less tractable, Wallace found a home for it at the Edinburgh Zoo.

I relished my first experiences in crime investigations, multiple administrative duties, *Chandu* raids, road blocks and searches, jungle patrols, police station inspections and pay days, setting up beat patrol systems, liaison with SB for special operations, liaison with military units, ceremonial parades, night duty officer, vehicle and boat maintenance, up-river journeys by boat to far-flung police stations and posts, inspections of rubber estate security systems and personnel, liaison with rubber estate managers, liaison with *Penghulus*, *Ketua Kampongs* (headmen of the *kampongs*), personnel management, and so on."

A Cadet ASPs First Patrol

P.H. Wright-Nooth

"IN LATE 1948 I resigned my commission in the Royal Tank Regiment and was appointed to Malaya as a police cadet. I soon found myself in the hurly-burly of Campbell Road Police Station as Assistant OCPD KL North. Tim Hatton, ex-Gurkhas, was OCPD. He spent most of his time running a ferocious looking jungle squad and hunting for 'bandits' (as we then called the CTs) in the jungles north of KL and left the policing side of things to me. This was quite a lot for an inexperienced twenty-one year old to take on, but I was quite happy to do it and learn as much as I could about being a policeman.

Tim's jungle squad had to be seen to be believed, it consisted of about thirty Malay and Indian policemen dressed in jungle green and armed to the teeth, brandishing rifles, Stens and Brens with hand grenades stuck in their belts. Every now and then one of his section leaders, a large and imposing Sikh sergeant, would march into the

office which Tim and I shared, give a butt salute on his Sten gun, receive instructions from Tim, shout ""Sahib!" and march out. Then chaos ensued as Tim and the jungle squad poured into their vehicles that went roaring out of the station compound.

"Would you like to go on an ambush" asked Tim one day. Enthused by his squads arrivals and departures I said, of course I would. But then I learned that I would not be going with the jungle squad but in charge of a party of Chinese detectives,

So, at ItiOG hours on a hot, humid afternoon we got into a black, wooden-sided police truck and headed north towards the Batu Caves through what seemed like an endless series of Malay **Kampongs** standing amidst coconut trees. Lorries pulled over to let us pass, their cargo giving us those varied smells that added a touch of mystery and excitement to the country. How clearly one recalls them: **durum** (fruit with a penetrating smell); Chinese cooking; the humid air, and in this case the unmistakable whiff of tightly packed sheets of rubber. We passed a tin dredge, which looked like some metal monster floating in the lake it had created, then came to the vast, towering exotic limestone rocky outcrop of Batu Caves; two miles round, five hundred feet high and covered in jungle growth that was home to birds and monkeys. In the caves on its northern face a small gang of CTs had their base.

Their role was to collect food from the Chinese squatters who lived round the edge of the rock and hills and take it to the gangs deep in the jungle. Our role was to ambush one of their jungle supply routes. We drove along a narrow bumpy track with high grass on either side, to the northern end of the outcrop. It was getting dark by now. The occupants of the occasional squatter hut peered at us then, realising who we were, withdrew inside their homes. Ducks quacked, dogs barked and open latrines stank. We passed through a small village and came to the edge of a nee held where we stopped.

The ambush party got out of the truck and I followed. Imagine now a bunch of squat Chinese detectives dressed in an assortment of civilian clothes, many wearing hats of different shapes, grinning at me with gold-filled teeth. This was my ambush party. They were armed with a variety of weapons and nonchalantly brandished their pistols, sub-machine guns and rifle. I only hoped they knew how to

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use them because, young and inexperienced as I was, my life was in their hands.

In the gathering darkness we set out at a brisk pace along the side of the rice field. It was flooded and I kept slipping off the edge into the water and floundering back out to find my feet again, trying to keep up with my more agile companions. Rice field followed rice field then, in the distance, loomed the edge of the jungle. It was quite dark now but there was the light of a full moon by which we followed a path leading into the ominous blackness ahead. With the moonlight glinting on the path, together with the shadows of the trees and undergrowth, this was my introduction to the jungle that I was to get to know so well. The path rose upward along the side of a ridge, crossed over the top and wound downwards again. We were still walking at a very rapid pace and it was much darker now as the moonlight failed to penetrate the canopy of trees above. I stumbled along following the figure of the detective in front of me, and keeping on the path with great difficulty. Not a word was said by any of my companions, all was deathly silence, not a sound coming from the gloom on either side of me.

After we had been walking for about an hour, we suddenly stopped and the detectives disappeared into the undergrowth to the right of the path. One remained with me and explained in Malay that this was the best place for the ambush. I followed him off the path and up the side of a steep hill, near the top of which we crouched down among some bushes. The jungle trees had slightly thinned here and enough moonlight penetrated to light up the area around us. At the bottom of the hill was the path bending away to the left so that we were looking directly along it. Visibility was about twenty yards, after it was darkness again. I looked around and saw other shadowy figures squatting in the undergrowth gazing, like me, towards the path.

We seemed to sit in the darkness for ages. All was silent except for the occasional cracking of a twig as one or other of my companions moved slightly. I had time to think about the situation: I was miles away from anywhere, in the middle of the Malayan jungle with no precise idea of my location, sitting among a bunch of Chinese detectives about whom I knew very little. Suppose I got lost, how would I get back to civilisation?

IN AT THE DEEP END

Suddenly I was woken from my thoughts, as all hell broke loose on either side of me. My companions started firing their various weapons in the direction of the path. The flashes of their guns lit the darkness and bullets whistled over my head: it was getting rather dangerous, especially as the firing was uncontrolled. I strained my eyes but could see nothing at all on the path. What were they shooting at? I decided to take control and in my excitement shouted, "Stop shooting you silly bastards!"

This seemed to have a magical effect. The shooting finished and I could now see shadowy figures standing up in the jungle around me and waving their firearms in the direction of the path. I crept forward with one of my companions. Suddenly, he jumped onto the path and triumphantly held aloft a battered old trilby hat. The other detectives emerged from the undergrowth and gathered on the path. I managed to find out from their excited chatter what had happened. Three armed men had been seen creeping stealthily along the path. Someone had fired too soon and they had disappeared. This, I learned, was the way it was in the jungle: contacts and then, perhaps, nothing.

Tim was there to greet us on our return. "Bad luck you missed them," he said. "Quite honestly, I didn't see a bloody thing," I replied."

Apprentice Patrol Leader CID

M. Engel

Michael, although commissioned into the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, was too tall and was transferred to the Royal Engineers after service in Sudan, Egypt and Greece.

After demobilisation and a spell as a Territorial Officer in the Artillery, Michael Engel set off to join the RMPF.

"WHEN WE ARRIVED in Singapore we were invited to join the local Force. Shock! Horror! We were keen as mustard, some might say pathologically stupid, and we certainly had not come all this way to enjoy the bright lights of Singapore. So we agreed to draw lots and two dispirited comrades were left behind to their fate in Singapore. No doubt they were destined to enjoy a long career and steady promotion.

Opening my sealed orders on my second day in Malaya, I discovered that I was to be known as a Patrol Leader Criminal Investigation Department, I arrived in Sungei Patani and reported to the OC CID, Bill Luscombe from Sydney, Australia: a man of few words, mostly pejorative. He introduced me to a group of fierce looking Chinese and said, "These are your men." Later, it transpired that some of them were police detectives, while others were former members of the wartime MPAJA. The next day I was invited to go into the depths of darkest Kedah in order to look for what had been described to me as up to 250 armed CTs. The 8th Regiment MRLA was on the move with the intention of creating mayhem in South Kedah and North Perak.

After only two days in the country I was unable to speak Malay, still less Tamil or any Chinese language, and anticipated a communications problem. I was relieved to hear that two experienced European sergeants would accompany me. Bodi were ex-Palestine policemen.

We arrived on the south bank of the Sungei Muda, which was wide and fast flowing. I held an 'O Group' with the two sergeants and sent one upstream with about five men to select a suitable ambush position, and the other downstream with a similar number of men. I took the central position with five men. Each of us was

equipped with a US .300 carbine (useless) and a Browning 9mm pistol (better). We also had three Bren guns (excellent), one in each group. Apart from shouting we had no means of communication. I had seen all those films about the war in Burma and the Pacific and so I thought that I knew instinctively what had to be done. I can remember my order quite clearly, even after all these years.

"Hold your fire until their rubber boats reach the middle of the river. Aim for the boats and we will take prisoners," The two sergeants looked at me in silence for some minutes. "These guys use bamboo rafts," said one sergeant quietly.

In the end there was no contact with the enemy. We packed up and got back to Sungei Patani, evil-smelling, tired, hungry and knackered, I reported to Bill Luscombe and told him that we had not seen any CTs; he looked up and said, "I hope you are better at tennis."

On another occasion I was on a fighting patrol with the same two European sergeants. We were wandering around in Central Kedah looking for a CT camp. We were a long way from human habitation when suddenly a Chinese boy came dashing along the track towards us. One of the sergeants grabbed the boy by the scruff of the neck and in one swift movement drew his pistol and held it against the boy's head. Turning to me he screamed, "Shall I shoot the ****, Sir?" I ordered him to release the boy and the sergeant, very unhappy with my decision, said that the boy was almost certainly a CT courier. Fifteen minutes later we walked into a well-organised ambush."

CT Heads and Other Matters

M, Engel

'IN 1949 A COMBINED police/military operation was mounted in the Gunong Bongsu Forest Reserve on the Kedah/Perak border. The object was to kill or capture all CTs in the area. This was in the early days when people talked about "cordonning off large tracts of country, including dense jungle. Three Battalions, two British and one Malay Regiment, constituted the cordon. The killing ground was bombed and strafed by the RAF, shelled by a field battery and

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subjected to sporadic shelling and machine-gunning by armoured vehicles from a Lancer Regiment.

When the dust and smoke settled I found that I was in charge of the one and only police unit instructed to follow up the bombardment. The unit consisted of about fifty men, drawn from different parts of Kedah, mostly Malays, some Sikhs and Punjabi Musselmen. They had never worked as a team and some of them had never been involved in this type of operation before. We started off and passed through the cordon. After about an hour and still in open country, I spotted mist or smoke rising above the treetops on a hill feature. Some of the men thought it was mist, but I was sure it was smoke from a cooking fire. We made our way towards the hill, the patrol strung out in single file. They were making a hell of a lot of noise, so I ordered a halt. After choosing one of the Malays, a Sikh and a Punjabi Musselman, I told the others to go back towards the start line and wait. The four of us moved forward very slowly and continued uphill, where we found an occupied camp. We shot and killed one CT and recovered a weapon and documents.

It was a hot day, and by now we were tired and hungry. We discussed the problem of recovering the body of the dead CT and after a show of hands, opted for a simple solution. We rejoined the main body of the patrol and made our way back to the start line, where a major in the Malay Regiment told me he had heard firing. When I told him we had killed a CT, he wanted to know what we had done with the body, so I opened my pack, allowing a severed head and two hands to roll out onto the ground in front of him. He became very excited and got on the radio to his brigadier who stormed up, red-faced and furious. Apparently, our friends from Nepal had been upsetting everyone by doing this sort of thing and it had now become a court martial offence. In the end, I was ordered to go back and recover the rest of the CT and the various bits and pieces were taken to Kulim Police Station, where the usual photographs were taken, 'pour encourager les autres'.

None of the detectives had received any training in jungle craft and, as most of my time in the army had been spent in desert country, I was not well equipped to take charge. All wore black shirts, with black shorts or long trousers, and trilby hats, always worn inclined to the right. The style of headgear was probably

copied from actors seen in countless American B pictures shown nightly at the Cattle Shed, an affectionate name for the open-air cinema in the Lucky World Amusement Park. The first real shock came when I realised that this was what they wore on patrol: jungle green uniforms were unknown. So I made do with khaki shirts and trousers from army days, until I bought a bottle of green Quink and dyed my clothing. The result was not too bad, more glittery emerald than dull jungle green, except that when I stripped off to wash, revealing myself in verdant glory, it tended to frighten Cookie, a man of nervous disposition. Nobody had a proper water bottle, so the men carried beer bottles hung from the waist with string. There were no jungle boots, so we all wore Chinese basketball boots. Mine were red, because I couldn't find a size 11 in blue or black.

In an ineffectual effort to keep the leeches at bay, I wore a pair of spats, which Bill Luscombe had liberated from a US Marine during his army service. Lacking any decent kit, we were, as you would suppose, armed to the teeth, with .300 US carbines, 9mm pistols, .38 revolvers, and hand grenades. I thought the US carbine was a useless weapon and always wondered whether some clerical officer in Crown Agents had done a crafty deal with an American deserter in connection with a job lot of time-expired weapons. We travelled in soft-skinned, open, Chevrolet troop carriers and I used to sit at the back, lulled to sleep by the exhaust fumes. '

After we started operating, reports started coming in, mostly from planters, about an armed Chinese gang led by a red-haired European. As I was dark-haired, it just shows that you can never rely on the evidence of an eye witness."

Memories of a 'Shock Trooper'

P.A. Collin

Like many police officers Sandy had been an officer in the Armed Forces during World War II. His first civilian job after the war took him to Singapore as a shipping agent, but the Emergency gave him the chance to join the police and thus fulfil a long-standing ambition.

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"ABOUT FIFTEEN OF US turned up for an interview in KL, all of us either still in the armed forces or, like me, employed by local companies. We had all held commissions in the British Army and had experience of the East and spoke an Asian language. The interview stays clear in my memory. The interviewing officers told us that if we were accepted it would be as 'shock troops' in the war against the Communists: the bumph and routine work would be left to the older generation. All fifteen of us were accepted and asked to report as soon as possible for duty. We were urgently required to fill gaps on the ground.

I was immediately posted as OCPD Balik Pulau, the district at the back of Penang Island. It was a small township to the west of the considerable range of hills that ran down the centre of the Island. The CTs were using this jungle ridge for a training ground and our attempts to sweep them out were unsuccessful.

I had barely settled in, blessed with the services of a very knowledgeable chief clerk to coach me on procedure, when one morning I heard a shot and went to investigate. I found my detective sergeant slumped over a table in a coffee shop; an unknown person had shot him in the back of the head at point blank range. This was a serious loss; the murdered man was an 'old sweat' who knew everyone in the village. A few weeks later another shot rang out, this time I found my detective corporal in the same position in the coffee shop, again a victim of a shot in the back of the head by an unidentified assassin.

About this time I was given a Picardy Alsatian dog whose mother had seen service in North Africa. Zipper soon won over the hearts of the Malay policemen and proved to be a most excellent scout. He not only led the patrol, but also trotted back from time to time to check up that all was well to the rear, and never allowed himself to be distracted by the barking curs in the villages.

I was reminded a few years ago of a visit by the CPO who asked me about a recent sudden death in my patch, "Was the outcome Coroner's proceedings etc.?" I looked him blandly in the eye and said, "I buried it, Sir." At the time I had no understanding of the requirements of the law and presumed that I had to bury the corpse so that I could get on with the job in hand. I say that now in mitigation and without a blush. I had been hired as a 'shock

trooper'. As an anti-ambush drill I used to subject my *Mata Matas* to the rather terrifying exercise of leaping off trucks moving at about twenty miles per hour. The technique was to leap, head forward, and land squatting, virtually upright on terra firma, to avoid hitting the head on the ground or the tailboard."

From Court Clerk to Police Field Force

Ahmad bin Abdul Hamid

"I WENT TO the same school as Tan Sri Amin in Kedah; when I started work as a Court Clerk a Malay Inspector persuaded me to go to KL for an interview and, so to speak, 'shanghaied' me into the police. My interview with Mr McNamara at the Depot was perfunctory: I was enrolled immediately.

After basic training I was posted to Kuala Krai as an Investigating Officer, but my first job was not to investigate but to lead twelve APs into the jungle in pursuit of a CT gang. I barely had time to confirm that they knew how to fire their weapons before we set off in hot pursuit towards the Thai border. It was an unenviable situation: I had no radio and my sergeant was the only man in the patrol with experience of action or indeed any operational experience.

As we moved along the track we found what my sergeant identified as traces of the CPs, including the marks made by their bodies and weapons when they had established a rearguard position. In view of our inexperience and lack of training, it was probably a very good thing that the CT rearguard had pulled out before we got there, otherwise the light machine gun, which the CTs had positioned to cover the track, would almost certainly have caused us heavy casualties.

We followed the CT trail up to the Thai border, but failed to catch up with them and returned to base un-bloodied and untriumphant.

I was soon detailed to take another patrol out in hot pursuit of an even larger CT party, but the OCPD decided that, in view of the inexperience of my squad and myself, the job should be given to a more experienced squad, and I was allotted a less exacting task.

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Once again my patrol made no contact. The other patrol, which had taken over my original task, lost an officer and four men. Later I learnt from an SEP that he had spotted our patrol but, since he was on his way to surrender, he had not wished to start a firefight.

We did a lot of training. We practised silent movements, spacing, crawling, holding weapons, maintaining silence, the use of hand signals and subjected the students to plenty of live firing over their heads, grenade explosives, and the sound of thunder flashes close at hand. We accustomed the men to a non-smoking regime, and the general discomforts of the jungle life.

I finished my jungle work in command of seven battalions of the Police Field Force (PFF)."

Midnight Sortie

A.J.V. Fletcher

"AFTER A LONG, hot journey by road we fetched up in Mentakab in the early evening, to be greeted by the OCPD, Peter Machin-Cook and his assistant, Gerry Gill. We must have presented a pretty ghastly spectacle and probably smelt. We had been on the move for three days and nights and were still in the clothes we had travelled in. We spent the night on our camp beds in the OCPD's house, because the Rest House was full of planters and their families who had been burnt out of their bungalows. We emerged from the two bathrooms, grappled with our fiendishly sharp-edged steel camp beds (several of us receiving our first light wounds of the campaign in the process) and, eyes fixed on a large tray of tall, bedewed glasses of ice-cold whisky-sodas, waited for the last of our comrades to appear.

Before we could raise our glasses, the field telephone rang. Another estate had been attacked, Peter told us; he and Gerry were off to deal with it. "You chaps have your drink and get your heads down," he said, "You're all-in." Some gung-ho clowns among us immediately insisted on going with the party. Not wanting to be killed so soon after my arrival, I would have kicked their ankles and enjoined silence had I been within reach. There were also fourteen whiskies awaiting our attention. In our white shirts and light-coloured slacks making a superb target for the enemy, we were soon

bumping along a laterite road towards the distant glow in the sky of a burning rubber estate.

We arrived at a scene of some animation. The CTs were retreating, but still firing as they melted away through the rubber trees. The stout-hearted Malay SCs, ill-armed for the most part with single-barrelled 12-bore shotguns, were returning their fire (as did some of us) and their spirited defence had resulted in one very dead C T. But a Chinese foreman had been murdered and the smoke-house, full of sheet rubber, was spectacularly ablaze, as were the labourers' lines and the office. There was not much we could do.

It was about 0200 hours when we arrived back at the bungalow. The servants had long since cleared the tray of whiskies away, and we agreed that bed was the diing. Alas, it was not to be: as we prepared for sleep another attack on another estate took place and off we went again. This time, the CTs were gone by the time we arrived. We got back to our camp beds at around 0400 hours. We slept!"

From Detective to Commander
Mohd Kassim bin Abdul Aziz

Encik Kassim started the Emergency as a detective in the Malayan Security Service (MSS), and by 1969 was in command of 13 Platoons of the PFF.

"MY FIRST SQUAD consisted of a sergeant and twelve SCs; the smallest was no higher than his rifle, which he learnt to fire from the hip. By the mid-1950s, I was commanding a special operations squad consisting of SEPs.

The most famous case in which I was involved was the investigation and prosecution of Watts, an estate manager who, based on the evidence of Tamil and other SEPs, was accused of 'consorting with the enemy'. Watts was discharged but not acquitted.

I remember some of the CTs most brutal actions, particularly on ambush, when they butchered and stripped naked some British soldiers whose unit (KOYLI) had been causing them grave inconvenience. I also remember two foolhardy planters who paid the ultimate penalty when they went squirrel shooting.

The *Tuan Mat Salleh* (expatriate officers) who trained, guided and disciplined us did a good job, but they were also a source of friendly amusement and given funny names. One OCPD, whose name was Legat, was nicknamed *Lekas* (the swift) because of the speed with which he left his District every weekend. And then there was Tuan ShitShit, so called because he had once Fallen in a hole full of human excrement."

Out of the Frying Pan into the Fire

B. Collins

The analogous Malay proverb is more colourful:

*Terlepas dari mulut buaya
Mamsok ke dalam mulut harimau.*

Which translates as:

*Freed from the mouth of the crocodile
Enter mouth of the tiger.*

Barry Collins, a 2/Lt in the Royal Signals, was talent-spotted by the CPO Petiang and persuaded by him to join the police.

"I WAS POSTED as a 2/Lt to Malaya in May 1948.

The CPO Penang asked me when I was due for release from the army if I would be interested in joining the police, as there was an urgent need for signals officers in view of the worsening security situation posed by the rising Communist threat. In fact, the travelling exhibition, in which I was involved, was terminated that day due to the declaration of the Emergency following an ambush of a bus and subsequent death of a number of passengers in Perlis. Ten days later I collected my police uniform as an AS resplendent with two silver pips, and the next morning departed by air in a Dakota en route to Kota Bahru in Kelantan.

In those days road links to the east coast were rudimentary to say the least, and involved many river crossings by ferry with only two flights a week from KL. The airfield at Pengkalan Chepa was a grass runway. A *Mata, Mata* from Contingent HQ, who drove me

the five miles to Kota Bahru where I reported to the CPO, met me. After a short and somewhat perfunctory welcome, I was told that I would be proceeding immediately to Kuala Krai to organise the defence of this small town as a group of CTs were said to be coming down river to attack the settlement. However, when I told the CPO that I had been informed that I would be setting up a police wireless communications network, he changed his orders and I was told to work in Contingent **HQ** to set up this network. To my surprise, however, my days of army involvement were not over, as the CPO then ordered me to take charge of the small group of men in the Malay Regiment left guarding Pengkalan Chepa in the absence of the Commanding Officer (CO) who, with his company, had been sent on operations. I found myself in charge of this small group including a senior sergeant major. Although my memories of these events are now very dim, I do have a recollection of some disciplinary problems concerning some missing stores. I began to wonder if I had jumped from the frying pan into the fire.

In due course, after chasing the CTs out of Kelantan, the Malay Regiment Company (MRC) returned to base, and I then left the camp and was assigned bachelor quarters in Kota Bahru where I remained for nearly two years, until the expiry of my contract of service.

Shortly after this period, Len Cullen, the CPO, and his wife, whom, I remember with affection for their kindness to their junior officers, was replaced by P i l l i . (Paddy) Jackson. If my memory is correct, Len Cullen was somewhat disillusioned over the appointment of the new Commissioner of Police. Colonel Cray, and the many changes being made to the established order, and this may have resulted in his departure. Shortly before the end of my contract, a further change of CPO occurred with the appointment of (Charles?) Dobrey.

One of my earliest memories of my time with the service was the occasion of the crash of a RAF Dakota on operations in the Batu Melintang area. A party of RAF officers, including the Chaplain General, arrived in Kota Bahru to visit the site, which was in a very remote area. I was ordered to escort this party, having never been in the jungle beforehand. To the RAF party my obvious lack of experience on an expedition, which took four days to reach the site,

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must have been somewhat daunting. We travelled in two *prahus*, over the upper reaches of the Kelantan river, camping on sandbanks or other clearings each night: this in an area where it was known that the CTs were operating. What a vulnerable target we presented to the CTs had they but known this! Having organised the rations for the party, which included a quantity of tinned peaches, when an airdrop of additional supplies was made, I was appalled to find dozens of tins of peaches! To this day, I still dislike tinned peaches!

The police post at Batu Melintang was an important location, as it was close to the track used by the CTs from Thailand into Kelantan and Perak. It was decided to set up an ambush up one of the hills in the area, which involved a trek of some three hours from the police post and having an ambush party of five or six police in situ for two or three days at a time. Each junior officer was assigned the job of OC and, in turn, I arrived at Batu Melintang Police Post for a one-month stint. I shall always remember my dismay on arriving in the area, as the only non-Malay member of the squad, seeing my colleagues leave by boat knowing that I would not see another expatriate for a month, with all the uncertainties of the operation facing me. The ambush section was relieved every three days, and I usually accompanied the change of section to ensure that the ambush situation was satisfactory, and to deal with any other matters affecting the section on duty. In fact, no CTs were apprehended at this ambush, possibly due to their information on our whereabouts! It was a lonely and tense time but my fluency in the Malay language improved beyond compare.

My last year in the service saw my transfer to CID and SB, working for David Yates, a charming man whom I greatly respected for both his knowledge and his kindness. I shall always picture him with a cigarette in his mouth — a real chain-smoker. The OCPD Kota Bahru was John Lawrence and my immediate colleagues were John Snakey, Peter Penn and Roy Petch. Wan Ibrahim bin Wan Isa, became a good friend and I shall always be indebted to him for his advice and guidance in learning about the customs of the area.

My stay in Kelantan was immensely enriched through the friendship of two prominent members of the Royal Family — the Tengku Makota who later became Sultan, and Tengku Kelana D'Raja. Their generosity in welcoming me to their homes and

teaching me the finer points of Malay etiquette, particularly the Kelantan adat was an enormous privilege. The District Officer (DO) in Kota Bahru was Peter Coates, his wife, Olga, worked with me in the Police Signals Section, as a cypher clerk

It was with great sadness, and with considerable misgivings, that I decided to return home at the conclusion of my contract in June 1950. In fact, I was offered a career with the Royal Dutch/Shell Group and was shortly afterwards assigned to the oilfield in Seria, Brunei, as a trainee Personnel Officer. "

TRAINING

At the beginning of the Emergency most of the CTs had the advantage of experience of jungle warfare and of training as a result of their wartime service in the MPAJA.

But the police force and the army were not jungle-trained. The rapid improvisation of defence forces and offensive measures was greatly aided, however, by the fact that so many of the expatriates had recently left the British Army. The new intake of police officers and planters had nearly all been officers in the British Army and thus at least knew how to handle firearms and to command troops.

This accumulated military experience was not something that the MCP had factored into their plans to launch a terrorist campaign, and the rapid reaction of civilians, must have caused the CTs some surprise.

Bags of Bull

Dato' J.J. Raj (Jnr)

Dato' Raj, who joined the police in 1947 and finished as a Deputy Commissioner, saw a lot of the training process.

"INITIATION IN THE DEPOT was, indeed, a culture shock. On the second day we were marched onto the parade ground, shirtless and with a pair of baggy shorts and army boots. There were over a hundred recruits on the parade ground at various stages of training and in overall command was the Chief Drill Instructor, Chegu Panjang, my childhood friend. Tall with an imposing figure and a thunderous voice, he struck fear into everyone. I felt that as an old friend there would be concessions for me. But for Chegu when on parade there was no such thing as friend or foe, senior or junior officer, everyone was equal in his eyes. He yelled at anyone making the slightest mistake and my friends and I had to do many punishment drills till

we improved. Chegu Panjang was a perfectionist, he accepted no nonsense from any quarter, Off parade he was a perfect gentleman,

During my training period, the MCP had a strong hold on the labour unions, unleashed considerable strikes, many which were militant in nature. The problems were countrywide, and the police were hard-pressed and short of manpower. There were times when the shortage of manpower was so severe that many of us, still training in the Depot, were sent to rubber estates to quell disturbances.

As OCPD Pagoh, I remember visiting an estate where a burly Scots manager, with previous military experience, took on the job of training his raw APs. It was a comic sight to see the manager, handgun in holster and carbine over his shoulder, playing the part of Drill Sergeant

The APs did their best to respond to his English commands, but they did not understand him. so some marched forward, others backwards, some turned right and others left. I was able to help.

Training has been an important part of the police tone even since its inception in Penang on 25th March 1807 There was much in common between training in the military and in the police, since the original British officers were from the British Army. Before World War II, there was no national police force, but different police forces. Straits Settlements. Federated Malay States Police, and Un-Federated Malay States Police. However, training was more or less similar and based on the common iron discipline. All police trainees were given thorough training in the use of firearms. During musketry lessons, trainees were trained to strip and re-assemble Bren guns, Sten guns, pump guns, etc They were trained to shoot to kill or be killed, on operations.

Parades were daily and rigorous, particularly marching and drill, These were in the mornings, followed by classroom studies in law, as well as Malay language lessons, followed by musketry. The rapid expansion programme caused problems in leadership, training, organisation, management and communications. The strength of the police force rose from 9,422 police officers, and 2,08? civilian staff in 1947, to 76,000 regular police, and 80,000 APs making a total of 156,000 at the height of the Emergency!

The problem of recruiting such a colossal number was great, but the task of training them was as daunting.

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We had recruits who had never worn boots. The parade commands were in English, and the men had no idea of the language. It was an uphill task. Almost all were Malays and they learnt quickly and willingly. The same scenario was repeated in police training schools all over Malaya. The British Police Sergeants, later known as P/Lts, did a marvellous job in the training and moulding of the SCs and the APs.

After training I was posted to a sub-Depot at Tanjong Rambutan, which was next door to the government hospital for mentally retarded persons. The training took place near the patients who were locked up in large, airy, rooms with wire netting. Mentally retarded they may have been, but they soon picked up most of the commands — right, left — right, quick — march and all die swear words used by the drill instructors.

Night and day the 'loonies' yelled out the drill commands and the swear words, and whenever I passed by I received smart salutes from them, some completely naked. I returned the salutes meticulously. Having lived with the 'loonies' for two years, I am not sure whether part of their idiosyncrasies have not rubbed off on me!"

The Depot

Leong Chee Woh

Like JJ, Mr Leong started as a recruit at the Depot and finished up as a senior police officer.

"IT WAS VERY TOUGH at the Depot. I remember my first meal garnished with ants, smelly fish, food barely fit for dogs. The coffee tasted as if the cook had been using the Commandant's socks!

Our barracks was as basic as any building could be. Every morning a bugler woke us at 0600 hours. Then we drilled, breakfasted, and drilled again with musketry training until lunch. The hardest part was the sessions on law and language in the afternoon, when we were physically too tired to concentrate easily. The day ended at 2045 hours. Then we took turns at Guard Duty.

On Saturdays barracks and kit were inspected, and if any blemish was found, we were severely punished.

TRAINING

The recruits were of all shapes and sizes, of various races. Only two out of our Squad of 52 failed.

The squad was divided into two sections. Mine was under a Sikh, ferocious on parade, but pleasant when we met at the weekend. The other section was under a Malay so fierce that he was known as 'Tiger'.

The training was designed to produce strong and resilient officers, and most of the trainees enjoyed the camaraderie, which contributed to esprit de corps in the future."

Some Very Special Constables

A.J.V Fletcher

"My first post as a P/Lt was at Mentri Estate, about twenty miles from Mentakab. The Manager, Ian Davidson, had endured a pretty frightful couple of months under siege from marauding CTs and was delighted to have his 'Palestinians', both for the company we provided and for the training of the estate's SCs.

We had three other estates to defend, each with its complement of thirty SCs. We had to cope with shortages of arms, ammunition and transport. To begin with we had shotguns for the SCs (one between two), but later we had an issue of the old and reliable SMLE .30 rifle. Ammunition, however, was limited to five rounds per man, and was also of great age and often misfired. The dates on the rim of the rounds were mostly '34, '35 and '37, and after a dozen years or so in the humidity of Malaya, it was an agreeable surprise when they fired. As for transport, we had none, sometimes we walked for hours or more to our other estates, or sometimes hitched lifts on the trolly tankers,

To begin with our St N never had an opportunity to fire their shotguns and rifles, but during CT attacks that were launched usually at night. After much insistence, we obtained ten rounds per man for training purposes and, despite misfires and hang-fires; this proved a great morale-raiser.

Thus we saw almost all young Malay lads from kamptungs in the area. An example was a thmeseniwood estate that was four or five miles away from us on Mentri where the thirty SCs were Kwongsai cubs. These were, to a man, rabidly pro-Nationalist

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and anti-Chinese Communist. They tended to be large, tough fellows who, to our untutored eyes, all looked alike. They also shared between them only a very small number of surnames, and were related by marriage or 'clan' for good measure; even their given names, in Romanised form, were similar. Finally, just to ensure that we were driven to madness when trying to work out shifts, all of them [being good Chinese entrepreneurs) in addition to their SC duties, were also tapping rubber.

Several attempts to organise these celestials resulted only in ever greater confusion until finally, at the gentle suggestion of the manager (himself a Kwongsai), we promoted to corporal the largest and most thuggish of the lot who, in short order, had three shifts up and running and posted on the duty roster board (in Chinese characters which we could not read). All was well.

One minor handicap of these Kwongsai lay in their inability to close one eye when firing their rifles. We made eye patches which did the trick (although making them look even more sinister) and eventually some, but not all, learned the knack of closing the left eye."

A DIY Battle School

J.A.S. Edington

John Edington was one of the many young men in Malaya who, having been in the British Army, found his military experience highly relevant during the Emergency. And, like many other planters, he welcomed the arrival of the P/Lts from Palestine to take over the training and leadership of the SCs recruited to guard the estates.

*John had only arrived in Malaya in May 1948. Kulai **Yang** Estate was in South Johore: notorious bandit country. His tale illustrates admirably the enthusiasm and initiative with which the planters took up the cudgels against the CTs. The Bob Graver who participated in John's DIY Battle School later won a GM when he chased and killed four CTs who had attempted to ambush him.*

"EVEN BEFORE THE EMERGENCY there had been 'considerable disturbing activity around the estate with unnerving comings and goings at night of sinister people. We had no arms, and were very

relieved when a Gurkha platoon came to camp on the estate. We were less pleased when the next day our Chinese (Hainanese) cooks disappeared without warning, never to be seen again.

Boh Graver and Jock Sutherland, two ex-Palestine Police Sergeants, were sent to help and soon all three of us were hard at work training the young Malay SCs who had been recruited, mostly from local *kimfungs*.

I had already worked with the OCPD Kulai, Encik Yusuf bin Yanus, who, knowing that I had been an officer in the British Army, asked me to train his men in the use of the Bren gun with which he had been newly supplied after the CTs had attacked the local police station.

We set to with enthusiasm on the training task of which I had plenty of experience from army days, training National Servicemen. Drill, barrack room inspections, field craft and weapon training became the order of the day. We dug trenches, in which the SCs stood to at dawn and dusk, the times when the CTs were most likely to attack. All this added interest to my work as a planter.

But, although our young Malay recruits became ever more proficient in their paramilitary duties, they had never experienced enemy fire, and we agreed that their training would not be complete until they had experienced the sound of live rounds cracking overhead. So we worked out a battle inoculation exercise. The plan was that I and Jock Sutherland would set up a Bren gun on a ridge above the estate and open fire, in Battle Style: hoobstyle. on a fixed line above the heads of a three section fighting patrol of SCs led by Sergeant Graver. The patrol was to be spread out in battle formation, each section in single file, advancing along both sides of the road beneath us.

On D-Day I had some difficulty in finding a suitable spot on the ridge from which to find a clear field of fire for my Bren, so eventually decided to site the gun about five yards forward of the crest. Meanwhile Sergeant Graver's fighting patrol was advancing blissfully unaware that they were about to receive battle inoculation.

When Bob and his leading section appeared, I opened up with several bursts from my Bren. Immediately, to my consternation, our well-trained SCs dropped to the ground, took up firing positions facing towards me and started to return fire. Their bullets hit the

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ground uncomfortably close to me as I scrambled back to safety behind the crest, accompanied by the familiar sound of bullets cracking around me.

Sergeant Graver blew his whistle, ordered a cease-fire, and explained that the live ammunition, which had passed over their heads, was part of an exercise, not part of a CT attack. Although I realised that I had made an error of judgement when I sited my Bren on the forward slope, I was delighted with the textbook performance that had been put on by our SCs. Perhaps the state of efficiency of our SCs was the reason why the CTs never attempted a set piece attack on Kulai Yong; they preferred to indulge in cowardly ambushes against moving vehicles where they could be sure that they outnumbered their prey."

DEFENDING THE ESTATES

An Honorary Inspector Defends His Estate

C.J. Frazier

Jay Frazier, having left the Indian Army in July 1948, joined Harrison and Crasfield as an assistant manager on Prang Besar Estate, Klang. These were notorious Bad Lands within the operational area of LIEW Konkim (the bearded one), and Jays estate was an obvious CT target, since it included a research centre, with an international reputation, which cloned rubber seeds for world-wide distribution. He was appointed an Honorary Inspector

This account of a Terang Bulan (bright moon) attack on Prang Besar Estate captures the atmosphere of the times, when planters had to become soldiers again to heat off the CTs and train and lead the SCs..

"THE ESTATE WAS some distance from the town, with a laterite road connecting factory, labour lines and managers' bungalows. For some curious reason, the CTs never cut the telephone wire that linked us to the outside world. The encircling rubber trees were between fifty and one hundred yards away from the buildings and strung with barbed wire between the nearest trees to form a serviceable perimeter fence. On the laterite road and round the managers' houses and the factory, there were gates and sand-filled 45-gallon drums to provide strong points. At night the perimeter fence and the strong points ~~were~~ illuminated,

The resident estate labour force was Tamil; the guards, also resident, were Malay and Tamil. There were also some Malays working in the research station. Our relations with all of them were friendly. The remainder of the workforce, however, was Chinese contract labour that was trucked in daily. There was little doubt that there were Min Yuen — Communist spies — amongst them and their

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work gave them a perfect opportunity to spy out the land and report on our habits and defences. The Chinese made no secret of their hostility to us. Whenever we visited areas where they were at work, they would bang loudly on their latex collection pails as soon as they saw us, so that our whereabouts on the estate was always known. This was unnerving but kept us on our toes.

The nature of our duties, constantly visiting the working areas of the plantations, made us easy targets for the CTs. Having attended the dawn muster of tappers, and returned to the bungalow for breakfast, we would set out on foot or by Jeep, on our tours of inspection. Although we had escorts, we were very vulnerable. We hoped that the Tamils were sufficiently well disposed to warn us of any CT presence, but had no delusions that the Chinese contract force were on our side. The best we could do to make life more difficult for the enemy was to carefully vary routes and timings.

The estate weaponry was a quartermaster's nightmare. Understandably, the regular police got priority when modern weapons became available, and we had to make do with whatever Harrisons had been able to buy on the commercial market. Our weapons included small *parangs* and single-barrelled shotguns for the guards, and ancient .455 Webleys for the management, but very little ammunition. There were also strange weapons such as Lanchesters and Reissing guns. Eventually we got some Colt .45 revolvers. I was fortunate; I had my own private Colt.

The police too were outgunned since we were facing an enemy, which as the MPAJA, had been generously supplied with arms and ammunition by the British Army. They had cached their weapons after the war and now brought them into use for their 'armed struggle'. Things looked up when the police sergeants arrived. We were issued with .303 rifles and Sten guns and I was appointed an Honorary Inspector, and thus had authority to train and discipline our guards. Meanwhile we strengthened our defences, putting shards of glass at the bottom of the drainage ditches which, following the contours of the hills, had been dug to prevent erosion.

My favourite escort was a Tamil, rumoured to have been a member of the Japanese Army. Whatever the truth of that matter, he was respected by the other Tamils. It helped that we both spoke fluent Urdu and he was good company.

We tried to make sure that we were back inside the perimeter before 'Stand To' at dusk; that was the most dangerous hour. Nights were disturbed by false alarms; sentries loosing off shots at fireflies, wrongly identified as a CT having a smoke, or at wild boar rooting about near the perimeter, and identified as a section of CTs forming up for an assault. But once we had Stood To we could not stand down again until dawn, since we could not be absolutely certain that there was nothing sinister behind the apparent false alarm, so we lost a lot of sleep. The CTs soon cottoned on to the idea that they could cause us a sleepless night at little cost to themselves by arranging 'jitter' parties, which would fire a few rounds from somewhere near the perimeter and then depart having brought us all out of bed for the night.

Outside the estate, driving on the road to Klang or Kuala Lumpur (KL), was a hazardous business; we had the choice of driving alone and fast, hoping that there would be no tree across the road, or waiting until a convoy could be organised.

The first, long-expected, attack came at dusk just before Christmas. There was a full moon to light up the scene and the SCs fired a near perfect volley at the CT targets, who were illuminated by the bright moonlight as they formed up outside the perimeter of the Manager's bungalow. Then all deteriorated into wild firing and chaos. I regrouped with my guards at the Manager's bungalow where we were able to move around in comparative safety behind the bullet-proof barricades, which we had built up to waist height, around the house. We moved about calming the SCs while our imperturbable hostess, Mrs Wright, dispensed coffee and tea. The CTs did not press their attack and, eventually, the firing died down. We stayed on the alert until dawn.

There had been no casualties on our side, but when we looked around outside we found plenty of bullets in the house and in the surrounding trees. We also found traces of blood in the ditches where the CTs had dived for cover when we fired our first volley, and landed painfully in our broken glass trap.

The CTs returned to the attack two nights later. This time, having been taught a painful lesson when they attacked during Stand To, they attacked after Stand Down, penetrated the perimeter fence and broke through between the houses and office and into the

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factory. Once again firing was wild and confused, and again we grouped our guard force in the Manager's bungalow. We decided to mount a counter-offensive. The plan was to use our armoured lorry to charge through the CT position on the laterite road, where they had positioned themselves between the offices and us, and to chase them out of the factory. Our counter-attack went according to plan; we took the lorry charging through the CT party with the SCs firing at will at weapon flashes or movement. When we reached the factory we debussed and hunted the CTs out. After that the CTs never came back."

Estate War Diary

(August-December 1948)

C.J. Frazier

The extracts here are from a diary of events. They provide a vivid picture of action on a rubber estate in the early days of the Emergency.

Both before and after 17th August many lights were seen at night. As a result of these lights, a Fighting Patrol was formed and led by Mr Frazier, to investigate and to eliminate prowlers, and to reinforce any threatened position.

17th August, Tuesday

AT 2100 HOURS an unknown Chinese was seen to approach Mr Wright's bungalow. On being challenged by the sentry on that particular point, he vanished. The alarm was sounded and action stations manned. The Fighting Patrol was detailed to search the area into which the man had disappeared, but drew a blank. Mr Wright then took the patrol by Jeep to the office, soon after they left a sentry saw another Chinese and opened fire. The shots were not returned. Mr Wright's party was reinforced and they returned without mishaps. The patrol was sent to comb the suspected area, while it was still out the sentries at Dr Chittenden's bungalow, hearing movements from another direction, opened fire. The patrol was, therefore, sent to that area but again found nothing. On their return the order was given to stand down.

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At 0500 hours the next morning, the guards at the Assistant's bungalow opened fire on two Chinese whom they had watched approach to within twenty-five yards. All the guards stood to until dawn.

29th August, Sunday

At 1800 hours Messrs Gray and Frazier, while returning from B.12 in the former's car, saw a strange Chinese standing in the rubber. On seeing the car, he assumed a belligerent attitude and reached for his hip pocket as if for a pistol. Messrs Gray and Frazier drew up, but the Chinese turned and ran as the two got out of the car. He did not stop when called upon but fled, using the cover of the aibber trees to great advantage. He was then fired at as he zigzagged between the trees and an attempt was made to cut him off before he reached the cover of the *Lalang* (very sharp, stiff grass) and jungle areas. At this time two Jeeps full of SCs arrived and the area was searched. Two Tamil labourers, who were trapping pigs on the boundary, reported that they had seen a Chinese carrying a pistol in his hand and moving awkwardly, as if wounded.

As Messrs Gray and Frazier returned they were stopped by one of the two Tamil pig trappers, who said that he had seen a large bundle lying in a drain in B.11. They proceeded to the spot and collected this bundle, which proved to be Communist documents. These were handed over to the police the next day.

30th August, Monday

At 0400 hours the sergeant on his rounds was informed on reaching the factory that lights had been seen coming down the hill from Block 8. He sounded the alarm and ordered the guards to stand to and open fire as they came within range. Three men were seen and fired upon. They were heard running away. The patrol was sent out on hearing the alarm.

31st August, Tuesday

Since during the last three nights lights have been seen ascending the path outside the Tower Gate, the Fighting Patrol took up an ambush position at 0200 hours. In spite of waiting for three hours, no lights were seen on this night.

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2nd September, Thursday

It was decided to check up on the Chinese labourers occupying the lines, since it was suspected that they were harbouring Communists at night. At 2230 hours, two parties under Messrs Gray and Frazier were sent to investigate. Only those authorised were present.

3rd September, Friday

At 0300 hours, a sentry at the factory fired at four men who did not stop when challenged. The men scattered and, as they withdrew, fired back. The patrol was again sent out but the enemy had withdrawn."

Report on a Night Attack

15th December 1948

"1920 hours. SC Sidek, sentry on duty at Dr Chittenden's bungalow, saw the light of a torch moving in the lower germinating beds, he immediately blew his whistle. Mr Wright, at the sound of the alarm, contacted all posts by Telemaster and Dr Chittenden reported what had been seen and requested reinforcements if possible. Mr Wright immediately sent both Sergeant Abdullah and SC Indris.

1930 hours. Dr Chittenden's bungalow and the factory were fired on, this was at once returned by the SCs. Cpl Raja Yussin, in charge of the factory, rushed to the point of the main attack and opened up with his Lanchester. Mr Frazier, hearing the heavy firing withdrew with his men in accordance with instructions, to Mr Wright's bungalow where he formed his patrol ready to move off. The firing was very heavy indeed. Dr Chittenden being attacked by rifle and Sten, the factory by rifle, Sten and carbine and the Manager's bungalow by rifle. Simultaneously Mr Corray's bungalow was fired on, where three men were seen and shot at by the guards. This attack lasted for 15 to 20 minutes of concentrated fire. During this attack the Cpl contacted Mr Wright, who was operating the Telemaster, and asked for the patrol and more ammunition.

Mr Wright ordered Mr Frazier and his men to go to the factory by armoured lorry. As the patrol left, heavy firing could still be heard from both Dr Chittenden's bungalow and the factory. As the lorry reached the road, it came under fire from insurgents behind Dr

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Chittenden's bungalow. A man was seen to run across the road; SCs Samiappen, Raman and Mr Frazier fired at him. The lorry was hit. At this time figures were seen running towards Mr Gray's bungalow and were shot at by Mr Wright's guards. Reaching the gate at the factory, the lorry stopped and failed to start, the patrol finished the last few yards to the factory at the run, accompanied by the driver, SC Simat. Mr Frazier handed over the 9mm ammunition to Cpl Raja and despatched SC Mohamed Noor around the perimeter to ascertain the number of casualties and amount of rifle and shotgun ammunition required. The patrol then searched the houses between the main drying shed and the roads. At this point all firing ceased, the area was cleared without contacting the enemy. The patrol took up defensive positions and listened.

During the lull in the firing, Dr Chittenden and his guards made their way across to Mr Wright's bungalow, and took up their positions along the perimeter.

2030 hours. Mr Frazier, having reported to Mr Wright that there were no casualties, and the number of rounds required, was told to return and collect them for distribution. It was obvious that the factory had been surrounded, but the arrival of the patrol had caused the enemy to withdraw. The lorry was hand-cranked by SC Simat who was covered by the patrol. The patrol boarded the lorry and returned to Mr Wright where they debussed and manned the perimeter while Mr Frazier collected the ammunition.

2040 hours. The enemy again attacked the factory with heavy fire; Cpl Raja who returned fire and kept them outside the perimeter beat this off, however.

2045 hours. The enemy again opened fire on Mr Wright's bungalow and the lower factory, this was returned by the defenders. Messrs Wright, Chittenden, Gray and Frazier, each commanding a sector of Mr Wright's perimeter, controlled and directed the fire. From Mr Corray's part, Mr Osman saw the flash of a rifle firing on the factory from the water tank on the hill in B.8. He ran forward up the hill and fired on this man who immediately changed his target to that of Mr Corray's house, from where the guards engaged him.

At this point it was obvious that both the factory and Mr Wright's bungalow were encircled and, but for the glare from the floodlights which dazzled the attackers, far greater damage would

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have been done on the Manager's bungalow. The firing continued until 2100 hours when lorries could be heard approaching, the fire gradually slackened and died down, there was a sudden burst from the pumping station as figures were seen running across the nursery.

The police arrived and despatched a platoon of Grenadier Guards to comb the area around the factory, while they combed the area around the Manager's bungalow and the pumping station.

2120 hours. The patrol supplied the factory with the required ammunition and returned for more.

2140 hours. The Grenadiers returned certifying that the area was clear.

2210 hours. The patrol supplied Mr Corray's post with ammunition.

2215 hours. The police and military left for Galloway Estate.

2223 hours. The patrol supplied the factory again and then the pumping station, returned, and the order to 'stand down' was given

Mr Wright was in continuous touch with the police until the time of their arrival. Concluding it can be stated that the attack was completely thrown off balance by the fact that it came during the dusk 'stand to' period, and that lights had been seen as they were getting into position, and the general alarm sounded. Thus they were forced to attack before all their parties had reached their assault positions. The urgent need for hand grenades, searchlights and more wire has been brought out and, in our opinion, they are considered absolutely necessary. The estimated strength of the attackers was 40 men."

The Attack on 17th December 1948

"2115 hours. Two pistol shots were heard from the vicinity of the tank above the factory, this was obviously the signal for the attack, because the factory, the Manager's bungalow, Dr Chittenden's bungalow and the pumping station were simultaneously fired on. The attackers this time did not make use of automatic weapons, using only rifles and pistols. The SCs on all posts rushed to their 'stand to' trenches and emplacements and returned the fire.

Messrs Gray and Frazier and their men withdrew to Mr Wright's bungalow where they took up their defence positions. A report came from Cpl Raja that the enemy were through the wire

into the factory. Mr Wright, fearing an ambush, did not send out the patrol under Mr Frazier.

Mr Wright immediately contacted the police. The firing continued around all the posts.

2130 hours. The firing slackened and stopped. Dr Chittenden took this opportunity to evacuate to Mr Wright's bungalow; positions were taken up to cover Dr Chittenden's arrival. Dr Chittenden arrived and firing broke out again and continued for the next hour, the heaviest coming from the pumping station. The firing died down and stopped altogether. Eventually, the police arrived, combed the area and reported that all was clear. The 'stand down' was then given.

This attack was better organised, but a much smaller force (had been) used. All four points had been attacked simultaneously at a given signal, at the factory they had actually breached the wire, but had been beaten off by the terrific fire of Cpl Raja's Lanchester."

Estate Life

A.J.V. Fletcher

"WHEN I RETURNED to Mentakab District life followed the normal pattern of training, setting up defences and one-day jungle patrols. It was now November 1948, and we found ourselves adapting pretty well to our Malayan life. Our knowledge of the Malay language was increasing rapidly: it had to because our SCs were, almost to a man, monoglot Malay speakers.

The CTs shot at us in the bungalow on some nights, but no large-scale attack was mounted, and our two Scottish managers, through changing timetable and route, using armed SC escorts, and with a bit of luck, remained unscathed. When the firing started, the drill was to dive to the floor where one could kill the generator-driven room lights and switch on the security lights. We would then crawl out to the verandah, take up positions behind bales of ribbed-smoked sheet rubber, about three feet cube and totally bullet-proof, and fire back at the flashes of the CT weapons, using .303 rifles.

One night as we were dining, our SC guard called out that a light was moving among the rubber trees about 200 yards away. There was a 100% night curfew on the estate, so I fired six or seven

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rounds at the light, which suddenly went out. The next day, to my horror, we found that an elderly Tamil labourer had been seriously wounded. He had been breaking the curfew to collect some stored *Samsu* (illicitly distilled liquor) from a cache in preparation for his daughter's wedding celebrations the following day. We got the old chap into Mentakab Hospital where he was treated and eventually made a full recovery. I made sure that he was not charged with breaking the curfew, and when he returned to the estate he sent a basket of fruit to me by way of thanks.

Then one day I developed a stomachache. It rapidly became worse and by evening I was being sick at frequent intervals and I became delirious. We had a field telephone; it had a handle which one cranked to get through to Mentakab. The call was made but Mentakab told the Manager that nothing could be done until dawn, for to travel at night, except in armoured vehicles which we did not have, was highly dangerous, not to say suicidal. At first light two rail jeeps would be sent. These were jeeps that had been fitted with railway wheels and, as the railway line passed through the estate, it was a practical and fast means of emergency transport.

The Manager sent for the estate 'dresser', who diagnosed appendicitis and suggested that a wise old man in the labour lines (in those days they were called 'coolie lines') might be able to help. The old man was brought up to the bungalow. He was a Tamil with white hair and an abundance of white stubble on his chin, and spoke no English. He produced a bottle and poured the contents into my palm (held firmly by the Manager and company, for I understand that I was writhing around on the bed). "When his hand is dry, the pain will ease," the old chap said, "and he will sleep." And so, miraculously, it did, and I slept the remaining couple of hours or so until the rail jeeps arrived to take me to Mentakab.

The Mentakab Hospital was basic; I was their first European patient, and for several hours I lay on a mattress on the floor. The Indian doctor was decidedly squiffy, puffing a black cheroot and supported on each side by hefty hospital orderlies. A course of penicillin was ordered, a shot in the buttocks every four hours for 48 hours. Slowly the pain and the temperature subsided and after a week, although tender, I was allowed to return to Karmen Estate. I never found out what was in that old Tamil's bottle."

AMBUSHED BY CTs

This collection is a reminder of the constant danger of ambush faced by the police and, indeed, anyone required to travel around the winding hilly, jungle fringed country mads of Malaya.

The CTs had every advantage: choice of site, target, time was their prerogative and after a lethal fusillade from Bren guns, accompanied by a shower of grenades, the CT party would melt away into the jungle before a counter-attack could be mounted. However vigilant and mentally prepared the traveller might be the odds were heavily in favour of the CTs.

The first story is not of ambush by CTs but by their wartime predecessors the MPAJA.

Ambushed by the MPAJA and by CTs

Dato' Mohammed Pilus

Dato' Pilus was born in Kampong Sungkak near Kuala Pilis in 1917. His autobiography is written with a light touch, but in it his seriousness of purpose, devotion to duty, patriotism and dedication shine forth: and so too his devotion to and pride in his family. However, he clearly was not a 'Yes' man. Pie joined the police in 1935, retired when the Japanese occupied Malaya but rejoined the police, taking the view that his duty was to maintain law and order. His hook reflects the mutual respect and affection that, for the most part, existed between the Qrang Puteh and their Asian colleagues. Sadly, this happy relationship is seldom reflected in post-colonial commentaries: it is not fashionable to record the truth in these matters. We did respect each other, although of course the rules of the day gave the top jobs to the colonial visitors.

Dato' Mohammed Pilus is almost certainly the only Malayan Police Officer to have been ambushed by both the MPAJA and the MRLA.

Dato' Mohammed Pilus sewed in the RMPF from 1935 to 1971, rising from constable to SAC. Tun Hanif applauds his

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book, 'A Policeman's Story', and describes it as 'An important contribution to Malayan history.'"

"LESS THAN A QUARTER of the police recruited by the Japanese were trained policemen. Most were fit only for beat duty; they were certainly not trained for search and rescue operations. One day in December 1944, I was ordered to bring twelve constables and a sergeant major to escort three Japanese officers to Panching, where the police station had been attacked by the MPAJA. Our party squeezed into an old five ton lorry which we had commandeered; the Japanese officers in the cab, the sergeant major and I sitting on the sideboards, one Malay with an automatic weapon, lying on die roof of the cab, and the rest of the constables in the back. We set off along a dirt track, and then along a road running between river and aibber trees. No one said much; each had his own thoughts about what lay ahead.

About a mile from the village, the silence was broken by two bursts of automatic fire. The sergeant major and I jumped down, took cover under the lorry, and tried to locate the source of the gunfire. The Japanese jumped down too. Suddenly the firing stopped. An eerie silence ensued and then I felt something wet and sticky soaking into my uniform. It was blood, trickling dirough the floorboards. The only sounds to be heard were the sobbing of one of the Japanese, the reproaches of his superior officer telling him to behave like a man, and the groans of the injured constables above me. I awaited the MPAJA's attack, determined to make them pay a heavy price for their devilry, but there was none.

After some time I crawled out from under the lorry, my men's blood sticking to my skin like red sweat. I found six of them had been killed. As I looked at their limp bodies, I thought of their families, and felt a pain in my heart greater than any the men could have felt when the bullets smashed into their bodies.

Later, when reviewing the circumstances of the ambush, I concluded that probably only one man had opened fire on us, aiming, with his automatic weapon, at the centre of the lorry, and that he had run off as soon as he had emptied his magazine.

There were several MPAJA raids in Pahang, and they always used hit and run tactics. I concluded that they were not ten feet tall!"

Saved by the Bell

K.G. Summers

"HAVING SERVED IN BOTH the British and the Indian Army, I missed the esprit de corps and so applied for the RMPF, and was appointed a P/Lt. My first posting was to Dunlop's Ladang Geddes Estate in Bahau, Negri Sembilan. It was the largest estate in Malaya, a show-piece with its own police station and 84 miles of private estate roads. However, most of the estate roads were on the perimeter of the estate and the *Lalang* and secondary jungle that lay outside the perimeter, was infested with CTs.

One day I was on the steps of the station talking to the crew of an armoured personnel carrier (APC) that was about to set off to escort a convoy of lorries earning rice. The convoy was going to a village nearby that was well known to harbour many Communist supporters, possibly volunteers but more probably conscripts. I was mulling over the situation and had just decided that I should accompany the convoy, when I heard the telephone ring and then saw the Station Sergeant coming out. He reported that Tuan OSPC was on the telephone and wanted to speak to me, so I signalled to the convoy to start without me. I went into the office and picked up the telephone to talk to the OSPC. Suddenly, while I was still on the telephone, the air was rent with the sound of rifle fire and the explosion of grenades.

I rushed back to my quarters, which I shared with Major MacDonald of the Gurkhas, collected an escort and dashed off" to investigate. When I arrived on the scene I found that the APC had been grenaded, killing the five men on board and the driver had been hurled out of the door, doused in petrol and torched.

It was a sad business bringing the bodies of these brave policemen back to the Bahru Police Station compound where they had been living with their families. And it is a tragic memory, which will remain with me all my days."

Ambush of a Police Armoured Column

P.J.D. Guest

I am indebted to Peter Guest's son, Ken, for stories from his father's unpublished journals.

Ken, an ex-marine and a media man, presented me with a complete set of his father's journals.

"KAMPONG BANGGOR REPORTED that they had found a booby trap on the path leading to the village. At 2345 news was received that a police squad heading south in two armoured vehicles, had been ambushed at the 77.5 mile.

I gathered a squad and we drove down to the police post. The casualties were worse than the first report, there was one constable killed and six injured out of twelve men in the convoy party.

I took some men up onto the bank on the right hand side of the road. There I found a row of shallow trenches had been dug and concealed with foliage. The CT who set the ambush knew what he was doing. It had been well sited. At the end of the straight stretch the road did a tight left turn, with the bank following it around. Obviously, vehicles would have to slow down to negotiate this tight bend. At this point were more trenches, from which the CTs had looked both directly onto and into the front of the approaching vehicles. Anybody diving out to the left to get into the ditch was the object of enfilade fire. I was able to unravel the sequence of events involved. The CTs held their fire until just the right moment, when the vehicles were closest to them and travelling at their slowest to manage the sharp bend. When the firing started, some of the shots had plunged downwards into the armoured vehicles and struck some of the men inside the open topped armoured box of one of the vehicles.

Watching this disaster unfolding, the second vehicle came forward again and stopped on the verge alongside the one in the ditch. The armoured car also now came forward again, moving up the now clear road, and fired away with its Bren gun along the bank from which the CTs were engaging them. Under this covering fire, supported by some of their own men firing over the side from inside the open top of their vehicle, the crew of the second vehicle swung

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their rear door open. At the same time the rear doors of the first G M C were also swung open. The survivors of the first vehicle now hopped out and in through the rear door of the other vehicle. These, fortunately, being at the rear of the vehicles, meant they were at least partially sheltered from view from the bank in front of the enfilade fire.

As a Bren gunner in the armoured car was busy firing from the seat in the turret, there was a loud crack and he suddenly jerked back with a startled gasp, letting the Bren gun go. The driver looked across and saw that the gunner was clutching his neck and that his hands were covered in blood as he had been shot through the neck. He was still alive, although in some distress and bleeding badly. With the gunner incapacitated, the driver went into reverse.

As a result of this incident police armoured vehicles were modified, with a steel plate erected behind the driver and extending the roof cover back a bit, so that the driver was in his own armoured box and cut off from bouncing rounds. Another result was a wave of volunteers at the station to replace the casualties of the squad, which had a good record in action against the CTs. Another result was that Corporal Mohammad, the convoy commander, was awarded the C P M for gallantry for his steady action."

One Cadet ASP Against 15 CTs

Sadly Peter Andrew died in 1963 so this account is not from his pen but from the citation for his King's Police Medal for gallantry.

The account gives a vivid impression of how courageously young police officers handled the 'incidents' that they came across as they travelled unescorted through the rural areas of Malaya.

"P.R. ANDREW JOINED the RMPF as a cadet ASP. In 1947 he was sent to Klian Intan to take on the formidable gang of 'bandits' who were terrorising the area, operating from a safe haven across the border in Thailand. The gang had carried out murders, kidnappings, robberies, and extortion.

On 17th June, a bandit gang of about twenty-five men armed with Stens and pistols had just attacked a bus on the road to Kroh, seriously wounding the driver and Andrew, accompanied in his Jeep

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by a Sikh driver, drove round a corner to find himself face-to-face with CTs, a crowd of passengers in the middle of the road and, at the side of the road, the burnt-out bus. The bandits opened fire; Andrew ordered his driver to drive on and as soon as they were clear of the crowd, jumped into a roadside culvert while the driver carried on round the corner.

Andrew, who was only carrying a revolver and nine rounds of ammunition, then opened fire on the bandits, with complete disregard for his own safety. The bandits retaliated with heavy fire from short range but somehow none of their bullets hit their mark. Andrew, despite his meagre supply of ammunition, managed to disable two of the bandits as they began to close in on him. His choice of target was made particularly difficult because of the presence of the bus passengers scattered all over the road, but his accurate shooting forced the bandits to take cover.

When he had exhausted his ammunition, Andrew crawled away under fire, along the culvert and round the corner. Since he had no more ammunition he took to the jungle to continue observation of the bandit gang. By the time a rescue patrol arrived on the scene the bandits had withdrawn."

Ambushed Near Yong Peng

P.A. Collin

"AROUND 0800 HOURS we set out from Kluang with a police scout car behind us. We were travelling in the OSPC's car, a large blue American saloon.

The OSPC was driving, Girdler, the Administrative Officer (AO) sat next to him in the front seat, with Arshad, our Malay office orderly, and me in the back. Arshad and I kept fairly quiet, listening idly to the conversation of our elders and betters in the front. It was a fine day, not too hot with a clear blue sky overhead.

I kept looking back to see that the scout car was keeping station. It was.

After about 30 minutes we reached Yong Peng and shortly after passing through the village, with the police station behind its barbed wire, we turned right along the Paloh Road, which ran through an area inhabited by pro-Communist Chinese squatters, and then

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through an area of jungle that had been the happy hunting ground of the CT Independent Platoon for some time. In short, the road was unhealthy. Nevertheless, I started to doze between watching the rather uninteresting squatter and tapioca scenery flit by, and ruminating on the day's work that lay ahead.

We were on our way to consider a large scheme for resettlement in the Paloh area and, thereby, to deny the CTs food, contacts and sources of recruitment. Monty Ormsby, commanding the local Company of the 2/6 Gurkhas, pulled alongside in his Jeep and we all got out and talked shop for five minutes. There had been no contact with the CT Platoon for some time, and we had been wondering where it would strike next. We were soon to know.

Saying *Selamat Jalan* (safe journey) to Monty, who was on his way to Yong Peng, we continued northwards and shortly entered jungle.

I lit another cigarette and agreed with the AO's suggestion that it was a perfect day for a picnic, and weren't the CTs a bloody nuisance.

We were now all wide-awake and kept our eyes on the jungle, which lined both sides of the road. Somehow that day it didn't look so dank and uninviting. Not that I minded the jungle normally, when on foot, but it really can give you the willies when travelling in a soft-skinned vehicle such as our American saloon.

We sped along until the road started to climb and we slowed up a trifle to take a right-hand bend. Then it happened. A sharp report from somewhere to our right and front, and the car lurched over to the right side of the road, ending up below a four foot bank, which formed the inner curve of the bend.

Silence followed for a few brief seconds, and in those seconds all four of us must have realised what had happened. On the right our vision was completely blocked by the bank, and supposedly the CTs were in position along the top. To the front the road curved uphill to the right, so that the jungle was facing us. To our left and on the far side of the road, the jungle again reached to within a few feet of the tarmac.

For the first few brief seconds, however, we saw no one. Then all hell broke loose, with fire coming at us from the front, and down

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from the top of the bank. There appeared to be no bandits along the left side of the road.

The OSPC had slumped forward, and Girdler had vanished from my view behind the front seat. I turned to Arshad who was sitting to my right, I told him to open fire. He didn't move: he must have bought it in the first burst of CT fire.

I flopped down on the floorboards as the CTs opened up again, and the air became filled with cordite fumes and dust. Looking up I noticed that the rear window had been shattered, and suddenly in a fit of what I can only call temper, I fired my Browning Automatic through the roof. It was a complete waste of ammunition and energy. However, I was doing something, and in a way helping to take my mind off our plight.

"Can't you fire your Sten?" I yelled to Girdler.

"I've been hit in the arm, and can't cock the bloody thing," came the reply.

I wriggled and twisted myself into a position where I could see Girdler through the 2-inch gap between the left-hand edge of the front seat and the side doors.

The din was terrific and bullets continued to smash against the car. Thanks be that it was a sturdily built model, or else we should all have been playing harps after the first burst.

Girdler, who was crouched against the nearside front door said, "I'm going to make a run for it." "OK". Good Luck," I shouted back, "I'll have a go after you." I saw Girdler open his door slowly and immediately one or two Brens opened up from in front, sending a hail of lead down the side of the vehicle. We both waited, strange, as it may seem, fairly calmly. It all seemed so unreal and somehow death didn't seem at hand at all. This sense of unreality was produced, I suspect, by the fact that we had still seen nothing of the enemy.

The firing stopped, and Girdler suddenly flung open his door and dashed outside with a "Here we go!" I was, as far as I could tell, alone in the car with Arshad's body. Of the OSPC Folliott, I had seen nothing since the first shot had been fired. Of the scout car also I had heard and seen nothing. In fact, I felt pretty lonely taking all in all. But I started to pluck up courage to follow Girdler's example.

As I slowly opened the door the whine of the bullets just outside made me hurriedly close it again. Hell, I thought, is this the end of

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my innings? I must take a grip of myself. Once again I gently pushed the door open a few inches and saw the welcoming green of the jungle on the far side of the road, only about fifteen yards away. Fifteen yards, it looked more like a mile to me.

Taking a deep breath and flinging open the door at the same time, I sprinted across what seemed like an endless stretch of tarmac. All I could see ahead was the jungle, its thick green foliage waiting to engulf and protect me. I think the CTS opened fire on me. They were only ten to fifteen yards away as I left the car, so presumably they had a bash. I was never a fast sprinter at school, but I think that I beat all known world records that day, and I must have proved to be a very fast moving target. As I reached the jungle edge, after what seemed an eternity, I took a flying leap and ended up beside a large log, having passed through a thorny bush on the way.

Picking myself up, I flung off my green jacket and belt for ease of movement. My pistol fell on the ground somewhere but I did not pause to look for it. Not a very heroic and disciplined thing to do, but it had jammed in the car and going through that undergrowth I would need both hands. I was, to put it mildly, in a panic. One thing only was uppermost in my mind, escape, and the only hope that I had of getting away, was to run like a deer away from those little bastards, wearing their three star caps, khaki tunics and puttees.

I ran then as I have never run before. Stumbling through the bush and hanging branches, tearing myself on the thorns, and gasping for breath. Meanwhile, bugles sounded behind me and whistles were blowing. Were they following me? I didn't know. I kept on running away from the road and deeper and deeper into the protection of the jungle. The words of Col Spencer Chapman came to mind, "The jungle is neutral."

When I was completely out of breath, I stopped and good old Mother Nature reminded me to ease myself, I stood there contentedly watering the leafy floor. What a relief. The noise that it made, in the stillness of that place, must have been as deafening to an observer as Victoria Falls to Livingstone, when he first observed and listened to the giant cascade of water.

Whether I had been running due west or southwest, I hadn't the faintest idea, but one thing was certain. If I was to get back to the road I must travel east so, trusting a bit to instinct, I started to walk

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stealthily and pausing every minute or so to listen for sounds of cracking branches or voices. Slowly my confidence returned and with it my breath and concentration.

I had seen nothing of either Folliott or Girdler. What had happened to them? Where were the Gurkhas? Had they heard the firing? I must be careful; I thought, when I reached the road. If the CTs saw me I would certainly be a goner, if the Gurkhas, then they might easily mistake me at a distance for a CT and have a pot at me. Once again my spirits fell. Was I going in the right direction? The sun by this time was nearly at its zenith and I had become more that a little doubtful about direction since I had calmed down and collected my thoughts.

Suddenly, ahead of me, I saw that the foliage was thinner and, running forward, found the road. With a thankful prayer, I dropped down in the ditch at the roadside and looked around. The road was straight at this point, so I must have struck it a good way south of the ambush. All that I had to do now was to wait for a passing vehicle to take me into Yong Peng.

Five minutes later I heard the sound of a truck coming up the road. Oh wonderful, it was Monty with his Gurkhas. I rushed out into the road waving my hands, and with a squeal of brakes the leading small troop carrier pulled up within a few feet of me. Monty jumped out and gripped my hands. "It's good to see you," he said, "come on, jump in. Evidently, the police at Paloh heard the firing and came to your assistance. They found Folliott and Girdler in the bush and both are in a bad way. They've been bayoneted with short Sten bayonets, and are now on their way to Kluang. Your Orderly was burnt inside the car and they seem to think that you are *matt* (dead) somewhere in the bush. I'm bloody glad to see you're not."

With thankful heart at seeing friends again, I climbed inside the trooper and a grinning Gurkha handed me a rifle. We sped along the road and a few minutes later arrived at ambush corner. A number of men from the police jungle squad were prowling around and there, by the bank, was the car, a burnt out wreck.

With an intense feeling of having somehow let Arshad down, I walked slowly over to the nearside door and looked inside. There was nothing left of Arshad. I turned away sickened and as I did so, Monty came up beside me and gave a smart salute. In my heart I

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thanked him. It was so typical of the man. He had already won two Military Crosses (MCs) and, though he said little, he had proved himself again and again to be a very able commander, a fearless soldier and a reliable and staunch friend. The Brigade of Gurkhas was, indeed, fortunate to have the services of such a man.

The Gurkhas spread out and prepared to follow up on the heels of the CTS. They had brought five days' rations with them and, in a matter of minutes, had picked up the trail. I turned once again to take a last look at the car and then got into a police truck that had just arrived. As we left the scene, some of the Malay Jungle Squad Constables, who were sitting behind me, slapped me on the back and offered me cigarettes. I knew them all pretty well. They were glad to see me and I more than reciprocated their feelings. We said little, and I was soon half asleep, my eyes were heavy and I suppose shock had started.

When we arrived at Kluang Police Station, I reported my return and then went straight to the hospital. Mrs (Eileen) Folliott was there, putting a very brave face on it all. She had heard from Yong Peng of the ambush and had travelled right up to the scene with a police party, and had torn up her underclothes to use as bandages on her husband and Girdler. She was a very brave woman.

I was allowed to see Girdler first and found him lying on the operating table. He was conscious, and we talked Urdu to each other for a few moments. I noticed three clean stab wounds in his chest and a bandage covered his abdomen. "They got me in the guts as well," he explained, "and I can't shit." I left him then, I couldn't say anything more. Words stuck. I went in to Folliott and found him surrounded with blood plasmas. His whole face was swathed with bandages. We could not converse so I left and went straight to the Post Office to send a telegram home. I remember its exact wording, **Bloody lucky — don't worry — writing — Sandy.** I learnt later that the Bren gun in the scout car had jammed and they had, therefore, driven straight through the scene of ambush to report and get help."

Postscript

"I have always felt ashamed about the loss of my pistol, but at the time, escape was my only objective. But my pistol was found and returned to me.

Later, I was sitting at a dinner in Kluang with various Chinese dignitaries and our SB hosts informed me that the chap sitting opposite had been the CT Bren gunner in the ambush. "

The CT version of this ambush was found later in a CT camp.

Our Army killed the enemy's AO, OSPC and A Malay Sergeant, and wounded the Operations Officer and recovered 6 Firearms in Yong Peng Area.

(3rd Regiment Correspondent)

At about 10.05 on 4th April, our unit of the 3rd Regiment laid an ambush at the 12th milestone of "Paloh Road and resulted in wounding the Operations Officer, and recovered 1 Sten gun, 1 carbine, one .32 pistol, 1 pistol and 2 revolvers. Apart from these 6 firearms captured there were also more than 70 rounds of ammunition seized. One motor car was set ablaze: one set of Parker pens, 1 wrist watch, 1 camera and cash, about \$30 and Identity Cards and notebooks were confiscated. The following is the story of the incident:

On 15th March the enemies collected the Security Forces consisting of 200 to 300 men to launch an attack at the three points namely: at the 9th milestone on Paloh Road, the Hylam Village and at the 5th milestone on Ayer Hitam Road. The last day of screening and combing the areas were carried on till the 19th March. Our army in mufti, acting on accurate information received, laid an ambush at the 12th milestone on Paloh Road in spite of the continuous showers of rain. 10.05 a.m. a streamlined motor car followed by an armoured car coming from Yong Peng side came into sight. As the signal, firing a shot, was given, the enemy's cars had already reached within 30 metres of our firing range. A volley of light machine-gun and Tommy gun fire poured down on the enemies. As a result of the firing the car in front overturned on the side of the road, the armoured car behind was afraid to put up a resistance but

only tried to escape out of our firing range. At this moment our vanguards were ordered to rush forward in two directions — one party gave dime to the two red-haired pigs, the OSPC and the Operations Officer who, by now, had thrown off their weapons and ran for their life. (Although the OSPC escaped he died later in Yong Peng). The other party, which consisted mostly of our vanguards, swarmed to the side of the car where the AO and a Malay Sergeant were shot dead. After a ten minutes engagement the battle etmutually came to an end.

The enemy's reinforcements arrived at the spot of the incident and began firing at random. All the people said that we had done a goad job!

A Lucky Police Lieutenant

Although there were mountains of surplus equipment in Europe at the end of World War II, in Malaya four years later there was a woeful shortage of arms, ammunition and kit. One officer was so incensed that he wrote to his MP to stir things up, and, of course, was severely reprimanded for not going through normal channels.

But, even if stares had been, adequate, there would still have been a huge problem of training particularly of the rural Malays, reared in peaceful kampongs, and now enthusiastic but totally inexperienced para-militaries

The P/Lts were in the forefront of the battle and about one in six lost their lives, since they stuck out like sore thumbs amongst their Asian troops.

Tthe following story is an example of the courage of newly arrived P/Lts thrown in at the deep end, and of the brutality of the CTs.

"P\Lts QUINN AND STREET were posted to Kuala Selangor within days of their arrival at Singapore, They reached the town of Kuala Selangor without incident and spent the night there. The following morning they were issued with weapons and given their instructions. A Land Rover and an escort of four SCs arrived from the rubber estate, which was to be their destination, and they were sent on their way.

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Shortly after turning into the estate road, the party was skilfully ambushed by a large group of CTs that included a number of Tamil Indians. There was no escape. Quinn, who was driving the Land Rover, was killed in the first burst of fire, as were two or three of the escort. Street, who was sitting alongside Quinn, was uninjured but covered in blood from his dead companion, and leapt out and made a dash for cover. As he did so, a bullet shattered his left kneecap and he collapsed on the road. The shooting eventually stopped and the CTs came out of concealment.

Street decided that his only chance was to play dead. Hardly daring to breathe, he shut his eyes and hoped for the best. His predicament was compounded by the fact that he was face down on the ground and could not, therefore, see what was happening. Having been in the country less than a week, he spoke not a single word of Malay, Chinese or Tamil and had no idea what the CTs were talking about.

A group of CTs approached him, talking among themselves as they did so, and one, putting his foot under Street's stomach, turned him over so that he was face upwards. Obviously deciding that his shirt was too bloodstained to warrant removal, one of the CTs proceeded to cut off his epaulettes, buttons and badges of rank, while administering the odd kick or two.

A considerable amount of conversation went on between the CTs, and, although he could not understand a word, Street guessed that they had some doubt as to whether he was dead. Terrified at the prospect of what would follow if they found out that he was alive, he breathed a silent prayer and concentrated on proving that, if not exactly dead, he was beyond all hope of recovery.

Then he heard the sound of a match being struck and a few seconds later he felt an excruciating pain as one of the CTs stubbed out a lighted cigarette on the bridge of his nose. Somehow or other he managed not to flinch. The CTs then picked up his body and deposited it with those of Quinn and the four dead SCs on the back of the Land Rover, set it on fire, and departed. Street managed to extricate himself from the bodies on the Land Rover and fell onto the road beside the vehicle, unable to move.

Some three hours later a police party, which had been sent out from Kuala Selangor to investigate why his party had not reported in

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at their destination, found him. He was taken to *Bangsa* Hospital in KL where, after a number of unsuccessful attempts to repair his knee, doctors amputated his lower left leg."

Fatal Inexperience

J.P. Taylor

Jim Taylor was on leave, not yet searching assiduously for a new job having just completed his contract with the Palestine Police Force, when the Crown Agents invited him to join the RMPF. The formalities were completed with commendable speed but a shortage of aircraft delayed his departure by three weeks.

"I ARRIVED IN SINGAPORE in 1948 as a potential P/Lt but rankless, since the rank of P/Lt had yet to be gazetted. I was posted to Perak almost immediately where I remember that all was in a great state of confusion, and equipment was seriously lacking.

An MCS officer assisted by a Scots doctor ran the local jungle squad, but their 'kill' rate had not been impressive. I took over their jungle squad.

I was issued with jungle green. The mismatch between my 6'2" frame and the garments made for a W R A C 5'4" was bizarre, so I resorted to the local tailor.

We had Ford vehicles made in Singapore, which were entirely unsuitable for fast operational debussing, and their unsuitability must have contributed significantly to our casualty rate, but the Singapore factory's tenders were, no doubt, the most competitive, and that presumably was all the Treasury knew about the matter.

I survived two road ambushes. The second was the fault of my superior officer, who had no personal experience of para-military operations against the CTs and insisted that we should respond to some light CT fire that had been directed at one of our police stations.

I suggested that there was no point in responding by taking out a fighting patrol, since it was probable that the CTs had opened fire to tempt a police patrol into a trap. The CT shooting was certainly not part of a serious set piece attack on the station. My comments were ignored and so we set off in two vehicles with a motley collection of

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police. My superior and the Bren gun were in the lead vehicle. Unfortunately, my guess had been correct. It was a trap and halfway to the police station the trap was sprung; my superior and his driver were killed instantly and all the passengers in his vehicle were wounded. Not a shot was fired from the lead vehicle and no one fired from my vehicle except me. I was down to my last four rounds when the CTs departed, carrying off with them all the arms and ammunition from the lead vehicle. The tragedy taught me an important lesson about the need to be forceful when dealing with inexperienced officers, however senior."

Ambush at Chan Wing Estate

P.W. Giles

Paddy Giles served in the Royal Navy 1944-1946. He spent a year at Jesus College, Oxford, before accepting an appointment as a Cadet ASP in the Malayan Police at the outset of the Emergency in 1948. Coming from a colonial service background he had always intended pursuing that career path, and considered himself fortunate to have had that experience.

"LATE ONE AFTERNOON on the way back to my base in Labis after a rugby weekend in Singapore, I called in on Cha'ah Police Station. The Charge Room Constable reported that everything was all right but added, "I have just heard firing to the north east which lasted for several minutes." This sounded to me like an incident somewhere around Bekok, an area that had given us a great deal of trouble since the Emergency started two years before. I told the constable to report the firing to Labis and that I was on my way to the incident.

The Bekok road ran for eight miles out of Cha'ah before it stopped at a dead end. There were several small rubber estates along the road, all Chinese owned, isolated and dominated by the CTs. I suspected that Chan Wing was the estate involved, since it was the only one with a telephone line and the CTs had developed a tactic of cutting telephones lines, in order to lure the police escort for the Post and Telecomms (P&T) repair men into a carefully prepared ambush.

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We, however, had learnt to minimise the CTs chances of success by de-bussing some distance away from the incident and moving in on foot. I parked my car some way from the estate entrance and went in on foot through the rubber trees. All was deathly quiet and there was no sign of movement. Then I saw a large vehicle, which I identified as the police three-tonner from Labis, slewed across the estate road. Next, I found some police survivors lying prone on the ground. They told me that, as the truck approached a defile between two high banks (an unmistakeable likely ambush point), the CTs had opened heavy and accurate fire from the top of the banks. The scene in the police truck was awful; men, whom I had known well, lying dead riddled with bullets, blood everywhere and only one constable alive but badly wounded.

Five of the escort had managed to jump out of the lorry but had been cut down by CT bullets; the driver and the Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) sitting beside him had been killed in their seats, probably in the first bursts of CT fire. The police had minimal chance to return fire. The survivors reported that the CTs had stripped the dead and wounded of their arms and ammunition. The Gurkhas, who had arrived about half-an-hour after the ambush, were now following up the CT ambush party. I tended the wounded as best I could using the field dressings, which were carried by each man, and identified the killed in action (KIA) This was a melancholy task. I knew them well, not only as their OCPD but also in jungle operations with them the previous year.

The total police casualty list was eight killed and seven wounded, and the unfortunate P&T man had also been killed in an incident that he probably considered to be no business of his.

By now it was dusk with the curtain of night only minutes away. Then we heard the welcome sound of the engines of the rescue party: the police from Labis, the ambulance and a Public Works Department (PWD) repair vehicle from Segamat, thirty-eight miles away from the scene of the ambush.

The Inspector who had been in charge of the District in my absence was beside himself with remorse. I managed, with the greatest difficulty, to persuade him that his reaction had been correct; the fault lay in the tactics of the Squad who had set out to

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investigate the incident; they had not followed our standard procedure for movement in suspect areas.

We never knew exactly how many CTs had been involved in this catastrophe. Based on their observations of gun flashes and movements, the survivors estimated that the CTs had numbered between ten and fifteen."

Paddy Giles commented:

"The escort party were regulars, mostly constables, including several still on probation (less than 2 years service).

Like all newcomers to Jungle Squads they had been given instruction in various operational procedures, including anti-ambush drill and debus routines. This was repeated at intervals and when different types of vehicles were made available (i.e. 3-tonner, soft-skinned personnel carrier, etc.), but there were no written or set down procedures on jungle squad duties at this relatively early stage of the Emergency. The frequency of training sessions was left to the discretion of District jungle squad commanders and operations had to take priority over training.

Although there was no drill book available, experience should have urged the Squad to take the usual precautions in the Chan Wing Estate area — probably the worst area in the District. The junior NCOs in each squad, corporals, were promoted from within the squad on merit and earned their stripes. Perhaps it was a case of familiarity breeding contempt'.

Most of us were on our first tour and trying to learn the ropes on the job. I do not recall directives from contingent or force level coming down the line. Later on training took on a more organised and professional aspect.

My recollection of the swift changing events of that disastrous day for the jungle squad — as related to me at the time - is one of confusion. The Squad had been caught in a well-executed ambush by CTs whose fighting abilities had been honed by a hardcore of ex-MPAJA fighters.

The CTs had moved fast to complete their two objectives — capture all weapons and ammunition and get out fast. They knew there would be a military follow-up and the knowledge that a

AMBUSHED BY THE CTS

Gurkha battalion was currently operating in Labis/Segamat, would have spurred them on in their flight.

The survivors were in a state of shock when I got there, some hardly aware what had hit them, one or two even oblivious of the fact that their weapons had been snatched. All but one of the survivors had been wounded and they were trying to cope. The one unwounded survivor had lost consciousness — indeed, I thought he was dead until he came to in front of me. If there was a saving grace, it was that the CTs had not mutilated anyone.

Consider the mentality of young *kampung-bred* constables transferring to this new aspect of police work. They were volunteers attracted by the likelihood of excitement and probably by the perceived glamour of being a jungle fighter. They soon came to realise it was not all action and heroics. A lot of escort work came their way, nearly all of which was repetitive with nothing much happening so that the senses became dulled and lulled into the pitfalls of complacency. Although the very best junior leaders will not let that mindset take root.

It is easy with hindsight to say the escort commander should have debussed and moved tactically through the rubber. Had he done so, there might not have been a confrontation at all. Deprived of tactical advantage, the CTs would probably have slunk off rather than fight on a level playing field.

The force eventually developed high standards of training for PFF units. The watershed came about in late 1953/1954 when the previously independent Federal Jungle Companies (FJCs) were absorbed into a bigger unit, PFF, comprising three or four companies. Overall command of these new units was vested in SAC B, with more emphasis and personnel dedicated to training. I had command of one FJC in Perak in 1953 until forced to leave after contracting scrub typhus. Thus, I missed the advantages of the reorganisation but escaped the loss of operational independence.

The PFF played an increasingly significant role in operations thereafter and I recall in 1964/1965 in Sarawak, during Confrontation with Indonesia, a distinguished Gurkha Brigade Commander, who went on to become a Major-General, saying he considered the PFF company brought over from the mainland to be superior to one

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of the newer Royal Malay Regiment battalions, then under his command. Praise indeed from a soldier!"

Ambush of an Elephant Column

P.J.D. Guest

As the Malay proverb has it:

Gajah soma gajah berjuang Pelanduk mati di tengah.

When elephants fight the mouse deer in between will be killed.

"IN OCTOBER 1950, I was told to lead a party of thirty-six men, four *gajah* (elephants), and seven mahouts to Temenggor to relieve and supply the garrison. Since there was only one track that could take elephants, I decided to lead a six-man fast patrol in parallel to the main party. I did not like the idea of doing both the outward and return journeys on the same track: it was against every principle we had been taught.

We met the *gajah* at Titi Gantong, five miles from Grik, and set off at midday, the *gajah* moving almost silently. We camped by the river. Next morning I took my six-man patrol across the river: we moved at a smart pace up an old road. In the late afternoon of D3, having started before dawn, we arrived at the disused tin mine at the end of our dirt track, having covered about twenty-five miles in a day and a half. The *gajah* party arrived two days later.

On the way back from Temenggor I led the column with my seven-man reconnaissance patrol, putting the *gajahs* in the centre, and a strong rear guard behind, hoping that if we ran into trouble one part of the column would be able to launch an effective counter attack.

At noon the silence was shattered by the noise of heavy firing. I turned my patrol round, swinging to the right of the track in order to attack the CTs from the flank. Just before entering the trees, I saw a startling sight: several men, some in police jungle green, and some in CT uniform, were charging down the hill together hotly pursued by an enraged *gajah*. Police and CTs were so intermingled that, although I raised my carbine, I did not dare pull the trigger. Then

the CTs dived away to the left and three police dashed down the track shouting, somewhat unnecessarily, "Ambush!"

I continued up the flank, ordering my men to fire at will and to ignore casualties, which we would pick up later. We charged up the slope: fifty yards from the crest the first enemy round whipped over our heads and we returned fire as we continued to run up the hill. I yelled, "Keep going," focussed only on the need to maintain our momentum and to reach that crest: but we slowed down as the hill became steeper. Now we were only walking. "More noise," I yelled and the patrol responded screaming for all they were worth. We reached the crest, soaked with sweat, parched and gasping. I had barely time to see below us a gajah lying on its side and some policemen who had been caught in the first bursts of fire, when we came under heavy fire again.

The policeman on my right was knocked over by a bullet in his thigh. We took cover, and returned fire with everything we had.

Then, to my relief, I heard firing to our right where the rear-guard was, presumably engaging the enemy. Our ammunition was running low, so I ordered the Bren to fire short bursts, and riflemen single shots only. But we were facing a much stronger force and I realised that we would not survive if we relied on passive defence. I asked for a volunteer runner to go to the rear guard and tell them to launch a counter attack on the right flank. I hoped that the CTs would thus be convinced that we were more numerous than they had thought. Meanwhile my section, grouped round our Bren gunner, continued to harass the CTs across the saddle: then we heard the rearguard open fire. The ruse worked and the CTs ran away!

But it had been a bad day for us, seven policemen were dead and we had several wounded and a gajah lay by their side. We had no radio, so I sent a volunteer runner down to Grik with a short report; that we had been ambushed by probably about three platoons of the MRLA.

This was no time for hanging about so, having hidden our heavy equipment in the jungle; I set off to base, carrying our wounded to Kampong Bersia. A second volunteer was despatched to Grik in case the first runner had been captured; although they had a dangerous job, I hoped runners would be able to get by posing as civilians.

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We waited overnight in Bersia, combining in a joint defence' force of my police and the *kampong* guards (the kampong equivalent of the Home Guard of WWII) with their shotguns.

At dawn the next day we saw a body of armed men coming up the track; there were some tense moments until they were identified as a party of Royal Marines. I went back with the marines to the scene of the ambush. It was a sad sight, but we were cheered up the reappearance of a missing policeman who had passed out after being wounded but had managed to hobble down the hill using homemade crutches.

We inspected the CTs trenches and it looked as if we had driven off a force three times larger than our own, despite the advantages of prepared, well sited positioning, enabling them to fire down upon us. It was a good thing that they did not exploit their advantage with determination. I had only nine rounds left by the end of the battle.

I reflected that it was lucky for me that the CTs had held their fire and allowed the front guard to pass through their position and waited for the elephant section to come into their sights.

Some months later we were interrogating an SEP in Grik, He denied, of course, any involvement but told us that he had heard about the ambush from the aborigines who had told him that seven Chinese policemen had gone first, and passed through the ambush without detecting it. When I corrected him and said it was six Chinese and one European (me), his facial expression changed to astonishment and then rage. "If we had known that we would have killed you! We thought you were riding on a gajah." Then he remembered where he was and readjusted his facial expression."

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Revenge is Sweet

Dato' Mohammed Pilus

"I HAD ALREADY noted the cowardice of the MPAJA, and their brutality in the post-war 'Kangaroo' courts which they established before the British Military Administration (BMA) could fill the gap left by the departing Japanese.

Immediately after the surrender, an MPAJA leader, Goh Seng Peng, said to me, "Now you will see that we are not against the Malays. You were very brave to see me: did I harm you?"

Now in 1948 the MPAJA had turned into the MCP, and there was no doubt that they were the enemy.

The majority of the people living at the jungle fringes were Chinese: there was a tendency to brand all rural Chinese as Communist sympathisers. This was completely wrong, and could lead to wrong policies.

One night in 1948, when I was driving back to my HQ at Tronoh, accompanied by two detectives, we were ambushed near Kampong Saya. The first burst of gunfire hit the car, and one bullet struck my ankle and caused me to lose control. The car immediately swerved off the road into a ditch, but we managed somehow to scramble out and to take up firing positions, to give us some sort of all round defence, ready to fire on the CTs when they followed up their ambush. As we waited, my ankle felt hot and my foot was sticky with blood, but the attack never came. We peered into the darkness, searching for moving figures, listening for sounds and waiting for the sudden flash and noise of the enemy's guns, but there was no sign of them; once again it seemed that, as at Panching, the enemy did not have the stomach for a fight. Hit and run tactics were the order of the day, and the first thing we saw was the lights of a

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vehicle coming down the road. It was a lorry that had been sent out by my Station Sergeant as soon as he realised that we were overdue.

My wound was successfully treated in hospital and after a few days I was released on sick leave. However, I decided that investigating the crime was more important than leave, and went straight back to duty. I was determined that the gang that had attempted to murder us should be brought to book. I immediately contacted a Chinese acquaintance, who was *Hang Kong* (supervisor of a tin mine workforce) and, therefore, very knowledgeable about the people in his area, and asked for his help. He promised to try to discover who the perpetrators were, and said that he suspected that they were a gang from Pusing. A week later the *Hang Kong* brought me information that the gang leader was a heavily built Chinese called Chen Ngan, another member was Chen A'Pai, a short, boastful, not very bright man with a limp, the rest were also Chinese, six men and five girls, whose names he did not know. So there had been a dozen of them that night, but they lacked the courage to come out and finish us off.

Three days later, at about 1730 hours, I was still in the **office** doing some paperwork, when a male Chinese face appeared outside my window. He was about forty years old, and asked in a low tone if he could see me for a moment. After a quick observation of the man's expression and eyes, I felt that he was genuine, and not likely to come in and try to kill me. So I asked him in.

He blurted out that Chen Ngan and his gang who led the ambush and tried to kill me at Kampung Sayap were, at that very moment, in a house at Kampung Sayap. To remove any doubt I might have had about his sincerity, he offered to take the police and me straight to the house.

Very quickly, I planned the raid. Leading a party of fifteen men and a platoon of KOYLI troops, I left the police station at 1900 hours; when we neared Kampung Sayap we left the three transport vehicles some distance from the house. The plan was I would lead the police party with the informer, followed by the men spread at three feet intervals, ready to smash into the house from all sides. By the time we got close to the door, the police and the military had the house well surrounded. The door was half open; I rushed in shooting in the direction of A'Pai to disorientate him, without

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actually intending to hit him, since I wanted him to face his fate in a court of law. The occupants of the house were caught completely by surprise. They stood with their hands up, shivering with fright. A'Pai and two others were caught inside the house, while others in other parts of the house ran out through the back door, in order to escape across to the other side of the mining pool.

However, the men from the KOYLI Regiment surrounded the entire mining pool, so the CTs had to spend the night in the water. We called out to them to get out, but they remained silent in the pool. Our sergeant went to Pusing and returned with twelve gallons of petrol, spread it on the water and set it alight, to try to flush them out. It did not work. We had to wait till morning, and managed to fish out three women.

The raid resulted in the arrest of four men and three women, and the capture of one .303 rifle, two shot guns, two revolvers and about fifty assorted rounds of bullets.

Epilogue to the Ambush

1. A'PAI PLEADED GUILT to the charges of:
 - a) Kidnapping;
 - b) Illegal possession of firearms; and
 - c) Participating in the ambush and attempted murder of the OCPD of Tronoh.He was sentenced to death, and hanged.
2. The others all pleaded guilty to the charges of:
 - d) Illegal possession of firearms; and
 - e) Participating in an ambush and attempted murder of the OCPD of Tronoh.All were sentenced to death, and hanged.

But Chen Ngan, the gang leader, had escaped our net and I was determined to catch Chen before he did any more mischief, and to show the public that, like the Mounties, 'We got our man'.

I was brooding fruitlessly on the case and decided to visit my OSPC to seek new leads. On the road to Batu Gajah, escorted by my bodyguard, Mohd Som, I decided to pay a visit to an attractive mining *kongsi* (a building housing Chinese workers) house, with

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well-manicured garden. After a few paces, I saw a young male Chinese, tidily dressed and walking confidently, as if he might be the *Hang Kong* of the kongsi. The man greeted me with a nonchalant "*Ada Balk Ka?*" ("Is all well?"). I asked him if there was anyone in the building, and he said that no miners had yet been recruited. By this time Mohd Som had caught up with me and whispered, "That's him: Chen Ngan!"

I arrested him and at the police station he admitted that he was, indeed, Chen, and had taken part in the ambush. He pleaded guilty in court, and was sentenced to death and hanged.

Thus the file on the Kampung Sayap Ambush was satisfactorily closed."

A Trap in Kampong Bersia

Dato' Mohammed Pilus

"NGAH LAHAMAT, the *Ketua* of Bersia, a little village on the route to Temenggor, was a friendly and cooperative man, with a reputation as a fine, strong, athlete.

One day he told me that 5 CTs had visited him three times in the previous month. When I jokingly asked Ngah whether he had thought of helping the enemy, his furious response suggested that I had insulted him. I first considered setting up a police ambush, but reluctantly concluded that the most effective ploy was to involve Ngah personally. I suggested that a man of his ability could easily capture any CT visitors, with help from his friends, provided his team were brave enough. I felt a little guilty about thus exploiting Ngah's pride, but he rose to the challenge. We agreed that he should:

- a) Welcome the CTs;
- b) Ensure he always had assistants with him;
- c) Try to make friends with the CTs and drop titbits of anti-government propaganda into his conversation;
- d) When he judged the time was ripe, signal to his team to capture the CTs; and
- e) As a last resort, if the CTs resisted, kill them.

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Two weeks later Lahamat and his team carried out the plan, but they hacked the CTs to death with their *parangs*."

Night March and Dawn Attack

J. C. Macnab

James Macnab started his service career as a trainee RAF Engineer, but finding himself underemployed, switched to the Scots Guards with whom he did recruit training before being commissioned into the Seaforth Highlanders. In 1946 he served with them in Central Java during the 'troubles' of the post-war period. He joined the police in 1948 where he found himself, once again, working with the Seaforths who were, like him, stationed in Johore.

"BY APRIL 1949, the police were still far from fully equipped or trained for sustained jungle operations. Jungle green uniforms were just beginning to appear in the Circle stores, jungle training was minimal, and full time Jungle Squads had yet to be formed: police forays into the jungle seldom lasted longer than 24 hours.

My OSPC, Eric Freeborough, was an ex-soldier who had been Commissioner of Police, Trengganu, in BMA times. He had started some jungle training in Batu Pahat when we were still calling the CTs 'bandits' and our operations 'raids'.

On 11th April 1949, an informer reported that a small party of bandits had set up camp in some *belukar* on the jungle edge adjoining the Sri Medan squatter area. He agreed to guide us to the spot.

At the evening roll call, Eric selected a squad of ten rank and file. At about midnight we set off by road in two vehicles. We approached Sri Medan without lights and left the vehicles parked with the drivers and two PCs to guard them. Guided by the informer we moved through the squatter area. It was very dark so progress was slow. Eventually we arrived at the jungle edge, the informer indicated that the bandit camp was about 100 yards from us, and then faded into the night.

Eric had a small pencil torch with him and shining it carefully, shaded by his hat; he located the track into the camp. We reckoned that we had about one-and-a-half hours until dawn. I remember saying to Eric, "Why don't you try and work your way round the

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back and I will try and flush them out to you?" He replied, "No! You try and get round the back and I will flush them out to you." He told me to go left flanking. We agreed that I should try and keep about 100 yards from where we reckoned the bandit camp would be.

I set off with four PCs. Eric had stressed the importance of a silent approach, but those who have tried to move silently through *belukar* in the dark, will know how difficult it is. We made very slow progress. We were only about three quarters of the way round when it started to get light. The *belukar* gave way to a spur of *lalang* about sixty-to-seventy yards wide, running over a slight rise to our left. We were about halfway across the *lalang* when we heard a burst of automatic fire about fifty yards to our right, followed immediately by the explosion of a grenade and then a further burst and a few single shots. The grenade threw debris and smoke above the *belukar* pinpointing the exact location of the action for us. We made our way in that direction at top speed, but Eric was dead, lying face down at the edge of the camp, the rest of his party were in defensive positions around him. The bandits had fled, leaving their packs and belongings behind in a small *basha* they had constructed. I left two or three PCs in the bandit camp, took the rest and followed a track leading out of the back of the camp, to primary jungle a short distance away. But all bandit tracks were lost so I abandoned any further follow-up.

Eric had moved off before dawn and had managed to crawl up to within ten yards of the camp, which was in a small clearing, but as he raised himself up to throw a grenade, one of the bandits saw him and fired a burst from his Thompson sub-machine gun. This hit Eric and killed him as he threw the grenade, which exploded slightly off target and did no one any harm. He was a brave officer who was liked and respected.

My abiding memory is returning to Batu Pahat and having to break the news to his mother, who lived with him. The poor lady was a widow, and had only one leg and moved on crutches. It was an appalling blow for her.

With hindsight, I believe my left flanking manoeuvre was probably doomed to failure. Eric and I obviously misjudged the time it would take. Perhaps if we had had an extra half hour it could have been successful, but it is doubtful. Had Eric been a second faster

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with his grenade and the bandit a second slower in spotting him, perhaps it could have been a different story — who knows!

Butch Hitchman succeeded Eric as OSPC, and I became his Operations Officer. A proper three section Circle Jungle Squad was formed, trained and equipped. It gives me some satisfaction that in the months that followed we managed to account for two CTs killed and one captured."

Bloody Nose for a CT Food Party

P.J.D. Guest

"4th June 1951

WE RECEIVED INFORMATION that the CTs would be picking up food from a drop arranged at the 1st mile Intan Road. We obviously couldn't lay a close ambush and I decided we would have to deploy around and close in, like a sliding noose. I reckoned on six units being involved.

I dashed up to the marines to borrow some 88 sets: we needed radio to coordinate the attack.

I left the HQ with my ten man squad and P/Lt. 'Rusty' Rudge. Rusty later became famous in Grik as the bloke who said, "Don't shoot, they're ours!" a second before the incoming volley confirmed they weren't!

Just as we began moving north, a figure about three hundred yards away in the rubber was seen dashing away, the leading scouts fired a couple of shots but missed the fleeing figure.

I pressed on. We were moving through rubber but lots of it was overgrown. We heard a bust of firing. Somebody had obviously clashed with the CTs and, judging from the direction, it sounded like Mohammed Pilus's squad. It was fairly heavy fire, I guessed about platoon strength going hammer and tongs.

I speeded up. As the prime contact had taken place so early, I was feeling disappointed and assumed that the CTs would have fled. I felt as if this operation was going to end as most operations did: an inconclusive encounter with little to show for it other than the sudden fright of contact and more paperwork.

Suddenly, first one and then the second leading scout flopped to the ground and one of them fired. I ran forward, "*Apa hal?*"

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("What's happened?"), and one of the scouts replied, "I've seen a Communist section." I peered through the *lalang* but couldn't see anything. Then a couple of shots went cracking overhead.

My first concern was to gain the high ground on the ridge to prevent our being subjected to plunging fire, I called to the section behind to cover us, and then led the two scouts in a sprint for the higher ground. This provoked a further flurry of shots, then the section under Rudge opened up.

We went to ground on the crest of the ridge and opened fire. I shouted for the rest of the squad to close up. The column came tearing up the slope (as they do when fired on!) running in a low crouch position. An unnatural and uncomfortable posture but the prime concern is to make yourself small! I ordered the lead section with Rudge to press on a few yards beyond my own position. The firefight escalated. Then, as the second section drew level, I ordered them to go to ground. I now had the section in extended line with me in the middle.

We continued to try to engage the force to our front but, since we could no longer see the enemy, I ordered the men to fire low into the line of bushes. Return fire cracked overhead or smacked into the rubber trees spraying bark over us and spumes of latex out of the trunks of the trees as shots slammed into them. We were lying in fairly open ground, and it seemed to me we would have to move. I replaced my magazine, shouted "Advance!" and we surged forward. I recall the immense relief I felt as my whole squad, still firing, followed me. I was urging them forward being very aware that we were in completely open ground, I wanted to maintain the momentum to carry the squad into the better cover afforded by the bushes ahead, a move strongly resisted by the CTs.

As we headed for the bushes, it was a nasty surprise to see two uniformed CTs jump up just in front. The image is clear to this day. They were only twenty-five yards away, wearing jungle green uniforms with brown puttees, and carrying large packs. As they ran I was struck by their odd gait, a knees up sort of stride, as though they were picking their feet up over objects on the ground. I raised my carbine and took sight on the middle of the back of the second man. I squeezed two shots and knew both had hit him as I saw the dust jump from his pack. But to my intense frustration, he just kept

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running! I raised my sights and fired a third time. This time he went down but I wasn't sure if he had just dived for cover. As we pressed home the charge, a movement to my right, on the very edge of my peripheral vision, caught my eye, a Chinese looking straight at me, complete with peaked cap and red star. He was no more than four yards from me. I swerved towards him and fired from the hip. I just had time to squirt off three shots and then was jumping over his prone body. My last shot, as I passed over him, was about a foot from his body, I yelled, "Down!" I am sure they were as keen to hear the order, as I was to give it.

As we lay there panting from the exertion and adrenalin of the charge, I wondered how many CTs were in the cover of the bushy area we had entered. I unhitched a 36 grenade and lobbed it into the bushes shouting, "Grenade!" as a warning to everyone to flatten onto the deck. The grenade went off with a heck of a bang. I ordered another advance, this time a cautious edging further into the bushes.

By now the firing had stopped and it seemed ghosdy quiet. I heard a comment to my right, looked across and there was one of my chaps regarding a uniformed CT lying face down and unmoving. The policeman muttered, *mati*. Then came another voice, deeper in the bush. I made a quick head count, which confirmed that it was not one of my men. I shouted out to ask whom it was. If he was a die-hard Communist, wounded and cornered, he was potentially still very dangerous. It was possible for him to lure us out only to open fire or detonate a grenade in the hope of taking at least one of us with him. I carried on a brief shouting match in which he told me he was unarmed, as his comrades had taken his weapon, I warned him against any trick and arranged for one of my chaps to move into the left while I kept the dialogue going. Rudge and I began to worm and wriggle our way carefully in. I kept my carbine facing the sound of the CT's voice. Finally, I caught sight of him.

He was lying on his back, with his head turned away from me, towards the sound of my other chaps' voices. Signalling to Rudge to keep down and cover me, I quietly stood up with my carbine trained on his head and my eyes fixed on his hands. He was Chinese with a thick mop of black hair and looked as if he was in his early twenties, which made him about my own age. I also noted that he was very

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well fed, suggesting he had not been back in the field very long after R&R over the border in Thailand.

Then I heard a burst of firing further down the road. The retreating CTs had gone south and clashed with our section coming north. The CTs recoiled after a brief exchange of fire and fled.

I kept the wounded CT covered while my chaps held down his arms and stripped off his equipment. One of my chaps bound up the nasty gunshot wound the man had sustained in one knee, I was now hindered by the need to evacuate the wounded CT.

I sat next to the prisoner and offered him a cigarette. Surprised by this gentle reception the injured CT volunteered that there had been eight of them, members of the Communist 12th Regiment of the MRLA that operated in Perak, and had a well-earned reputation for being both professional and ruthless.

On the way out one of my men called out that there was a second dead Communist in the bushes. I opened up the packs of the dead men. In one of the packs there was a tight roll of oilcloth. When unwound it had two .300 bullets imbedded in it, the same calibre as my M1 carbine. So, my two shots had hit his pack but had been stopped in the rolled oilcloth. He had been killed by a shot through the back of the head. We heard later from SEPs that two others had been wounded but got away.

We carried the wounded man down to the road on a stretcher and also the two dead CTs, whom we had to bring back in to be photographed for files, in the hope of later identification.

On arrival in Grik we found the P/Lts, having been alerted by the radio report, had started celebrating in the Rest House! They hadn't been there, but it was something to celebrate and much Tiger beer was consumed."

A Nasty Surprise for CTs Near Kota Tinggi

S.R. Follows

Roy's credentials are well documented in the reviews of hb book, 'The Jungle Beat': General Sir Peter de la Billiere comments, "A tough book on the Malayan Emergency Campaign. It tells the story with no holds barred: war as war is. A compelling reminder of deep jungle operations."

His publisher described Roy as follows (no pun intended).

"In search of adventure, Roy joined the RMPF at the height of a bitter ten-year campaign against CTs. He was 22 years of age and had no experience of jungle warfare. Within a year he had become the youngest ever commander of a jungle fort and platoon operating deep within enemy controlled territory. Reliant on uncertain intelligence, he led his platoon through a series of offensive patrols and carried the war to the terrorists on their own ground.

This book ranks with the best and toughest of recent adventure and Special Air Service (SAS) stories."

"IN MARCH 1957 I was told to take a platoon into the swamps of Kota Tinggi: an area I loathed, and search about 200 square miles. We were to be away for about 21 days: I was amused by the verbosity of the planners whose final sentence read, "All CTs are to be captured or killed." Did they think we would play cards with them?

Our last stretch into the swamps was by launch; through the mangroves and the swamp stench, and then we waded ashore through mud, and treacherous roots, anxious not to fall over into the stinking water. We squelched on with leeches worming their way onto our skin. By 1500 we were exhausted, I found a dry spot, and the work of camp making began. Tea was made from the swamp water, with milk out of a tube; the grey liquid had a special flavour of long rotted leaves and would not have been well received in a teashop.

JoJo brought my supper while I worked out the map references of our position. We stood to at dusk, and by 1900 hours I was in my *basha*. The night noises started up: crickets, cicadas, and frogs croaking.

Diary Entry "At 0230 I was woken by a sentry: one of the 'new boys'. "Tuan, I can hear sounds of movement outside the camp." I was out of bed in a flash, carbine in hand.

"Over there Tuan!" I slipped off the safety catch. Was it a tiger? Suddenly, a wild boar bounded off, grunting loudly.

"I'm sorry I woke you, Tuan, the men believe you are without fear, they remember how you captured a CT when you were carrying only a *parang*. Were you ever afraid Tuan?"

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"I was shit scared," I said, "and if anybody ever tells you different, he is a fool or a liar."

The next day's patrol was murder and one of the men was straggling. Having warned him once, the second time I sent the platoon ahead, grabbed him by the collar and said, "Get moving!" and strode off. He stood there crying pitifully, '*Tuan Tolang!*' ("Help Sir!"). After a bit he limped after me, and I flung his weapon to him saying, "Next time I shall shoot you!" We had no more trouble with him.

At our first halt we found a trail, which was not difficult to follow because of broken branches. After very cautious patrolling along the increasingly clear track, I spotted a *basha* and gave the signal to crawl. Not a sound: we rushed the target. The *basha* was part of a recently deserted camp. Bugger!

I then planned to lay a trap for the CTs. I was carrying a special present for them that the 'boffins' had designed. It was doctored ,303 ammunition. Anyone firing the ammunition would find the Bren or rifle exploding in his face. "Not exactly British," said the SBO, but we agreed that there was a war on. My task was to position the doctored rounds in a CT camp for the CTs to find and, hopefully, assume that the SF had left it by mistake. I planted the ammo in a conspicuous place just before we left the camp. My patrol did not know of the existence of the doctored ammunition.

Several weeks later, a small patrol of village policemen walked into a CT ambush, but when the CTs opened fire their Bren guns and rifles exploded. Some CTs were critically injured and the rest fled, leaving the police patrol unharmed.

The low cost and efficiency of this 'nasty surprise' seemed to me to compare favourably with many of our air strikes, which laid waste large patches of jungle, and scared the locals, but seldom hit a C T . "

Major Assault Against a CT Camp

L.F. Comber

After his police career Leon moved into academic circles via the University of Hong Kong to Monash University.

The following account is a summary of Leon's original report to GPO Selangor.

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He remarks that, in fact, 8 CTs were killed in this highly successful attack; it was one of the first major battles with a CT unit after the beginning of the Emergency.

"IN JULY 1948 intelligence from agents and from interrogation of squatters, suggested that there was a CT camp, housing about 50 CTs, in the vicinity of the 11 1/2th milestone on the KL-Klang Road. The CTs had built well-camouflaged bunkers in a disused mine, amidst the undergrowth. They were well armed and supplied with food and intelligence by the local squatters who were controlled by the CTs.

We decided to surprise the CTs by moving our men in vans painted to look like Electricity Department vehicles, which were a common sight in the area as they went about their business of maintaining the power lines.

The assault party, led by the OCPD (the writer), would consist of the informer, four detectives and a Lieutenant and 20 soldiers from the Royal Artillery. The area would be cordoned off to prevent CTs escaping, by about 500 police and military.

At 0700 hours on 21st August, the assault party embussed in the electricity van and drove to the 11 1/2th milestone and along a motorable track into the Pilmoor Estate for 2½ miles. We debussed hoping that we had achieved surprise. We had moved forward in extended order, guided by the informer for about 100 yards when we spotted a post occupied by three Chinese. The assault party opened fire killing one CT and wounding the other two. We moved on at speed assuming that the post we had attacked was a lookout and the main camp would be nearby. We then heard firing that suggested that the bandits had made contact with our cordon and, immediately after, we came under heavy fire from close range. After a stiff battle six CTs were killed; the assault party had two casualties: one killed, one wounded. We continued the sweep but found no more CTs."

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Nine Lives: Saving My Skin

R. Cheah

Robert, an Inspector, was an experienced SBO who had shown considerable courage and ability in various actions. It will be observed that, unlike the CTs who never set up an ambush unless they were sure that they had superior numbers, the police took four men to ambush eight CTs.

"IN MID-1952 I was Assistant District Special Branch Officer (ADSBO) in Raub where I had often worked in a team consisting of the District Special Branch Officer (DSBO), Military Intelligence Officer (MIO) and our Junior Civil Liaison Officer. Our operation orders tended to be simple, along the lines of "Get your target and play it by ear if the situation changes."

One evening an agent informed me that eight CTs would be making a food collection at dawn the next day from a latex collection shed on a nearby estate. I knew the area well and that the latex shed was overlooked by a *belukar* and *Lalang-covered* hillock, which would make a useful place for an ambush party.

The DSBO (ASP Petch) decided that our usual four man team would be big enough to deal with the CT food party, and after briefing we set off at 0200 hours, first in a vehicle and finally on foot, to the hillock. By 0530 hours we were in position. The DSBO and his party concealed themselves, lying flat in the scrub on top of the hillock armed with Bren, Sten, shotgun and grenades. I was twenty-five yards further along the hill where the only cover was from rubber trees: my task was to provide a look out and possibly a rear guard, should the CTs decide to reconnoitre the hillock before starting their food lift.

At 0630 hours I saw a lone CT approaching cautiously along the track leading to the shed, then a few seconds later six armed CTs following in single file. The scout halted and signalled to take cover at the side of the track. The DSBO's party opened fire and I lost sight of the leading scout who had disappeared off the track. I repositioned myself, waiting anxiously to spot a target and looking out in case a CT might decide to try and sneak up behind us. Sure enough the leading scout did come up the hill. He was about thirty

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yards away when I saw him, and his weapon was pointing towards me. I raised my gun instinctively and snapped off a shot as soon as I had him in my sights. He tumbled down the hill and his body finished up about ten feet from me, I did not need a second shot: I had hit him in the chest and he was dead.

After a few minutes, when silence reigned, the DSBO called out softly to ask if everyone was all right and having received a satisfactory answer, asked me to discover if all was clear. It was.

The main party were dispirited: although there were some patches of blood along the track, the CT main party had made good its escape. When the DSBO asked me why I had fired, I pointed to the dead CT beside me and said, "To save my skin." The DSBO said, "So we did get one after all: good show!"

We found the dead man's weaponry nearby: it was a single barrelled shotgun and when the MIO examined the unexploded round in the breech he discovered the mark of the firing pin. The CT had pulled the trigger but the round had failed to explode. The MIO exclaimed, "My God Robert, you really have nine lives."

Tiger Squads

Dato' J.J. Raj (Jnr)

"WHEN I TOOK over as OCPD in Pagoh, I received a particularly warm welcome from the locals, who had been without an OCPD for some time in a district which had been badly harassed by the CTs. I decided to give priority to training in order to restore morale and to deploy Tiger Squads (TSs) to counter the CTs hit and run attacks. My TS consisted of a sergeant, corporal and eight men. It was an exhilarating challenge training these men and leading them in a counter offensive against the cowardly foe and highly satisfactory to be able to pass on the training, which I had received at the Depot, to Malay Constables, who proved apt pupils as well as being tough and brave. But, of course, there were moments of deep sadness when some young man, with whom I had just shared a meal, became a casualty.

We perfected a drill for responding to hit and run raids. The TS, armed to the teeth, would career through the town, horns blaring, in an impressive show of a uniformed armed force hurrying to catch

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the retreating CTs. As soon as we were out of sight of the town, however, seven or eight of the squad would drop off the lorry, and move rapidly into the jungle to outflank the retreating CT party and ambush the terrorists. By this means, TS could achieve tactical surprise, since the CTs tended to be relaxed on the way home, thinking that the only danger they might face would be from the noisy police party behind them. Our ambushes came as a nasty shock.

A Teenage Female CT

S.R. Follows

"Diary Entry 8th February 1957

SECTION LEADER CHANG Ah Tien found himself alone, and hunted. He decided to surrender and through his mother arranged a rendezvous (RV) with SB and was soon in Johore Bahru Police HQ, with bags to eat and lots of fags. Now Chang had to earn his keep and was briefed to lead some of his old comrades into our ambush. He had not been allowed to clean up, in order to preserve his cover.

9th February

This morning we set up our ambush. It was stinking hot and the mosquitoes were diabolical.

The briefing officer had kindly said that, unless there were more than seven CTs, we must bring them back alive, not shoot them.

My companion, Noel, and I decided that three was a more appropriate number.

At 1400 hours, the agreed time, we heard a sound. We waited, safety catches off, sprang out, all ready for death or glory, and saw one small ragged CT (whom we disarmed and captured easily).

Two days later we set out again, and waited by a stream for Chang to bring some CTs into our trap. Chang appeared followed by a girl in a brand new uniform. The two disappeared momentarily out of view and I felt something hit me on my shoulder. A grenade? No, the girl had taken off a gym shoe and thrown it across the stream. She got the fright of her young life when Noel and I seized her, but she refused to talk.

Back in our camp with Chang and the girl, whose hands were tied behind her back, Chang said, "She won't talk; best get rid of

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her." Noel yelled, "He's going to kill her." I brought my carbine up to Chang's chest and said, "If you touch her, I'll fire, drop your gun!" "You wouldn't shoot me!" "Try me." I said. "I wouldn't mind saving the government a few thousand dollars, I promise you." Noel said, "He's not **fooling**, Chang, drop your gun!" Chang had wanted to execute the girl **because**, until she too had turned traitor to the CTs, she was a threat to him. The **drama** had a useful **effect**: the girl agreed **to** cooperate and give **us** all the information we wanted.

She was a seventeen-year-old from a Singapore college, who had been involved in student **riots**, panicked and fled **to** the jungle."

With the Gurkhas in Thailand; Operation Knot

D. Wombell

Dennis was about to attend the War Office Selection Board (WOSB) with a view to getting a commission in the British Army, having served with the KOYLI. When he was jungle bashing under canvas with his battalion he succumbed to a serious bout of malaria and when he came out of hospital in Taiping, his battalion had left for Cyprus. He stayed in Malaya as a police officer.

"IN 1953 I WAS a platoon commander with 18 **Federal** Jungle Company (**FJC**) operating in the deep jungles of North **Perak**. We were not **permitted** to cross into Thailand **in** hot pursuit, and it was **frustrating** to know of the existence of large Communist camps within **easy** striking distance of the border, to which the Thais turned a blind eye, on the understanding that the Communists would refrain from doing anything nasty on their **own** doorstep. Eventually, agreement was reached to allow **Malayan** police to cross **the border in hot pursuit up to a depth of forty miles into Thailand**.

Discreet aerial surveillance had pinpointed a number of large **camps** in the Betong **Salient** — the projection of Thai territory surrounded **on** three sides by the **Malayan** border in which the MCP had established a safe haven — and it was decided to attack Betong **first**. The **aerial** reccees were **covert** and less than **perfect**, and it was not certain whether the **camps were occupied**. One large camp, **however**, was certainly **occupied**; there were a **number of substantial**

attap (type of thatch) huts and a parade ground that had a red flag flying above it. A mouth-watering prospect for those of us who spent our lives hunting for needles in haystacks south of the border!

18th and 20th (Gurkha) FJC were tasked with the series of operations that were to follow. They were to last several months and were designated 'Operation Knot'. The first phase was to be carried out by two groups who were to attack the primary and the most promising secondary targets simultaneously. The first group, consisting of the Gurkha company and two Malay platoons from 15th FJC, was to be commanded by Johnnie West, with Ben Gard of 20 Company as Second-in-Command. I commanded one of the Malay platoons and P/Lt John Abercrombie the other.

In order to avoid alarming the terrorist community in the Betong Salient where the CTs felt secure, we entered the jungle well south of the Thai border. The officers travelled to the area during the afternoon to recon the entry point for the main force. The three of us spent the night in the cells at Kampong Lalang Police Station. This afforded a great deal of amusement. The rest of the force arrived in the early hours and we stumbled our way into the jungle by the light of dim torches, until we were well out of sight of the road. At daybreak, after a cold breakfast, we commenced our march north towards the Thai border and the notorious Betong Salient.

We knew that the march would be tough. The distance as the crow flies was about eleven miles, which meant almost double that on the ground, and we would be going against the "grain", with innumerable hills to climb and rivers to cross. We calculated correctly that it would take us eight days to reach the target. This made resupply a problem, since normally jungle patrols would be supplied by airdrop every four days, and to carry eight days' rations as well as weapons and ammunition on such a long and difficult march ~~was~~ not sensible, if we wanted to arrive at the target ~~area~~ with men fit to do battle. The problem was solved by having two **platoons** of 18th FJC act as porters and carry two days' rations for ~~the~~ main force before returning to camp. We then had to carry only six days' rations.

A condition of the agreement with the Thais was that Thai Police must accompany us on cross border operations and, on this occasion, we had almost a full platoon of Thais with us. They were

nice chaps and acquitted themselves well on the march. But after two years of jungle bashing in North Perak, my hardened jungle-wise Malays were bemused by the carefree antics of the Thais, who seemed to treat the exercise like a picnic. However, they soon packed away their shiny, chromium-plated cap badges, their white scarves and towels, and began to conduct themselves in a more soldierly manner.

Navigation, the most important aspect of the march, was difficult. We had to locate a specific point in a vast area of primitive and largely unknown jungle, using maps that were, at best, rudimentary. The position of many of the rivers was only approximate and in some places shown as almost straight lines. I acted as a leading scout to find the best route, 'steered' by Johnnie West and Ben Gard who were thus free to concentrate on their maps.

We arrived without incident at a river that we calculated to be two or three hours' march from the ridge above the terrorist camp. We spent that night and the following day by the river to allow the men to recover from the march, before climbing the ridge the next night ready for the attack at first light the following morning. We had a relaxing day but silence had to be observed, and no fires were allowed. However, as the day grew wanner I suddenly heard singing, shouting and a guitar. The That contingent had decided that they might as well enjoy themselves and were having a great time playing in the river with • musical accompaniment from the bank. We quickly stopped the larking about and, fortunately, no harm was done.

In the late afternoon we made our way slowly and quiedy to the top of the ridge beneath which, if our navigation had been accurate, was a large CT camp. It was a tense time as we sat lined up on the ridge in die growing darkness, listening for any telltale sound that would tell us we were in the right place and that all our efforts had not been wasted. Suddenly, there arose from the river beneath us die sound of men singing. I shall never forget the eerie thrill of it. The CTs were singing their marching songs before lights out. We were in the right place: between us we had performed a navigational miracle.

There was much spirited, quiet, discussion as to how best to attack the camp at dawn. Our Gurkha platoon commanders wanted

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to creep down and behead the sentries in the night - but then they always did, In retrospect, perhaps we should have let them. I would have preferred a straightforward frontal attack with all guns blazing, but Johnnie decided upon a properly planned attack, putting stops to the left, to the right and to the rear of the camp before a frontal attack with the Gurkhas. I was to go to the right, leave a platoon on the track at that side and then climb the hill behind the camp to cut off the enemy retreat.

At first light we started to move into position. Abercrombie moving down the hill to the left and I down to the right leaving Johnnie and Ben with the Gurkhas in line on the ridge.

As I moved down to the right and neared the river, we came across a large well-built *attap* hut immediately in our path. We approached it carefully. In fact it was a large store full of food, uniforms and equipment and well outside the camp. We were elated. This was a terrorist group on a grand scale compared with the shabby deprived little groups we had been used to. Just as we started off again, heavy firing broke out from the other side of the camp and I assumed that the attack had gone in before we had had time to put our stops out. We hurtled down the hill to the riverside track and, as we reached it, much heavier fire broke out from the direction of the camp. I left a platoon on the track to block it and then started to climb the hill on the other side of the river to block off the rear of the camp. We were too late. The escaping terrorists were already above us on the hill and we came under heavy fire. Eventually, all firing ceased and leaving the platoon to cover the hill, I made my way to the camp. The place was in turmoil: two dead terrorists in the middle of the parade ground and Gurkhas running around in all directions looking for someone to kill! Then Abercrombie's platoon appeared from the track they had been blocking, carrying two bodies, Abercrombie and Sergeant Abu Bakar had been killed.

When he had reached the riverside track that he was to block, Abercrombie, accompanied by his sergeant, walked down the track to reconnoitre. As he turned a corner he suddenly found himself in a small clearing; it was a perfectly constructed sentry position with, at the far end of the clearing, a large fallen tree behind which sat a sentry on a bench with a Bren gun pointing down the track: he

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opened fire hitting Abercrombie between the eyes and Sergeant Abu Bakar in the heart. Both were killed instantly.

This had been the signal for the CTs to put their escape drill into action. Johnnie West and Ben Gard had no alternative but to lead their Gurkha attacking force at full tilt down the hill and into the camp, knowing that the stops could not have had time to take up their positions. The main body of the terrorists, leaving two men to fight a very courageous rearguard action to delay the attackers, and carrying only their weapons and ammunition, fled up the hill at the rear of the camp. The Gurkhas very quickly killed the two men left behind and charged into the camp. We tried to pursue the fleeing terrorists but they had the advantage of the precipitous slope, up which they had climbed ahead of us and from the ridge top dispersed and melted into the jungle.

The camp was substantial. Apart from barrack rooms there was a lecture hall, armoury, cookhouse and well-stocked stores. The defences were well planned and consisted of trenches, strong points and well-sited sentry positions with cleared killing grounds. There were even two bicycles with which it was just possible to ride down the rough riverside track to the nearest Thai village some miles away,

It was, of course, very disappointing that such a complex operation, so well planned and executed, had been largely frustrated by a premature movement by one officer who, sadly, paid for his mistake with his life.

Success, however, is not solely measured in the number of kills. The information gathered from the camp in documents and photographs was incalculable. The operation also signalled to the MCP that they were no longer in a position to thumb their noses at us whenever they disappeared over the border into Thailand.

The following day it was pouring with rain. I had contacted a bad bout of dysentery and, as I squatted over the Communist-made open-air bamboo loo feeling unutterably miserable and soaking wet, my eyes alighted on a piece of newspaper left behind by the terrorists. A large advertisement read, "You can be in Belfast tonight for £10.00." My God!" I thought, "if only!"

Deep Jungle: A Police Lieutenant Remembers

J.W. Camm

Joseph Camm was another of the Police/Lt cadre. He had cut his military teeth as a rear-gunner in Wellington bombers.

"MANY OF US who have contributed **to** this book about the Federation of Malaya Police will now have celebrated their 80th birthdays.

Possibly, some of our duties carried out in the jungle during the Emergency would now be considered rather dangerous, but to us in those days it was not so. We had volunteered to **do** our duty.

Quite a number of us had experienced active service during the war years, participating in much more horrendous activities. I, myself, was a Wellington bomber rear-gunner. We try to forget those terrible air raids over Germany, but it had **to** be. Hitler had to be defeated and, in like manner, Chin Peng and the Communists had also to be defeated.

My first impression of Malaya and its people was wonderful. They were so polite, had respect for each other whether rich or poor, and gave loving care to their children, often in **very** difficult circumstances. The Malayan Police contributed to their freedom from the CTs and **I** am sure that the citizens of today, especially the elderly, thank them for their devoted service during the Emergency,

The Field Force Jungle Squad (FFJS), with whom **I served** as a P/Lt, did not adhere to the same strict **procedures** as **the** army. We had our own rules, but once in the **jungle** we were on our own with a sergeant, three corporals, a wireless operator and approximately thirty constables — Chinese, Malay and Indian,

A P/Lt's command of a jungle squad was a very independent command. We sometimes served for two months **at** a time **in him** deep in the jungle, patrolling outside **and trying to shelter the locals** from the CTs in the area.

On **one cross border** patrol, we **met a man who seemed to** be **from** another age. He was naked, a 2-foot long bamboo tube full of poison-tipped darts hung **from** a cord round his waist, and he carried an 8-foot long blowpipe. We followed him into his **little** camp of about twenty-five men, **women and** children. **Some** were **naked**,

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some wore skins and some had bones through their noses. It seemed that **we** were **the** first people **they** had ever seen **from** the outside world, and they found my red hair particularly astonishing. We gave them what food **we** could spare, and in return we were treated to soup served in half coconut shells, I found a **monkey's** paw afloat in my bowl, but I was able to remove the delicacy surreptitiously and drop it inside my shirt.

We were glad **of** the airdrops **of** rations which, guided by our smoke, were usually accurate, but I often envied the aircrews their swift transport. They would be home in hours; we would **not** be home for weeks.

Every night **we** made **bashas** out **of** sticks with waterproof capes for roof. **We** slept in the dry clothes **from** our rucksacks and in the morning donned our filthy wet clothes to resume our march.

Although **we** occasionally came under **fire**, we were never engaged in a serious firefight. As soon as the CTs discovered that they were outnumbered, they always faded away **into** the jungle. On one occasion, **we** spotted **panji** (sharpened bamboo) stakes along a track and then a CT camp capable of holding 100 CTs, but the camp was empty. There was ammunition, clothing and documents in Chinese, in the huts and these we were able to carry back to base. **We** destroyed the camp.

On one **of** my last missions **we** were lying in ambush in a rubber estate; my ambush position was in a ditch near the spot where, according to an informer, a female tapper used to leave food for the CTs- **We** watched the tapper coming towards us, pausing at each tree **to** pour the latex **from** the little cups into her bucket. She stopped a few paces away **from** **us** and looked all round her searching, we thought, for CTs, our guns were at the ready and the excitement was intense. Our mission was almost concluded. But it was not to be, She stopped just in front **of** our shelter, started fumbling with her clothes and it became clear **that** she was about to relieve herself beside us. I shouted, in a broad Yorkshire accent, "Oi! 'Op it." She rushed off screaming and that was the end **of** that operation.

Sometimes **we** served for two months **or so** in the deep jungle forts that were a safe haven **for those** fleeing **from** the CTs.

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My early days were spent in Johore but, when my wife and three children arrived in Malaya, I asked to be transferred to Ipoh so that my son could attend a school and my family would be safer in a town.

Many CTs were crossing the border into Thailand, where the British Army could not follow them, and it became the responsibility of the Malayan PFF to work with the Thai Police to dispose of them.

I remember several days after crossing the border, noticing a very, very old stone on which was engraved the word SIAM, placed there many years before; I wish that I could have taken a photograph of it.

There was always an element of danger and the fear of an ambush when walking down those lonely paths, and I found the tracks in the border area much more frightening than the deep jungle. Weeks later it was nice to view the South China Sea.

The jungle through which we travelled in Thailand was unmapped, unexplored territory. It was there that we met the man of the past. The blowpipe he exchanged for a bag of rice and a heavy knife, hangs on my living room wall, a memento of the past.

My police days soon passed and when the Emergency eventually ended, I spent a further three years as a tin mining engineer. In 1993 I spent a short holiday in Malaysia, and was delighted when a gentleman approached me and mentioned that he had served with me. It was wonderful, as my red hair was now turning white and I wondered how he had recognised me after all those years.

I will always remember him and the other members of my platoon. We were a team, each of us proud to have been in the Force and to serve the citizens of Malaya to the utmost of our ability.

May they live in Peace and Harmony ... God bless them all."

OPERATION GOOGLY

AJ.V. Fletcher

The overall effect of 'Googly' was far-reaching and heralded a spate of surrenders, In addition to Graham's Bar to his Military Cross, Goh and Gus Fletcher were awarded the C M ; Idris the CPM for gallantry and seven Gurkha soldiers were also decorated.

THE HEART OF any honest SBO (no snide remarks of 'contradiction in terms' please), who has devoted his energies to penetrating the organisation of the jungle-dwelling Communist Terrorist Organisation (CTO), and to recruiting and directing against them agents or, even better, 'doubling' the CTOs' own agents, must be gladdened by the arrival of a letter from the leader of a target organisation inside the jungle, suggesting a meeting. When the writer of the letter (dated 25th September 1956, beautifully written in Chinese, well-sprinkled with orotund phrases and with the stern injunction on the envelope 'Not to be opened by unauthorised persons') then proposes to offer his services and those of his group of terrorists, joy is unconfined.

But hard on the heels of euphoria comes suspicion. The writer of the letter, Wang Hsi, was a highly effective operator, who had occasioned us much grief over the years with cunningly placed ambushes and despatched to their ancestors many unfortunate local citizens thought to be in cahoots with government, to remove the threat to Wang and 'pour encourager les autres'.

The letter came to me through several intermediaries, Wang's own father (a respectable elderly peasant) being the final link in the chain. In the letter Wang, who had previously gone to considerable lengths to remove me from this world, began by wishing me 'good health and happiness'. He apologised for not knowing my 'precious surname and great given names'. Referring to himself throughout

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the letter as 'this small person' (in the old Confucian term), he proposed a meeting to discuss future joint action against the Communist hierarchy who, he said, had betrayed him. If this was acceptable, he said, his father knew how to get a message back and would lead me to an agreed rendezvous. Among other requests he asked to be supplied with two sets of jungle-green uniforms and a 'No voice Si Teng' (i.e. a silenced Sten gun).

Dear Mr Officer-in-Charge

First let me wish you and everyone of your officers' good health in this letter. I have not addressed you by your name because I do not know your honourable family name.

Time and again I listen to the government's appeals to "Lay down arms, to work with the government to build a prosperous Malaya, to end the Malayan Communist Terrorist shooting war, and to strive for livelihood, democracy and a peaceful life for the people." This is a duty that every citizen living in Malaya should fulfil with full loyalty. Presented with a government policy that is benevolent and lenient towards surrendered personnel and gives consideration to placing them in employment, surrendered personnel thus feel boundlessly relieved and grateful to the government. This will similarly touch future surrendered personnel. The government is also constantly using aircraft to make explanatory broadcasts to us, agreeing to give us a good life and affirming that it will honour its promises. I thus feel even more grateful and have plucked up courage to accept the government's appeal and return to the Malayan Government's fold to help it eliminate the Malayan Communists. Looking back on the past eight or more years, I suddenly see the light and realise that I have gone against my own will and direction, and that I have failed to contribute my best to the people.

I have thought about what tasks I can carry out before surrendering. To make a contribution to the Malayan people's cause of peace, I consider that I can lie low within the ranks of the Malayan Communist troops and report when I have intelligence. At present I have an opportunity to eliminate two important Malayan Communists (the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of a District Committee).

I have a few questions, which I have to ask the government:

1. *The price for my undertaking the tasks Regarding rewards for eliminating Malayan Communist personnel, am I entitled to claim from the Government*
2. *The question of reinstatement of my social status (citizenship rights and personal freedom).*
3. *A request for the release of four political prisoners (LI lie, FAN Yafo LIANG Dong and ZHONG Yongdai). They are said to be connected with supporting the Malayan Communists and having dealings with me. If these are the facts of the case, I will stand surety for them Will the government allow me to act as their guarantor? The first two are members of my family I ask that the government pardon and be forgiving to them.*
4. *Can the government agree to this my request: that its military and police suspend temporarily their patrols, ambushes and combing operations on rubber estates and jungle fringes within our operational area. (The area is 'Ulu An. Gangwei,' towards Muar) These operations will hinder our making contact and communication work, especially in the initial stages of contact being established. As early as a month ago, I already sought to forward letters to CHEN. In the process of contacting the masses, I was interrupted several times by police patrols, hence the delay in the presentation of this letter.*
5. *I can try and think of a way to gain personal access to your residence to meet and discuss in detail the above questions and tasks, and the problems of establishing and maintaining contact.*
6. *Finally, I ask the government to agree to let me get a member of the masses to bring me some foodstuffs, As for the identity of those members of the masses, I will report next time.*

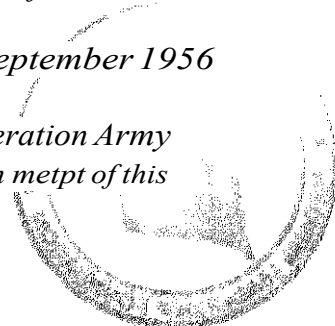
Regarding the above six questions, would the government please write and let me have instructions

Regents

In secret and in haste. Please examine and correct me if I have made any errors,

25th September 1956

Herewith a sheet of the Malayan Communist Liberation Army notepaper as evidence, I ask particularly that, on receipt of this

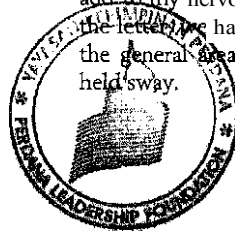


SMASHING TERRORISM IN THE MALAYAN EMERGENCY

letter, you detail trusted British and Gurkha soldiers (one of whom must speak Chinese) to go with this contact man (my father) at 5 o'clock this afternoon to the destination: the rear fringe of the Japanese rubber estate at 'Ulu An'. I have orally arranged with him all the contacting arrangements. Please believe me, I have no plots to ensnare and harm you, and there will not be any untoward incidents. Should I betray you, the members of my family can be punished. As for our meeting and discussion place, please avoid the presence of other people. I also ask that you give me an introduction to call on the British Officer-in-Charge of counter-insurgency operations.

After the meeting, we can arrive back in the jungles on the morning of the 27th and carry out a task: the ambush of two Malayan Communists (a Deputy District Committee Secretary and a courier). The government can send soldiers to go with us to carry out the ambush. First of all, please have prepared two Sten guns with silencers for shooting and killing terrorist elements. Also send two suits of military uniform, military caps and shoes for disguise. It is best that the guide should be in disguise too. I have offered my suggestions regarding the above matters, and apologise if my views are wrong. I had intended that we met up on the 25th but circumstances and the fact that I had no way of getting hold of my contact prevent this. Only today the 26th have I been able to get hold of him. Also, as today is the date of my return to the camp, I am unable to meet you for a discussion. As for the tasks discussed above, will the government please write and let me have its instructions as to whether it agrees with the proposed action. On the 18th I will be able to meet the contact again at five o'clock in the afternoon, the rendezvous being the fringe of 'Bating Tunan Rubber Estate, Gangwei'.

There was no doubt of the authenticity of the letter. The question uppermost in my mind was the possibility of a trap leading to the speedy and economical removal of DSBO Goh Chin Hee and myself, both having been a thorn in Wang's side for a long time. To add to my nervousness was that for some days before the arrival of the letter we had been receiving reports of large numbers of CTs in the general area where Wang and his Armed Work Force (AWF) held sway.



But Wang was not playing from strength; he had suffered a number of losses at our hands over the years. His AWF was now reduced to four, himself, District Committee Member (DCM) Tang Hsin, a tough and experienced Teochew, and two women soldiers, one of whom, Hsiao Ling, had been wounded in an earlier engagement.

But despite his parlous condition Wang was still in communications with other senior bodies of the CTO in the area. The opportunity of using a 'live' CT group, under my direction, against these targets (which was what Wang seemed to be proposing) was, indeed, attractive.

Inspector Goh, hard as nails and happier in the jungle than out of it, immediately said that he was ready to take up Wang's offer. Goh had started his career as a teacher and spoke five Chinese dialects. He was an action man but he had a clear and logical mind and quick perception.

We sent back a message suggesting a date and time of meeting at a location on the jungle fringe while declining, with thanks, Wang's offer to have his father guide us, so as to give us a day or two's breathing space. I drove to SB HQ in KL to seek advice from Mike Day, an officer whose judgement I much valued. Mike suggested that, as we didn't know which way the ball would bounce, we call the project 'Operation Googly' (had I been quicker off the mark, I might have counter-proposed the term 'Chinaman' — the term for a Googly ball that goes the other way). Mike would provide us with an important SEP operating under the pseudonym 'Thomas'. 'Thomas' would arrive in Kuala Pilah in an SB car with a minder and then, sans minder, would accompany us to our rendezvous with Wang, who would be most impressed since 'Thomas' was frightfully important but he had only just come out from the jungle and we were forbidden to ask 'Thomas' about his background.

The difficulty of minimising knowledge of an operation like Googly on a 'need to know' basis (by any standards delicate) was immense, for the Colonial Service had its fair share of officials whose amour propre was easily dented. I had to inform my District War Executive Committee (DWEC), my Head of SB in Seremban (25 miles away) who had to inform the CPO who told the

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Commissioner of Police, who told the Director of Operations (DOP) and the Director Special Branch (DSB)—and so on.

I was anxious to involve the 2nd Gurkhas who were stationed in Kuala Pilah. We would need a small selected group of these splendid soldiers and Major Graham Vivian handpicked five of his men. Graham was a superb officer, misleadingly easy-going but tough as hickory.

I had previously spent three years in close liaison with Gurkhas in Pahang and part of that time I led a jungle squad, sometimes on combined operations with them. They seemed to me to have only one drawback (and it was a terrifying one); on coming across a camp of disagreeably-minded CTs, who almost always outnumbered us, they tended to drop their perfectly good firearms, draw their fearsome *kukris* and, screaming war-cries, charge into the thick of them. My own preference was to fire from behind the thickest tree I could find, thus giving myself a reasonable chance of survival—and I encouraged my men to do the same. When operating in concert with Gurkhas, however, it was always my worry that they would charge the enemy, in which case one would have to charge with them, although *kukri-less*, for fear of being called a wimp—or, even worse, being decapitated in the general excitement of the charge. The trouble was that their British officers were as mad as, or madder than, their men.

Wang's father reported back that the meeting was on. 'Thomas' arrived and we set off with the comforting thought that Graham and five desperados were shadowing us. 'Thomas', a taciturn and slightly lugubrious Chinese, seemed to take it as all part of the day's work. Inspector Goh, eyes gleaming, was enjoying every minute. And with us was my Detective Corporal Idris, a veteran of several fire fights. He still carried in his leg a slug from a CT carbine, a memento from a fight with Wang's unit. I spoke to Idris sternly about not entertaining thoughts of revenge when we met Wang.

The journey, by track and on foot, took in 'dirty' rubber than that, *belukar* accepted, there is nothing more horrible to traverse, a *Lalang* valley and finally jungle. We four waited, I had taped a .32 pistol to my body with the sticky tape from a First Field Dressing and wondered, too late, how I would be able to produce it in a hurry.

Eventually, we heard the sound of a stick rapped against a tree, followed by whooping noises and then two Chinese figures emerged from the trees — clad only in undergarments made, with confounded cheek, from parachute silk from our parachutes.

With hands raised and conciliatory smiles, the two figures approached. We recognised them at once, for their mug shots adorned my office wall, along with those of all the other CT groups in my area. The ensuing conversation was in Cantonese, a Chinese dialect which all of us spoke fluently. I handed over a bottle of Benedictine Dom, a liqueur much favoured by Chinese for the alleged potency of the herbs used in the distillation process. After the obligatory pleasantries, including a polite scrutiny by Wang and Tang of Idris's bullet wound, it was agreed to bring up Graham's men and Wang's two female CTs.

Over the years we had all had dealings with SEPs, and with captured CTs. But to be in cahoots with a complete, albeit decimated, unit was, to say the least, gripping stuff.

Our first priority was to establish trust and understanding between us and not to rush too fast to direct Wang to wage war on his companions. But Wang made it clear, that an important target would present itself shortly. The State Committee Member (SCM) of Negri Sembilan, Hsiao Feng (a woman with a reputation for being, even by CT standards, tough and merciless), was about to arrive with policy directions for Wang and other CT groups in the area. The precise date and time of her arrival would be noted in a message at a courier letter-drop at a 'liaison point' some miles from us. But we had some days before the arrival of this VIP, who would be accompanied by her female second-in-charge and a male body-guard.

We left Wang and his group having made arrangements for the next meeting. Wang was, understandably, anxious that we preserved total secrecy; should any inkling of his double role get to other CT groups, he and his AWF would be dealt with 'with extreme prejudice'. I remarked that we were all in the same boat, *Tung chau kung chi*' (Together in boat, mutually assist').

Back in Kuala Pilah SB we conferred. No SBO would pass up the chance of getting an important bigwig terrorist alive; in actions at close quarters in jungle warfare there is rarely such a chance. Here

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was an opportunity of capturing a VIP who, if she could be persuaded to talk, would enable us to create great alarm and despondency.

But Hsiao Feng was a lady of great fighting prowess, quick on the draw and with a penchant for throwing hand grenades, one or two of which were always on her belt. The answer seemed to be to find a way of rendering her and her group incapable. Drink was not on the cards, since like most Southern Chinese, she didn't drink ('Dom', perhaps, excepted), and even if she did she would hardly allow Wang and his group to get her sozzled. Our only option was to administer some form of strong but harmless narcotic. No bloodshed; no noise (the sound of shooting carried for miles in jungle, despite the trees). So I asked KL for something suitable in the way of narcotic. After some agonising on the part of my bosses in KL as to the ethics of putting the enemy into a deep slumber, they agreed. (This seemed to some of us a little odd since in the past eight years some few thousand, on both sides, had succumbed to lead poisoning as it were). The dope duly arrived.

For the next few days we kept in touch with Wang and his AWF that was now, we hoped, under our control. Effective security was a pressing priority and difficult to ensure: inside the jungle we were secure, when getting in and out there was always the risk of being spotted by locals, some of whom were in contact with other AWFs in the area.

Throughout this difficult period, Inspector Goh played a leading part, well backed up by the urbane Graham and his Gurkhas who, as always, took on a new aspect when away from their base and on operations in the jungle. Their impassive faces took on a kind of fiendish excitement at the thought of an impending fight, I was devoutly relieved that these warriors were on our side.

I was equally glad that Wang and his group were with us. After many years in the jungle (like many CTs he had fought as a member of the MPAJA) his jungle craft was superb. He and his group moved with effortless speed, in silence, and had an almost telepathic ability to communicate between themselves. In fact they were, in many ways, creatures of the rain forest whose senses were developed to an amazing pitch. I had never believed that the jungle was neutral, à la Spencer Chapman, for, apart from the fact that it always seemed to

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have some sort of personal vendetta against me when I operated in Pahang, there is no doubt that a small group of seasoned, fast-moving guerrillas whose home is the jungle has a decided advantage over groups of heavily-accountred police or military who go in to find them.

To see 'our' AWF pitch camp for the night was an eye-opener. While we lopped saplings over which to drape our poncho sheets with considerable noise (which I could see Wang, though remaining politely impassive, found amazingly unprofessional), the four ex-CTs with unbelievable speed slung nylon hammocks (more captured air-drop parachutes!) between trees and after a silently and speedily consumed meal of rice and dried fish were asleep, each side of us-although we were convinced that, like jungle animals, they were able to sleep with one eye open.

Tang, much bigger than his leader, was a loose-limbed young tough with a grin and a great sense of fun. Big as he was, he could move tirelessly through even the most difficult jungle with speed and grace. The time came for Tang to take off for the RV with Hsiao Feng and the group who should have reached a liaison point only a mile or so away. In addition to Hsiao Feng, the group was to consist of another female CT (she was, it turned out, Wang's inamorata, although he didn't confess that at the time), a courier who was bringing information about the impending arrival of yet another VIP CT, and a male CT bodyguard.

We moved away from Wang's camp, where he planned to welcome his leader on her arrival with a suitably spiked cup of Ovaltine (a beverage which was much favoured in Malaya). The time passed slowly and sweatily in anticipation mixed with nervousness. If anything went wrong, if just one of Hsiao Feng's group escaped, the future of 'Googly' would be problematical, to say the least; at worst, should we try to continue it, we could all find ourselves on the receiving end of counter-measures by incensed CTs, intent on terminating the traitors in their midst, with the elimination of the rest of us as a desirable secondary goal.

Tang appeared as usual out of nowhere. He had met Hsiao Feng and her group and they were all in Wang's camp. The spiked Ovaltine had been administered but the taste was so foul that Hsiao Feng and the others had gagged on it and, although woozy, were still

half-conscious. The only answer was to pick them up and we did so — Goh leading the charge into the camp and securing the group. Hsiao Feng, game to the last and despite being only half-conscious, tried to roll a hand grenade down on the attacking party but lacked the strength to pull the pin.

We had achieved our object; the whole group was captured. It would be some time before the complex communication/contact/liaison points system would reveal to the jungle command that something was seriously amiss; meanwhile we had to get Hsiao Feng and her party, including her personal bodyguard, out of the jungle, while we returned to Wang and his AWF for what we hoped would be the next phase, when the State Committee Secretary, Chen Ho, would be our target. The removal of this leader, with his pivotal role in the CTO including policy-making and contact with the South Malaya Bureau, would deal a body-blow to the CTO in the entire region: the possibilities, if we could capture and turn him, were enormous.

I complained to KL about the 'Mickey Finn', making the point that, however powerful the dope was, its efficiency was much diminished if it tasted so foul. The boffins took note and promised to come up with a Mark II version.

The Mark II product duly arrived and like the original it looked like an innocuous white powder. The dosage prescribed was the same as before, and there was a minatory note that the prescribed amount should not be exceeded. But accurately measuring out the requisite amount in the darkness of a jungle camp had not been easy for Wang on the first occasion — and would be no easier this time.

Wang, meanwhile, was continuing his old life, keeping in contact with various 'cells' of local rubber tappers and the like who were assisting him with food, money or information, and keeping open his chain of communication with other CT groups by means of jungle courier points where 'dead-drop' letters were exchanged, or by means of the famous 'rolled slips', exquisitely and minutely written Chinese characters on rice paper, sometimes rolled into the thickness of a matchstick and easily concealed, particularly when carried by an outside agent travelling by bus, bicycle or car from one AWF to the agent of another and thus into the jungle. The complexity of this system, and the almost infallible 'fail safe'

machinery, which ensured an automatic break-up and move to a new location by a CT group should a jungle letter box remain unfilled, or a CT courier fail to meet his fellow courier at a liaison point, was one to excite admiration. It would have been beyond the scope of most of us, I always felt, and put it down to the fact that a people who can store 5,000 Chinese characters in their head, have 650 different names for varieties of tea and who as children can, and must, recite from memory page after page of the writings of Confucius would find such matters simple enough.

We were now ready for the next phase in concert with Wang and his group, with whom we were establishing a good rapport. One of Wang's two female soldiers had been badly wounded in the face in an engagement several years previously. This had left her with a disfigured jaw and impaired hearing, one of the bullets having exited by her ear. She was named simply *Ah Mui* (young sister) and, like the other young woman soldier, tended to remain in the background. She was obviously anxious to speak however, and also a Cantonese speaker (just as well, for at the time Cantonese was my only Chinese dialect), and slipped over to where I was eating my rice to ask if I thought she could, 'When all this is over,' have an operation on her face to remove or at any rate ameliorate the effects of the bullets. I said that I would do my best.

The CT communication system, still unaware of Wang's defection, continued to operate with its usual efficiency. Again Tang went off to meet a courier, from the State Secretariat where Chen Ho presided. The courier, satisfied that all was well, gave a message to Tang to the effect that Chen Ho would be accompanied by the DCM in charge of an AWF in the Jelebu area, plus a bodyguard, an ordinary member who knew our local area (the others didn't) and two other CTs, one of whom was armed with a Bren light machine-gun). The Bren gunner, one Chang of huge build and great strength, was reputed to be able to use this fearsome weapon (which, despite its description, was far from light) with one hand as lesser men might fire a pistol. This was a nervous-making and unwelcome piece of information.

We moved off to the near one of Wang's camps where Chen Ho would arrive. The narcotic would be given to him and, if possible, to the others and, at a given signal, we would rush in and capture Chen

Ho and as many of the others as we could. The importance of capturing Chen Ho alive was one which could not be over-estimated: it was on the cards that he would be able to lead us to the South Malaya Bureau and to Ho Lung, its legendary commander.

When Tang went off to meet Chen Ho's party we held a conference. We had to neutralise the Bren gun. Inspector Goh immediately offered to take on this high-risk task. Graham and his men, with Idris, would take on the other 'hostiles', while I would grab Chen Ho, mouthing dire threats as to his fate should he not immediately surrender. Beyond this we couldn't plan much further.

Another long, hot afternoon passed. The green gloom of the jungle quietly deepened as the sun, out of sight above the tree canopy, slid down the sky. Night fell. Tang, who had not only the grace but also the eyes of a cat, appeared with the news that the visiting VIP and group had arrived and were settling in. Tang had left the camp with, to use his Chinese term, "A disorderly stomach" as an excuse. Very slowly, he took us closer still to the camp. Eventually we were so near that we could hear voices, glimpse a faint flame from a small cooking fire and hear the occasional click of metal. Tang promised to return after their evening meal, which would be late, again with the excuse that his innards were playing up. By then he, and we, hoped that the dope would have worked, and if we were lucky we might grab the lot.

The time dragged on. We perforce were 'cold', i.e. we ate iron rations and drank water. One of the benefits of joint operations with Gurkhas, in addition to their jungle prowess and valour, is that among their re-rationing airdrops large, hermetically sealed tins of rum are included. But sadly we had no airdrop, and no rum.

Although the CT camp was very close, we were separated from it by a steep V-shaped gorge, and we would have to go down one side and up the other. No questions of a mad, death-or-glory charge here, and thinking of the fearsome whirling kukris and the darkness, this was something of a relief to me.

The sounds from the camp gradually subsided. Then, with a discreet cough when he was a few feet away, Tang was among us. The drug had produced little or no effect, he said. Wang put the correct amount in Chen Ho's drink; he had swallowed it but carried

on talking. The same effect, or lack of it, had occurred with one or two of the others.

"What about the gigantic and ill-visaged Oriental Al Capone, the Bren gunner?" I asked. "Didn't take any," said Tang, with a happy grin, adding that in his opinion, now that most of the enemy were pretty well asleep we could follow him crawl down the ravine, up the opposite side and grab as many as we could of them, shooting the rest. The VIP, Chen Ho, was lying on a raised platform, Tang said. Wang was on the far side of him and Chen Ho's bodyguard on the other side, nearest to me when I approached.

There was a sentry standing near the small smudge fire who would open fire on us as soon as he realised that we were attacking. The Bren gun was over to the right, near a small nipah-palm bivouac. Tang and Goh would make a beeline for it and its operator. Graham and his men, with Idris, would engage the others while I would make the acquaintance of VIP Chen Ho. After this whispered Chinese conversation, we repeated everything to Graham who passed it on in Gurkhali to his five soldiers. (The amazing thing about these tri-lingual instructions was that, unlike Chinese whispers, nothing was misunderstood and everyone subsequently followed the plan to the letter).

By now it was about 0200 hours and we began a most agonisingly slow crawl. It was dark as pitch, except for the ever-present phosphorescent glow of decomposing vegetation. Tang went first. Goh followed him with his hand always on his back. I was right behind Goh, my hand on the small of his back, then Graham, Idris and the Gurkhas, all, in the Stygian blackness, with one hand on the man in front. We would have looked like some monstrous jungle-green centipede, had there been any light.

Going up was easier than the coming down. We could see a glow from a small fire and hear the occasional Chinese comment in the camp. Every so often, despite our best efforts, there would be the snap of a twig, a rustle and once the clink of metal. I remember fervently wishing, first that I could be somewhere else and, as we got closer and closer to the final charge, wishing to get it over — now!

When we finally reached the camp everything seemed to happen very fast indeed. Inspector Goh and a Gurkha Sergeant, directed by Tang, found the Bren and threw it to one side. Graham

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and his men came under close-range fire from the sentry and several CTs, who were using Sten guns. I reached the sleeping platform, guided both by the flashes of gunfire to my right (from Graham & co as well as the enemy), and by Wang calling urgently in English, "Come on]" (the only time, incidentally, I ever heard him speak English; I suspect these words represented a large slice of his vocabulary). He was holding, in a bear hug, both to restrain him and to stop him reaching for his gun, a CT whom, I supposed, was Chen Ho. As I was about to relieve Wang of his burden, there was a tremendous bang from behind Wang and a charge of buckshot went past my left ear. I dropped to a low crouch and fired my .38 at the flash. Unfortunately, in doing so I hit Wang, twice; once in his left shoulder, shattering it, and once 'creasing' him right across the top of his head. This, understandably, caused him to lose both his concentration and his grip on Chen Ho who, being nearer to me than to Wang, should have been more likely to be hit. ("The CT nearest to me on the platform had grabbed his shotgun when the fight began and slid off the platform, and it was he who fired at me).

Wang fell back, half conscious, and Chen, like all CTs, **possessed** of the reflexes of a wild animal, began to slip off the platform. As he did so, Inspector Goh arrived and put the beam of his torch on him, the while saying laconically "You move, I shoot": Chen Ho, looking down the barrel of a 9mm Browning pistol, ceased his attempt to slide away. At that moment I saw the CT who had opened up at me with his shotgun (single barrel, fortunately), and this time was able to take a good aim, the light being not too bad. To my chagrin, all that happened was the sickening sound of clicks, at which point I realised, too late, that I had fired all of my rounds at the shotgun flash.

A Gurkha soldier then arrived, having taken part in the gun battle to my right. In great excitement I grabbed his arm and said, "Get him!" (In English of course) and the young soldier, not understanding a word, merely grinned. In desperation I grabbed his head and turned it towards the escaping CT who was, with great sangfroid, easing his way to the far edge of the camp. Goh took his torch from Chen Ho's face, the better to illuminate the departing CT. The soldier ripped off a burst from his Sten. Goh brought his torch back to Chen who, in the darkness, had slid eel-like from the

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platform and through Goh's legs. As Goh slowly brought his torch up and along Chen's most likely path he caught him in the beam. Goh loosed off several rounds, Chen lurched and slipped but then disappeared from view. A follow-up was useless; the blackness, away from the camp, was total.

It was all over. Perhaps two minutes had passed from the time we had entered the camp to the last shot fired. We patched up the wounded, collected the dead and gathered up the weapons and documents of Chen Ho and the others. At dawn we began the painful trek out of the jungle. Wang was semi-conscious but amazingly stoical about the whole thing, and bore me no grudge for shooting him. Our team had suffered no casualties other than Wang, and three of the enemy had been killed. We had caused maximum dislocation of the organisation and had recovered, in addition to weapons, maps and documents. Nevertheless, we had failed in our main objective, the capture of Chen Ho.

We studied a map that had been in Chen's pack. This was a British Army 'Artillery' map and was in a War Department (WD) map case inscribed with the name of a British Captain of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, who had been killed in a road ambush a year or so previously; the Captain's WD compass was also in Chen's pack. On the map, located in the jungle miles away, were two carefully drawn circles. One was named 'Wild Boar', the other 'Honey Bee'. These were, obviously, contacting/courier points and the captured courier from our earlier attack confirmed this.

I went to the military with a request that with the CT guide they put in an ambush party on both places. As always, Bill Vickers, the CO of the 2nd Gurkha Rifles was completely co-operative. He was also (and who could blame him?) most sceptical of Chen Ho making it to either spot. He ticked off the reasons; Chen Ho may have been wounded, he was without food or clothes other than underpants, he had no shoes, map, compass, gun or guide. He was miles away from his operating area, He had been betrayed by his own people and was almost certainly in a state of shock. Either he would die in the jungle or he would make it to a rubber estate and surrender. But if we thought there was a chance, soldiers would be supplied.

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Bill's logical reasoning was sound. But Goh and I were both aware that CTs possessed superhuman qualities of survival and more at home in the jungle than any of us, could perform feats of endurance that beggared belief. Graham shared our view and the troops were sent the next day. I went with them, the Whirlwind helicopter flying along valley floors to keep the noise down as far as possible. I came back in the chopper to Kuala Pilah, where Goh and I continued our examination of the captured CP papers.

Four days later Chen Ho reached one of the two sites marked on his map and was shot dead by troops of the Federation Regiment who had relieved the Gurkhas at the two ambush positions. I was disappointed; any SBO would prefer a live CT to a dead one, for the latter can't talk. But I certainly felt no sympathy for Chen Ho who, like most of his kind, had carried out acts of unspeakable cruelty against hapless locals. Ambushes on police and military were to be expected, but the torture and killing of local rubber tappers, labourers and rice-growers, including the immolation of whole families inside their huts, put him beyond the pale.

Wang's head wound was not serious but his left shoulder was shattered and he would never be able to raise his arm fully again. He was philosophical about this, however, regarding it as one of the fortunes of war. When, two years later, I left for Singapore and the UK by train from Seremban (my HQ town) with my wife and baby, I suffered a great deal of ribbing from my police and military friends over the fact that at the station platform to bid us farewell, several bearing beautiful examples of Chinese calligraphy extolling my many virtues, the ex-CTs, surrendered and captured, outnumbered my own colleagues. And in the midst of them all was Wang, who made sure that his one good arm was the last to shake my hand as the train moved off on its 12-hour journey to Singapore."

Epilogue on Boffinry

"THE BOFFINS IN KL, when told of the foul-tasting bitterness of the first batch, had said they would modify the stuff. But how had they modified it? By replacing half the contents of the jar of powder with a taste removing compound. So we had given each CT exactly half the amount needed to knock them out, thus not only lessening our chance of picking them up in an unconscious state but also, because

they were wide awake and very cross, making it more likely that we ourselves would come to a sticky end. I complained about this and, naturally, my complaints got me nowhere."

OPERATION JUNTO

J.G. Rothwell

Joe Rothwell came into the police from the Gurkhas with whom he was serving in Malaya in 1948. The police wanted army officer to help them on the para-military front. Four officers joined from, 2/7th Gurkhas. For many months he wore police uniform while carrying out military duties.

"IN 1957 I WAS involved in an operation designed to persuade the remnants of 37 Independent Platoon to surrender; the central theme of the operation was the exploitation of the surrender of five of their men led by Chow Fung. Since I spoke reasonably good Cantonese I was able to form a close relationship with Chow and together we worked out a plan to take out a Q patrol to capture 37 Platoon. My relationship with Chow was helped by the ministrations of the local military medical officer (MO) who diagnosed and treated him for malnutrition.

My Head of Special Branch (HSB) was not a Cantonese speaker and was not, therefore, able to communicate directly **with** **chow**. and he was extremely suspicious of him.

However, he reluctantly authorised my operational plan and we were successful. By 19th October the whole platoon was in our hands. Our original plan included the ambitious intent to 'turn' the whole of 37th Platoon into a Q unit, keeping them in the jungle and maintaining their communication links with other CT units, to conceal the fact that the platoon's circumstances had totally changed. However, we abandoned this ambitious project and brought the CEPs out of the jungle when they spent their first night camped under HSB's nose. HSB's view of the operational risks involved in Project Junto was, no doubt, influenced by a letter from his head of interrogation, which inter alia, discussed the possibility of

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SEP Chow Fung undergoing a change of heart (I saw this letter for the first time in 1993).

Since our first operations against SCM Kong Zu were not successful, MSB asked the army to attack him. The army made contact but, after the expenditure of a huge amount of ammunition (on both sides) and no casualties on either side, the engagement was broken off. HSB then asked for voice aircraft to broadcast a message to Kong urging him to surrender since many others had done so. Fortunately, Kong dismissed the voice aircraft message as propaganda and I persuaded HSB to lay off the aircraft and to let me reactivate Junto. However, he continued to mistrust Chow and told me to plant a radio marker beside Kong's camp so that the RAF could deal with him.

I could creep up to SCM Kong Zu's camp and leave the radio marker switched on. The bombers would then come in and blow SCM Kong Zu and his comrades to smithereens. I heard a little bit about these radio markers. They had been designed and made by Archie Pagan, an officer in the Royal Signals in Seremban. He had made them for SB in Negri Sembilan, who had used them successfully in a project against their MRLA Regimental Commander and SCM, Tang Fuk Leong.

The radio marker was used in conjunction with a direction finding radio, fitted in an Auster aircraft. I am sure that the system worked marvellously on Salisbury Plain, but in the depths of the Malayan jungle it had drawbacks. Everybody who ever relied on a radio for communications in the Malayan jungle of the 1950s will tell you that it lacked an element of reliability. During our Project Junto operations, there were times when we could talk loud and clear, strength 5 to, for example, Grik which was 100 plus miles away, but the people we wanted to speak to, only half a mile away, could hear nothing. And we were using specialist wireless operators!

So the pilot of the Auster, listening to the signal from the marker, would hear it but, before his hand could reach the dial to start tuning the direction finder, would lose the signal altogether and would then have to start all over again. Kong Zu had the reputation of being a lucky fighter, and I did not want to have to rely on Kong Zu's running out of luck! But I agreed with HSB that I would take

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the radio marker in with me, but that we would test it in the jungle and would only use it if I had confidence in it.

The Junto patrol picked me up from my bungalow at 0330 hours on 19th November, and we all proceeded to the 62nd milestone where we debussed and entered the jungle. We went along the track for a quarter of a mile and stopped until first light, changed into CT uniform and then carried on into the jungle until about 1430 hours when we reached an old 37 Platoon camp, which we were going to use as our base.

I switched on the radio marker and sent out a signal. Then the Auster aircraft arrived in the area and I spoke to the pilot who confirmed that he was starting to locate my marker signal. He flew to and fro for what seemed like hours and complained that the signal was weak and that he was constantly losing it. Eventually, as it was beginning to get dark, he made a dive on our camp, blipped his engine three times and flew away. He had located and plotted our marker signal at last.

I had not been impressed by the time the Auster pilot had taken to locate the radio marker. It needed to be located by the Auster within minutes of its arrival in the area, but the time it took was measured in hours, rather than minutes. So I decided to leave the marker behind and to rely on a normal ground attack on Kong Zu's camp. I had trained as an infantryman, so I was quite comfortable with the idea of putting on a ground attack.

On the next day we sent a party of Junto SEPs with Inspector Bernard Thong to bring in Kong Zu's couriers, who were disarmed and persuaded to surrender. This took until the middle of the afternoon. It was too late to take action against SCM Kong Zu, but the couriers also knew the location of CT SIU Ching, the DCM of Sungkai AWF, so we had an additional target.

On the next morning, 21st November, a party led by Inspector Bernard Thong, with SEP Chow Fong and eight other Junto SEPS, plus one of the couriers as a guide, went out to contact CT Siu Ching and his gang. About a quarter of an hour from ST Siu Ching's camp, three men were sent forward with a letter to Siu Ching, instructing him to come to Chow Fong. When he and his escort arrived, they were disarmed and persuaded to surrender. CT Siu Ching was reluctant to surrender but, when Bernard Thong was

introduced as a police officer/government representative, with authority to negotiate the surrender, CT Siu Ching's reservations about surrendering faded away.

A party of eight SEPs was then sent to the AWF camp to bring in the rest of the Sungkai AWF who all agreed to surrender.

Meanwhile, the patrol and myself moved off to a new base camp closer to Kong Zu. We waited for Bernards party, with the new SEPs from the Sungkai AWF to arrive, and then we set off. There were only two police, Bernard and myself. The rest of as were Junto SEPs.

I was most impressed by the silence of the SEPs as we moved through the jungle. I had been on operations with police parties and with various army units, but nowhere had I experienced a patrol that was as quiet as the one I was now in. I have mentioned how HSB relied on Richard Clayton and his interrogation team for advice about the reliability of the Junto SEPs, But all those of us who were involved in Junto operations, relied heavily on Richard and his team. We were sharing our patrols and our camps with people who, until very recently, were our deadly enemies. Could we trust them to stay on side? It was Richard Clayton and his team of interrogators who had the responsibility for vetting our SEPs, choosing whom we could use in the jungle and whom we should leave behind. We were ever conscious of the danger. Richard and his team did not let us down.

At about 1530 hours we arrived near Kong Zu's camp, and we were very close up to it: I, myself, was only about twenty-five or thirty yards from the centre of the camp, and the others in the party were about as close. But we were short of time, By the time we were all in position it was close to 1730 hours. In an hour it would start to get dark.

Bernard and a small party were due to start the whole thing off by opening fire on the sentry. In fact, Bernaird had been unable to locate the exact position of the sentry and, realising that the time was slipping away, he just loosed off in the general direction of Kong Zu's camp, Tills brought an immediate response in the form of automatic fire from the sentry and from Kong Zu's bodyguard. The sentry then ran away, fortunately straight into my party.

It?

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Kong Zu and his comrades fled uphill, as we had anticipated, and ran into our main automatic weapons. Kong Zu was mortally wounded, as was his bodyguard, who ended his own life by holding a hand grenade to his chest. Two of the CTs managed to get through our cordon, but one of them was badly wounded, and both subsequently surrendered.

We were ravenous by the time we got back to camp. I suppose a firefight does make a man hungry. But the party in the base camp apologised: due to circumstances beyond their control, there was some plain rice, but nothing to go with it. The fact was that, with the surrender of the Sungkai A W F and also the fact that our patrol had lasted one day longer than HSB had anticipated, our rations had been eaten. The Junto SEPs were well aware that I could understand Cantonese and they took advantage of this by, when they wanted me to hear their complaints and their scurrilous and abusive comments, talking in Cantonese, and they would then slip into Mandarin, so that I would not have a clue what there were saying. When they learnt that we had run out of food, they complained madly in Cantonese, and then blathered away to each other in Mandarin in a conspiratorial fashion. It might have been serious — I just did not know. If there was a boil festering away under the surface, I wanted to lance it straight away.

I decided that humour was the best answer. I walked across to them and said that it was as well that they would not be able to fill their bellies with food that night as that meant that, when I took them to Ipoh for a big banquet to celebrate the attack on Kong Zu's camp, they would have plenty of space to fill. I then said that I could not make up my mind which restaurant to take them to. Such and such restaurant had the reputation of serving the best food, but the so and so restaurant was said to be almost as good, and the waitresses there were much prettier. I asked them to discuss thus amongst themselves and then let me know what they had decided. I left them arguing excitedly about the relative merits **of** food and waitresses, and I was relieved that they were speaking to each other in Cantonese. Again I went back to my *basha* and, as I composed myself for sleep, I took pleasure from knowing that the previous Communist masters of these men would have had apoplexy, if they had heard them arguing about such trivial matters.

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Early the next morning we returned to Kong Zu's camp. A search party had found the bodies of Kong Zu and his bodyguard. We then moved to a place in the jungle that I reckoned was suitable to make a landing zone for a helicopter. We had captured one wounded CT and one of my men had been wounded in the leg, so we would need a helicopter lift for them. In a while, we made contact with an Auster with Gordon Tollworthy, again, as a passenger. We reported the result of our attack on Kong Zu's camp, and the MIO has given me the very notes, which he wrote when he heard my message in the Auster. "We've got Kong Zu," he wrote, "champagne tonight."

As the helicopter, with me on board, was coming in to land at Bidor airstrip, I noticed a party of soldiers approaching. As I stepped out of the helicopter, Lt Col Jebb, OBE, who commanded the local battalion, gave me a smart salute. This was the first (and only) salute that I ever received from an army Lt Col, and very nice it felt too. "I know that you cannot tell me what you have been doing, Joe, but I gather that you have not only got Kong Zu and his bodyguard, but you have managed to capture the whole of the Sungkai AWF as well. Well done, I wanted to be the first to congratulate you." So, I thought, so much for Top Secret and 'need to know'.

Each Junto patrol was given a number, and the patrol that I have just described, was Junto IX. Following Junto IX there were thirty more Junto patrols.

By die middle of 1958, Project Junto had succeeded in completely clearing the AWFs at Ayer Kuning, Langkap, Bidor, Sungkai, Trolak Slim River, South Johore (west of Ringlet), Ulu Slim/SW Pahang, Chenderiang, Batu Karang, plus the printing press at Kampar and, of course, 37th Independent Platoon. On 9th July 1958 the successes were announced in a statement, which was very 'economical with the truth'. SB, of course, prepared the notes for the press release and no mention was made of SB or of any police unit. All the credit went to the government's Operation Greenland and Operation Chieftain.

In total we brought out 118 SEPs plus 16 hostile aborigines. There were just two kills, of SCM Kong Zu and his bodyguard. We recovered 185 weapons of all sorts, 18,000 rounds of ammunition and 75 hand grenades.

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All those who surrendered were offered a choice of staying in Malaya or of taking a free passage to China. Only 11 out of the 118 chose to go to China.

I write this forty-four years after the operation and, at this distance, it all seems to have been ridiculously easy. Remember, though, that on this, the first patrol of the project, we had four combat policemen (two inspectors and two detective corporals) amongst twenty-five recently surrendered CTs, most of whom had not yet been outside the jungle and none of whom had been properly interrogated and nor were yet regarded as 'reliable', "

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F. Bedingham

"WHEN I ARRIVED in Malaya in 1950, it looked as if the police and army were facing an almost impossible task. The battle was hard, hundreds of police lost their lives in ambushes where the CTs took care to ensure vast numerical superiority. But police morale was high, helped by the heroic examples of their fellow police officers and men.

By 1954 the CTs were on the run. In Johore, the notorious Hor Lung surrendered, and in SB we seized the chance to engineer a meeting with Hor Lung's erstwhile comrades in the North Johore Regional HQ. After three months of such contact, we persuaded the whole CT organisation to surrender. There were some anxious moments during these operations deep in the jungle.

But by the end of June we had not found the key to South Johore: the CTs were still aggressive, well organised and morale seemed high. Then we had a lucky break: one of our SEPs remembered a communication RV, which had been arranged many months before, so we decided to try to use this RV to establish contact with the South Johore Committee.

In 1954 the terrorists began to realise that things were not going as well as they had hoped. Chin Peng decided that it was time to disappear over the border into Thailand, and he set up the South Malayan Bureau to run the war in the south.

The Secretary of the South Malayan Bureau was Hor Lung, a hard-core Communist, and he set about running the war in the south with considerable vigour. Although by 1956 there were only 550 terrorists in Johore, the end of the Emergency was not in sight. The terrorists had changed their policy and they had decided to give up their wanton killing and concentrate on upsetting the economy.

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As a result of this policy change, it became increasingly difficult for the SF to contact the terrorists.

On 5th April 1958, we in SB in Johore saw our big opportunity when Hor Lung surrendered. This was totally unexpected.

Hor Lung proved to be a deep thinker and one of very considerable ability. He agreed with us that, if it were possible for him to meet the various groups of CTs in the jungle, there was a chance that they would agree to surrender. The difficulty would be to arrange the meetings, because it was the breakdown in the jungle communication system that had been one of the contributing factors in his decision to forsake the jungle.

However, after two weeks we were able to arrange a rendezvous in deep jungle with some members of the North Johore Regional HQ. A small party accompanied Hor Lung to the rendezvous and the CTs surrendered.

After three months of similar secretly conducted operations, almost all the CTs in North Johore had been contacted and, without exception, agreed to surrender.

In some cases, only an hour's talk had been necessary to persuade them to lay down their arms but, in one case, it took 23 hours talking to convince one high-ranking CT.

By the end of June, although we had been so successful in the north, we had been unable to make any contact with the CTs operating in the south of Johore. The CTs in the south were well organised and still aggressive; they might prove far more difficult to deal with; their morale was still high.

Interrogation and re-interrogation of our newly SEPs had produced nothing. On 23rd June, I decided to re-interrogate Lee Tuan, who had formerly been the Secretary of the North Johore Regional Committee. He was cooperative and recalled that he had made a rendezvous arrangement with the Assistant Secretary of the South Johore Regional Committee to be used in emergency when all other means of communication had failed. Lee Tuan had tried the rendezvous every month for six months but no one had ever come, and he feared that the CTs who knew the location had been killed. Fortunately, they were still alive and we thought it would be worthwhile going, although it could not be considered that there was more than a five per cent chance of the meeting taking place.

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The date for the rendezvous was the 30th of every month, so there was little time to get down to details and planning the operation.

The operation started at 0500 hours. My party was a little larger than I had originally intended; there were six SEPs including Hor Lung and Lee Tuan, Police Inspector Ong Liew Swee, who was to act as an interpreter, Lt Geoffrey Dunn of the 1st Cheshires who was a military liaison officer, as well as a signaller from the same regiment, Signaller Chapman, and Captain Jack Raedar, a military intelligence officer attached to SB and one of his staff, as observers.

By 0600 hours we had issued rations, weapons and ammunition, and were ready to set off.

It was just getting light as we left Johore Bahru with the main party in army Land Rovers. Jack, Geoff and myself decided to travel in more comfort in my Morris Minor Traveller, as we had a journey of 110 miles in front of us.

The road that we took is the only one leading to the east coast of Johore; it runs for nearly fifty miles through jungle and, except for timber workers, there was no sign of man at all. We did not see any elephants during this trip, but we could certainly see where they had been the night before. It was a pleasant ride in the cool of the morning.

We stopped at the large fishing village of Mersing, had breakfast there and continued to the village of Endau on the coast at the estuary of the Sungei Enclau. Here a large police river launch and a much smaller outboard engine boat awaited us. It was now almost 1100 hours, the time the Malays and Chinese have their morning meal so, leaving the boat crews and the remainder of my party to eat, the European section of our party retired to a local Chinese shop for *mee* (noodles), a popular Chinese dish, and beer. The trip was expected to last about a week, and we knew that we should not have another cold drink during that period.

At midday we were ready to depart. An inquisitive crowd had gathered on the jetty to see us off, but they could never have guessed the importance of our mission. The sun was shining brightly as we drew away and commenced our fifty-mile journey up river. Fifteen minutes later it was pouring with rain and, after a further seventeen minutes, the water pump had blown a washer and we were drifting slowly back down stream. It is seldom that an

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operation of this kind runs really smoothly, and this one was to prove no exception.

Three quarters of an hour later we limped back to the jetty, and the same inquisitive crowd turned out to see what had gone wrong. There were no spare washers for the pump, but this did not deter the resourceful Chinese mechanic from a local garage.

Amongst our equipment was a packet of 'Tommy Cookers', which are normally used by army personnel when heavy rain makes fire-making a difficult job in the jungle. Taking the stiff waterproof cover from the packet, he made a washer and, by 1500 hours, we were on our way again.

We made our way up river at a steady five or six knots. At the mouth, this river is several hundred yards wide and, although it is infested with crocodiles, we did not see any: they like to bask in the sun but now the sky was overcast. By 1800 hours we arrived at an Aborigine village and decided to spend the night with them. Several of the aborigines knew me, and it was entertaining to watch their faces when they saw whom my travelling companions were. I had known for a long time that they had been supplying the CTs with food and medical supplies, and now they were more than a little confused when they saw CTs and government officers together, more so because the ex-CTs were still wearing their old uniforms.

The aborigines quickly accepted the position and smiled again when we convinced them that we had no intention of arresting them. They stated that an important wedding feast was taking place that evening and an invitation was immediately extended to all of us to attend. Our planning had not allowed for a wedding feast, and we had to re-examine our stores to see what we could provide for presents. We had included some luxuries such as biscuits and a few tins of fruit — these we rather reluctantly sent off to the house of the bridegroom, together with some of our tea, coffee and sugar. The aborigines live in longhouses: as many as fifty living in one house. It was to such a house that we were led and, after taking off our shoes and climbing up the ladder-type front steps, we found ourselves in one large room with approximately one hundred and fifty people present. All were seated cross-legged on the floor. At the far end of the room, mounted on a dais, was the newly-weds' bed, and there was the bridegroom in it. He was asleep. The bride was

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not so obvious, and I asked one of the aborigines if she was present. The replied that she was, and pointed to a small girl sitting on the foot of the bed. She did not appear to be more than 12 or 13 years of age and, as there were two or three other youngsters playing with her, it was no wonder that it was hard for a European to identify her as the bride.

At the closing stages of the meal, the bride's parents and friends made one group, whilst the parents and friends of the bridegroom made another, and then the bride's father started to bargain for the dowry. Amongst the aborigines, it is the custom for the bridegroom or his family to pay a dowry and, in this particular case, a fairly high dowry was being asked. The father stated that he was a well-respected man of the community and that this daughter was the fairest in the village. The father of the bridegroom pointed out that, whilst it was true that the bride was a good-looking girl, she was not all that much better than the others. Then the bargaining began seriously and, after approximately an hour and a half, an agreement was reached whereby the father of the bridegroom agreed to pay one dozen hens, 1cwt of rice and a quantity of fish and vegetables, etc. As soon as the haggling was finished, dancing started.

The dancing is done in the same way as the traditional Malay dancing; four girls wait in a line in front of the band and, as the music starts, four young men will take up their positions facing the girls and the dancing commences. The man must never touch the girl. It was only a matter of minutes before we were invited to dance. The manner in which Geoff Dunn and I attempted to perform this simple dance soon had everyone laughing. We put about three times more energy into it than required and then, just as we were tiring and expecting the dance to come to an end, the musicians quickened the tempo and carried on. Fifteen minutes later, we heaved a sigh of relief as the dance came to an end. We staggered away almost exhausted, but the young petite aborigine girls showed no sign of fatigue, and carried on promptly with the next dance, and did so in fact until 0500 hours the next morning. Only the same four girls were allowed to dance, the rest of the womenfolk playing no part, other than watching their menfolk enjoy themselves. It was about 2330 hours when we made our excuses and left. We had been drinking Ovaltine and eating rice and I was

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ready to sleep. I slept very well on the seat in the boat, whilst the remainder of the party slept in the house of an aborigine. Personally, I found the fresh breeze on the river more to my liking; die aborigines are certainly none-too clean in their habits and I do not like chickens as bedfellows.

We left early the next morning and by that evening we were some fifty miles up river, far from all civilisation. We had sent the large launch back, as the water was now too shallow for it. There were huge tree trunks and rocks in the river bed, and it was dangerous for any type of craft that had a draft of more than a few inches. The Malay driver was an expert with the outboard engine and, although we hit several submerged tree trunks, he managed to swing the engine clear just in time before any damage was done. We stopped on a sandbank and cooked lunch, and we found some turtle eggs. The monitor lizards were usually quick to find these eggs in the sand and we did, in fact, surprise one, about five feet long, having his lunch. The eggs were a tasty addition to our meal.

About 1500 hours that afternoon we reached our destination and built our camp on a sandbank. The water was beautifully clear and up to twenty feet in depth. After a quick meal and a few minutes in conference, it was decided that SEP Lee Tuan would take three of the party with him and go and see if the CTs from the south had turned up to keep the rendezvous. Lee Tuan said that the meeting place was about two hours' walk and, therefore, he would be back about 1900 hours. We agreed on our recognition signals; they would give two tiger hoots as they approached our camp on their return if they were travelling alone; three hoots if anyone else was with them. Our reply would be two hoots like those of a barking deer. The rest of us could only wait. Geoff and the signaller set up the wireless set and made contact with HQ and I had a swim in the river and waited.

At 1845 hours came the signal — two hoots. I felt very disappointed. A few minutes later Lee Tuan and his small party came scrambling down the bank, soaked in perspiration, very dirty and very tired. I later learned that they had not rested during the walk, and not only had it been over two ranges of hills, but it was a walk that would undoubtedly have taken SFs eight hours to achieve. Lee Tuan was smiling — and was certainly not looking depressed, as

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I knew he would have been if his mission had been a complete failure. He went to the river, had a drink and then, pulling a piece of plastic cloth from his pocket, he opened it. There, inside, was a letter. Inspector Ong took the letter and studied it for a few minutes. It was written in Chinese characters. He then said that the CTs from the south had been to the rendezvous but had made a mistake in the dates and had arrived there on the 15th. Owing to the shortage of food, they had been unable to wait until the 30th and they were, therefore, returning to the south. They said that they would be at a certain place for two hours only on the 4th July and, if it were possible, they would like to have a meeting with Lee Tuan.

Pulling out our maps we could see that it was not possible for us to walk so far in time; the meeting place was in deep jungle and it would take us at least five and, possibly, seven days to get there. It looked as though we were going to be unlucky. I then thought if we could only get helicopters to take us a part of the way we could do it. Geoff was enthusiastic and, viewing the sandbank with an experienced eye, announced that a helicopter could land on the sandbank where we were. We examined the map and, to our joy, there was a helicopter-landing zone marked on the map about two days' walk due north of the rendezvous. It was important that we kept to the north and that the helicopters were not seen by the CTs in the vicinity of the rendezvous, as they would not attend the meeting if they were at all suspicious and thought SFs were in the area. The question was: could we get helicopters at such short notice? Geoff called HQ and I put in my requisition for three helicopters to pick us up at 0900 hours the next morning. Fortunately, the importance of our mission was immediately recognised and HQ SB requested highest priority for our operation.

At exactly 0900 hours the next morning, two helicopters arrived; one after the other they landed safely on the sandbank and took us to the landing zone some twenty miles to the south. In order to make sure that the rendezvous was reached on time, we despatched two members of our party, who had been engaged on courier work during their sojourn in the jungle, to meet the CTs from the south. They were to tell them that their leaders, Lee Tuan and Hor Lung, were in camp two hours away and would like them all to return to the camp. There was nothing unusual about this

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request, as the CTs never made a practice of setting up a camp near a rendezvous because, if one of the couriers surrendered to the government, it might mean that their camp would be attacked. The two were given a complete cover story, and away they went.

We continued our trek south and, two days later, we considered we were sufficiently close to set up a base camp. During this move south we came across the tracks of the terrorist party we were trying to contact and, from this time, we had to take precautions in case we ran into them accidentally and shooting started.

On the night of the 2nd we found that the ex-CTs in our party were running short of supplies. I was very annoyed and told them they would have to go without. The four European members of the party had been allocating their food so that it would last for the whole of the operation and they should have done the same but, as they had not, what was I going to do about it? But, as I had an important job of work for them to do, I decided to request an airdrop. We had passed a clearing in the jungle about one hour's walk north of our camp and this was, I decided, a suitable and safe location. Our wireless request was approved and we were told that our supplies would be dropped from an Auster aircraft at 1500 hours the next afternoon. I had sent all but one of the SEPs off to **make** another camp one-hour's walk north of our camp in case CTs from the south arrived early. This camp would look like an ordinary CT camp and Hor Lung would not have to divulge his plans to them until he thought the time was ripe. I had kept one SEP behind so that he could act as a runner between the two camps. So we Europeans and one SEP would have to go to the dropping zone and carry back the food.

By 1500 hours we had arrived at the dropping zone and had started a huge bonfire that was giving off volumes of smoke. The Auster appeared a few minutes later and indicated by wagging his wings that he had seen us. Geoff then made radio contact with him and the pilot had no trouble in finding the right spot; the smoke could be seen many miles away.

He made his first run, pushed out the first bundle. We saw the parachute open and then, to our dismay, we saw it fall on top of a giant tree and remain suspended at the tip of a bough.

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On the radio, the pilot apologised and said he would try and do better next time. We sincerely hoped he would be able to do so. The remaining three packages were dropped very accurately, one actually falling on the fire itself! We looked at the first package as it swung backwards and forwards about two hundred feet from the ground.

The SEP whose name was Ah Han was 75 per cent Chinese and 25 per cent Aborigine. He volunteered to climb the tree and release the parachute if I would give him the parachute. The parachute was made of nylon and I knew he would value this for making clothes etc. I was only too pleased to offer it to him if he could get it, and I must say that I considered it impossible for any man to do so. Ah Han made his way through the thick undergrowth to the base of the tree. We could not see him but could hear him chopping as he cleared a path for himself. About ten minutes later, I saw him half way up the giant tree and he was climbing fast. The fact that he could climb it at all was a feat in itself, because Ah Han was depending entirely on creepers.

A few minutes later he was sitting astride the branch and edging his way forward inch by inch. The bough was about nine inches in diameter and quite smooth; after edging along in this manner for about 25 feet, the bough arched sharply for five feet. Ah Han sitting astride, let go with both hands, pulled his long parang from his belt and attempted to chop off the end of the bough. He quickly realised that he would be unable to do this so, putting his knife away, he continued to edge his way along and up the bough. A slip now would mean certain death. He reached the top of the arch of the bough and, lying along it, he once again pulled out his knife and started chopping. He chopped and hacked away and suddenly, as the weight of the parachuted package at the end of the bough became too much, there was a sharp snap and the whole lot came tumbling down.

As the weight was released, the part of the bough on which Ah Han was sitting whipped up and down so rapidly that we lost sight of him and thought, for one dreadful moment, that he had been catapulted from the bough. But, as the bough lost its momentum, we saw him sitting there as though he was riding a racehorse. Five minutes later he was back on the ground, dirty and grazed but still

looking as strong as ever, It was a fantastic feat, daring and skilfully carried out. After splitting up the parcels equally between us, we set off back to base.

We had left the camp empty. We had to make sure that CTs were not ambushing it As soon as we were within two hundred yards of the camp; we had to make a reconnaissance of the whole area around it and then slowly make our way into die camp. Ah Han then set off for the advance camp to tell the others that they could now come back for their supplies.

Ah Han did not return that night, but was back early the next morning with one other to help him carry some of the supplies. He told us that the couriers had not yet returned, but it was thought that they would be back in a few hours. We spent the morning washing our clothes in the river, and it was whilst we were so doing that I saw some of the biggest leeches that I have ever seen. Some were about 9 inches in length and, when they clamped themselves on to your ankles, it was very difficult to get them off. This particular type of bull leech is capable of sucking a pint of blood or more and, if you were lying down sleeping at night, you would not feel it. We took great delight in killing as many of these loathsome creatures as possible. There were also a number of water snakes in this river, which made bathing a little precarious since water snakes are usually poisonous.

At midday Ah Han returned alone and gave me the message we were waiting for from Hor Lung. It stated that Sun Lai Fong (Assistant Secretary of the South Johore Regional Committee of the Communist Organisation) was willing to meet me. After informing HQ by wireless of what we were doing, we set off with Ah Han and twenty minutes later he indicated that the camp was only a short distance away.

He gave the call sign and when we heard the reply, I went ahead into the camp with the others following a short distance behind. It was important not to make a mistake. Sun Lai Foong's party would all be armed and they would be watching carefully to see if they were being trapped. I was only armed with a short-barrelled 38 revolver and I now had this tucked away in my pocket with the lanyard out of sight.

I saw the group on the far side of the camp and I walked over to them. Hor Lung said, "Mr Bedingham, this is Sun Lai Foong." Then, turning to a man beside him, "Sun Lai Foong, this is Mr Bedingham. He is a member of SB and is representing government." Sun Lai Foong smiled, held out his hand, and I took it. I knew then that our mission was successful. We sat down in a large circle and I explained the government's amnesty terms. I told them that, if they would lay down their arms now and leave the jungle, they would, after a short period, be allowed to pursue a normal life and they would not be prosecuted for any crimes that they might have committed during the Emergency.

Sun Lai Foong, a 43-year-old notorious CT leader, known amongst his comrades as the 'lion of the jungle' because of his outstanding courage and physical strength, listened carefully and asked questions. He said, "You have convinced me that the government's offer is a sincere one. I have long realised that we Communists cannot win this struggle, but I was not prepared to surrender and abandon my men in the jungle. I have now decided to accept the government offer, and I will do all within my power to bring the armed revolution to an end."

He was trembling with emotion and I could not help admiring this brave man as he made what must have been a painful decision. As the tension relaxed, we all smiled and we sat together, talked and prepared the best meal we could.

Ah Han went out and shot two mouse deer. They are about the size of a large hare and taste much the same. A couple of hours later it was difficult to realise that, for ten years, these people had been our arch-enemies.

It was difficult to sleep that night. My mind was full of plans for the future; Sun Lai Foong had several meetings in the near future, including one with the Secretary of the South Johore Regional Committee. I knew that, if we could get hold of him, we could bring the war to an end in Johore.

We left camp at 0600 hours. The going was rough, and it took two and a half hours to walk three miles. At 0900 hours the helicopters arrived and we were lifted out.

Just one week in the jungle and we had the key to success. I wondered how many Company Commanders who had commanded

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troops in Malaya during the past ten years would like to have shared those seven days.

The Secretary of the South Johore Regional Committee refused to come and meet me. On the 12th November I was with a small party of SEPs when we contacted and killed him and two other high-ranking terrorists.

On 31st December 1958, just ten months after the surrender of Hor Lung, the State of Johore was declared a White Area. All the terrorists had been accounted for."

MR LEONG CHEE WOH REMEMBERS

There are many good tales in 'Scorpio', the book written by Mr Leong Ghee Woh, who served with distinction throughout the Emergency and left the Force as a highly decorated senior officer, with a string of successes against the MCP to his credit. Leong Chee Woh was not one to suffer fools gladly, and is sparing with his praise of his senior officers. His fiery temperament, which led him into confrontation with his seniors, suited his campaigns against the terrorists.

Apprenticeship

"MY FIRST JOB after leaving school was as a clerk in Taiping. My superior was an Indian, whose English was not very good and seemed to resent me as a 'bright spark'. So I decided to apply to the police for a job as clerk/interpreter and, after a two-week crash course, set off to Selama where my OCPD was a dashing young ex-Gurkha Officer, with whom I got on very well. Since he was frequently out of the office on operations for days on end, to a large extent I ran the office. He used to lend me his car from time to time to visit my parents.

About a month after my arrival, I saw my first CTs; three dead bodies in khaki uniform laid out in the compound. I would see many more CTs before I left Selama, and hear many stories of the atrocities they perpetrated. The worst I heard was of an unfortunate man, suspected of being a police informer; they tied him to a post, slit his chest open, and then tore out his heart and ate it in front of the terrified villagers.

In November 1950, encouraged by my OCPD, I joined the uniformed police, disguising my change of profession from my family, since Chinese tradition disapproves of sons joining the armed services.

All but five of my squad were posted to Johore, the majority to look after Resettlement Areas.

Bekok town was my allotted command and, for the first time in my life, I knew the meaning of abandonment. It was a small town housing five thousand people, mostly rubber tappers, on to which a Resettlement Area had been tacked.

My first night was spent in a police cell since, for security reasons, the station had not been informed of my arrival time. I found that, apart from my revolver, our armoury consisted of one Bren gun, some rifles, and a Verey pistol and a small supply of ammunition.

It was clear that our local CTs enjoyed several advantages, not least detailed knowledge of the local people and excellent contacts with them. They also enjoyed the friendship of the local mongrels, which never barked at the CTs but always announced our presence with a loud chorus. I ruined the canine alarm system by organising mongrel shooting parties and, encouraged by some SEPs, now turned from poacher to gamekeeper, discovered the taste of dog flesh.

Another measure I devised to discomfit the CTs was to engage in sporadic firing at night designed to keep them guessing. I was able to engage in this prophylactic exercise by courtesy of a friendly Gurkha Major in the vicinity, who was generous with his ammunition.

As we made Bekok more difficult for the CTs to use as a supply base, they became determined to eliminate me. I was equally determined that I would not provide them with an easy target, so I travelled on foot rather than by car. Although I succeeded in outwitting them, sadly, they did succeed in ambushing and killing a British P/Lt who was standing in for me one day. I felt very sorry for his bereaved family in England, sent them food parcels and in 1966 called on them in London."

Thai Hospitality

"I WORKED FOR several years in South Thailand with the cooperation of the Thais who gave us extraordinary freedom to operate in their territory, a wave of my hand at the Frontier Post was the only visa I required.

When I left Thailand the farewell parties were generous in the extreme. The most memorable was on the last weekend at Yala. The

drinking sessions were of heroic proportions and, despite a short siesta in the late afternoon, I was in serious need of support by the end of dinner. Finally, a huge box was wheeled in on a trolley. It was my farewell present and I found within it a Thai maiden. Alas I was in no state to appreciate her beauty."

A London Visit

It is salutary to be reminded that Britain does not always provide the warmth of welcome that Malaysians take for granted. Having, wearing a variety of hats in government and the private sector, been involved in 'inward missions' to the UK, I sympathise with Mr Leong's disappointment at the casual approach, which he encountered.

"I DID NOT LEARN much from the so-called Advanced Course which I had been sent to attend. After several years of practical experience in SB, I already knew as much as the instructors and a great deal more than most of my fellow students, most of who were from Africa.

One practical surveillance exercise turned out to be very comical. Our syndicate was given the task of keeping a lady under surveillance as she took her lunch break. The target was extremely tall, and it was not difficult to keep her in view while she browsed in shops, but soon she set off" with huge strides and we had a considerable problem to keep up with her fast, long-legged pace. The sight of five Asian men pounding along the pavement attracted a great deal of attention. Our target must have derived a lot of amusement from the exercise. When the course finished I was invited to comment on the value of the course. I did not want to hurt the feelings of the instructors, but they insisted on hearing my opinion, I told them that it had been a waste of time!"

The Dangers of Arrogance

"I VIVIDLY REMEMBER my first jungle patrol. The men offered to cook my meal and make a basha for me, but I refused their kind offer determined to prove that with my newly acquired one pip, I needed no help. But as the rain came down in torrents my efforts

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proved less than competent. To the amusement of my men, a combination of a loose poncho and then a hot billycan handle led to my food finishing up on the ground. And then my poncho, ineffectively secured, drenched me with water. After that terrible first night I decided to abandon my pride, I accepted the men's help and ate with them."

Jungle Company

"AFTER THREE MONTHS in Bekok my OCPD, who was by now commanding a Jungle Company, suggested that I should apply for the job of a Jungle Platoon Commander. When I joined my first Jungle Company, I found that my fellow platoon commanders were a Malay Inspector and two British P/Lts. I found them, like most of the P/Lts I worked with, a very friendly and likeable lot.

In Johore my Company carried out extensive search and destroy operations in the 'Bad Lands' that were infested by CPs; most of them were *Kwongsai*, a notoriously ruthless and fearless Chinese group. When the combined forces on our side included police, Malay Regiment, Gurkhas and HGs, there was little to distinguish friend from foe, nearly all were Asian, all wearing much the same uniforms and carrying much the same weapons.

My first success came with an ambush against a CT party, which was scheduled to collect food from the house of one of my sources. Our plan was to send out a patrol in daytime so that it could be widely observed but to drop off six men in a secluded spot near our selected ambush position, before the patrol returned to base. I was in command of the ambush party. After dark we took up final positions, commanding the track to my source's house, and just before midnight saw the silhouettes of three figures, with weapons on their shoulders, coming down the track. We did not open fire since I intended to get them on their return journey. A few minutes later we saw them coming back and opened fire. All three fell but, since we were not sure whether our targets were dead or merely wounded, we stayed in position, firing in the direction of any suspicious sound. At daybreak we saw a bloody scene; the three bodies were riddled with bullets. This was my first ambush and I remember shaking like a leaf before we opened fire, even though I knew that we were in a superior position.

We had many successes of this sort, based on agent information. One night trap we laid for a food party netted seven CTs. The ambush parties lay close to the perimeter fence, watched as the CTs climbed in, using bamboo ladders, to collect their supplies and then, as the CTs came down their ladders on the return journey, we opened fire

Not all ambushes were based on information. One successful trap was laid after we had established from a shopkeeper that a courier had bought far more supplies than he could possibly need for himself, and so we were able to anticipate the arrival of the CT pick-up party.

On this occasion the leader of the local CTO was so demoralised by the SF success that he surrendered. Eventually, he went back to his butcher's trade where he made a fortune as an expert roaster of pigs, and later blossomed forth as a millionaire entrepreneur, but he never thanked SB for his good fortune.

We had a problem housing SEPs and they were often billeted with police families, who were unhappy since they were uncertain whether the SEPs had genuinely decided to give up terrorism. But it soon became clear that most SEPs usually became docile and friendly once they had decided to surrender."

Mutiny and Punishment

"DURING ONE ENCOUNTER a group of about 60 CTs charged out and down the hill towards us, urged on by the notes of a bugle. We took off our packs in order to increase our mobility and one unfortunate wireless operator lost his wireless set in the course of the battle. He was arrested and charged with cowardice. His comrades thought that he had been unfairly treated and, having been told that they could not bail the man out, left our camp and marched down to the police station, surrounded the lock up and demanded the release of their comrade. Senior officers failed to persuade the mutineers to disperse, so the man was released. Although this was a clear case of mutiny, and the sergeant major had been the instigator, no formal action was taken against the mutineers. However, the whole Company was transferred shortly afterwards to Pahang, which was considered to be a punishment State.

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I began to regret that I had volunteered for jungle work. The discomforts of jungle life were extreme. They included the itch caused by the heads of wild boar ticks, separated from the body by any scratching, lodging in the skin and causing infection which might last, with accompanying itch, for many months. The ticks were usually encountered while we were lying on the ground, presumably attracted by the warmth of our bodies.

Officers' rations and clothes came from Britain; the dreaded baked bean was a staple, and I have been put off beans for life. The uniforms were ridiculously large for small Asian men, and many shirtsleeves and trouser legs had to be rolled up six inches.

One of the P/Lts, a former Welsh miner, never spoke without a stream of foul, rich, barrack room, language. One of his jokes was about a Sikh who, visiting an Anglican Church and finding himself with only five-pound notes in his wallet, put one in the collection plate. The preacher saw this generous gift and invited the Sikh to choose the next three hymns as a reward. The Sikh, being partial to male company, looked round the church and pointed to the three best looking 'Hims' in the congregation!"

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P.J.D. Guest

"MONDAY, 26TH MARCH 1951: Ambushing a Min Yuen Food Drop

We received information that a party of CTs going to an abandoned house on the edge of the rubber to collect supplies. I drew up a plan to put a horseshoe of 'stops' around the house and lead an assault group to close when trouble started. I was short of men so I spoke to Jock Stonier of the Frontier Branch and he came in with thirty of his own men.

We moved in darkness. I reached the ridge from which I would descend to close the horseshoe when firing started. Jock Storrier crawled into position in the Lalang at the top of a slope facing the house. To his right was a police party also in the tall grass. To Jock's left was another party facing the side of the house. Way out to the right was the other side of the horseshoe.

Tuesday, 27th March 1951

Dawn came up with all its usual burning colours and speed as we lay in the grass and waited patiently. Jock suddenly heard voices and, watching carefully, saw five people standing in front of the house. As he watched, one of them, a Chinese woman, picked up a basket and started to move down the track. The police party lay low. As she reached their position they said to her, "Don't say anything, keep walking." She gave a start but said loudly, "I'm only going to market to buy rice." As she spoke one hand came out of her basket holding a pistol. The police opened fire and she took a full burst into her stomach. As she fell, a grenade rolled out of her basket. It still had the pin in and was safe.

Jock's party opened fire on the group at the house, who were already scattering. My group came charging down the slope through the lalang and a group of three persons came out of the bushes from

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the direction of the house, going like the clappers for the edge of the jungle. They ran across our front and we opened fire as we charged. One of the running figures went down, the other two fled into some bushes.

As we plunged through the bushes we had them in view in front of us again, now running through the rubber. Still charging forward we opened fire again and another went down and then the last of the group seemed to go into the ground. There was a dry ditch there and he was at the bottom of it, having been hit in his forearm.

My party had killed two. The first turned out to be Ah Yuk; she was a well-known Communist. The woman shot on the path as she produced a pistol and grenade turned out to be Yong Eng, wife of a Military Adviser in the MRLA 5th Regiment.

All the men had held their stop positions. So I took over a Bren and put bursts through the side of the wooden house. We charged in firing as well but there was nobody inside. I noted a chicken hutch about eight feet long with the floor built about eighteen inches off the ground. We searched the area and there was no sign of anybody.

A long time afterwards I was speaking to a SEP and I referred to this action saying that we had looked for a man in the house after the shooting. The SEP said that one chap dived under the chicken run and lay there clutching a grenade with his finger in the pin ready to explode it if he was found. He could see the feet and legs of men standing near where he lay. He got away with it, we knew he was around but Jock thought he dived into the house and we assumed he had got out at the back. Jock and I also got away with it, as had we peeked under the chicken coop a grenade exploding in our faces would have rewarded us.

Thursday, 29th March 1951

The chap shot in the arm who dived into a dry ditch, was a local rubber tapper. We searched his place and found in the lalang, an oil drum and two large vases full of supplies.

Sunday, 1st April 1951

The squad sent to search the 27th March ambush site reported that they had found other drums and various containers full of supplies. We had found rolls of khaki cloth, rubber and canvas boots,

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medicines, foodstuffs, and writing materials; there was enough to equip about twenty-four guys.

So the chap wounded and caught in the crossfire was not the innocent rubber tapper he claimed to be. He was definitely the MY, the supply organisation to the Communist field troops.

Three killed and one wounded, no casualties to our side. When the extent of the disruption to the local Min Yuen was established we got a pat on the back from State HQ SB.

Thursday, 5th April 1951: The Relief of Temenggor

A runner, who had been sent down from Temenggor, 30 miles away, with a message from the Ketua Kampong, arrived at Grik. A unit of Communists, about fifty strong, had arrived and there had been a fire fight between the *kampong* guards and the CTs during which three Malay *kampong* guards had been killed and two wounded.

We didn't know what the position was. Temenggor might be under occupation by CTs. It was decided to call for an air recce and that someone who knew the area should go on the flight: I was nominated.

So an Auster was flown up from Kuala Kangsar. The pilot was a bit startled at finding how far out it was and that he was expected to fly a one-engined aircraft over all that jungle. We took off at 1300 hours and flew eastwards. I watched the river, picked up the Sungei Temenggor, and then spotted the *kampong*. Down we went and came in fast and low over the *kampong*. I saw a large group of Malays standing beside the rice fields. The pilot produced a dropping streamer, a small pouch with a multi-coloured streamer attached. I put a note in; we made a pass over the group of Malays and dropped it.

My note said I am the Assistant OCPD from Grik. We have received your news. If the Communists are still there, sit on the ground, if they have gone, wave your hands. We came in low again. The group of Malays were all waving. I wrote another note to say help was coming and wrapped it in the 'Good Morning' sweat towel I wore round my neck, and we dropped that too.

We flew back across nothing but jungle, an endless sea of trees. What would normally be days of hard slogging were managed

effortlessly in minutes in the Auster. I wondered how many CTs might be down there right then looking up at us flying over. There was a prominent conical hill on our route.

The conical hill was a large one named Bukit Besar and it stood 5,000 ft high. It lay directly in our course and it steadily grew larger in the windscreen. The pilot seemed oblivious of it, as he was engrossed in a book. I didn't want to act nervously and draw his attention to it so I just sat there behind him quietly watching Bukit Besar grow larger and larger. The pilot turned a page and I seized my moment to say, "Bukit Besar's quite impressive close up."

The pilot glanced out of the windscreen, gave a start as if hit by a lightning bolt and gasped the name of our Saviour. He slammed the aircraft into a tight turn, tipping the Auster on its side so that all I could see were treetops. I remain convinced that he hadn't seen the mountain and my bones would be decorating it now, if I hadn't drawn it to his attention.

I was relieved to get that long flight over. There had been no villages since Temenggor. The thought of going down into those trees was not a happy one, the bushy tops were 100 ft above the ground and I knew that other light aircraft had been lost without trace (including one carrying the Brigadier of the Guards Brigade).

Friday, 6th April 1951: A Long Patrol Crossing the Sungei Perak

We left the compound at 0400 hours. 40 Commando Marines had already gone ahead of us and I was keen to catch up with them as soon as possible. That morning march was nearly all up hill. As we approached Kampong Bersia we could hear activity and I stopped, then went forward with two scouts for a quick peep in case it proved to be CTs instead of marines.

The *kampong* was full of marines and Malays. I called out our identification, called up the squad and walked into the *kampong*. I outlined to OC Marine Captain Albury what lay ahead. There were about ten more miles to go down the track to Temenggor. I mentioned my concern that it was an ideal ambush setting. They would guess, after the visit of the plane buzzing low over Temenggor, that help would be coming.

We walked over to where the marine radio operator was sitting next to his 68 Field Radio, a luxury we in the police jungle squads

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did not have. Albury asked for an air strike. The marines were using porters to help with the extra rations needed. Albury mentioned that there had been some dissent among the porters when the marines arrived in Bersia the previous day. The porters had complained of being 'sick', a hint that they were having second thoughts about whether the agreed pay was sufficient reward for the loads being carried. The marine medical orderly gave them No.9s, a tablet used to treat constipation! Now, probably feeling a lot worse after a dose of No.9s, they agreed to carry on.

The column, now numbering about eighty, left Kampong Bersia at 0710 hours. We pressed on a little harder as the track began to descend towards die Sungei Perak. At this point the river was about 100 yards wide and fast flowing with rapids above and below the crossing point. With a screen of sentries posted we got on with the task of chopping down bamboo to make rafts. It took us about an hour to make the rafts. Those who could swim swam across. The non-swimmers had to clutch onto one of the rafts and kick with their feet to propel the raft across the swift current. The police rafts were the first finished and I deployed the squad ready to cross. As the flow of the river would sweep us downstream, we moved further up the bank to a place from where it was considered safe to launch out at the opposite bank to land at a selected point. We always put down a covering party first, who kept the opposite bank covered with weapons, including the Bren, before anybody set off. This precaution was taken against any CTs being on the other side waiting to give us a nasty surprise by opening up on us mid-stream.

When the marines were ready the lead group of police swimmers, including myself, entered the swirling brown water and started to swim over. On arrival at the other side we quickly recovered our weapons from the raft and set up a defensive perimeter to cover our beachhead. Only then did those police left on the other bank begin their own swim across the river. Movement in tactical bounds like this made for slow progress but it was necessary; you could never be sure if you were not under observation.

Instead of swimming over with their gear on small rafts as the police party had done, the marines had constructed larger rafts.

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They climbed on and their *kampong* porters began rafting them over. They stayed drier but were larger targets for longer.

The track ran along the north bank of the Sungei Temenggor, a tributary of the Sungei Perak and had *beluka* jungle coming right down to the bank. Even though we were now a strong amalgamated party of police and marines, I was still worried about the prospect of ambush. Around 1600 hours, as we were nearing that portion of the track I was most concerned about, I heard the drone of several aircraft flying overhead, but could not see them. The column was halted and the marine section leading at this point was instructed to let off several smoke grenades so that the air support could identify exactly where we were.

A few hours later we duly arrived at the suspect area and my anxieties disappeared as I saw the results of the air strike. They had blasted it with bombs and rockets. Had the Communists laid an ambush there they would have been plastered. We went through this tangle of craters, shattered boughs and torn vines, with no trouble. We pitched camp with the marines two-and-a-half hours march from Temenggor.

Compared to the police jungle squads, European military took up more room and made a lot more noise. My chaps joked, thankfully in Malay so the marines couldn't understand them, that they knew it would be safe now; the noise would frighten off any CTs as they would think we numbered several hundred! It was simply a fact of life that European troops were inevitably louder and clumsier than indigenous forces.

Saturday, 7th April 1951: Back in Temenggor

The column was on the march by 0630 hours. At 0945 hours we eventually reached Kampong Temenggor. It was strangely quiet. It turned out that the villagers had taken fright when they saw us approaching and fled. Once they realised we weren't CTs they emerged from the trees and we were enthusiastically greeted.

The first task was for the marine medical orderly to assess the condition of the wounded. One was shot in the stomach and would not survive without immediate aid. Our first wireless transmission confirmed our safe arrival and requested a helicopter to evacuate the

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two wounded guards. Our second message congratulated the airmen on pinpoint accuracy, a job well done.

We got the story from the Malays. About fifty armed CTs had appeared close to the *kampung* and shouted to the *kampung* Malays, who were fast disappearing from the immediate area, that they wanted to talk to the Ketua Kampong. All the Malay *kampung* guards grabbed their shotguns and went en masse to meet the Communists. CTs spread out in a rough line among the trees. The CTs shouted greetings, indicated they wanted to talk and generally behaved in a friendly manner. What they got was not what they expected from *kampung* guards stuck out in the ulu (backwoods) without immediate support. Someone, probably a *kampung* guard, let off a shot. That did it! The startled Malay guards let off a barrage of shots from their 12 bore shotguns.

The CTs still tried to get the Malays to talk but when these calls were met with continued fire from the guards' shotguns, the CTs returned the fire with Stens, Enfield rifles and one Bren. In the exchange of fire two Malays were wounded and the CTs retired from the rubber and the Ketua Kampong sent the runner off to summon help.

The area was immediately searched to see if there was any trace of the CTs. There was no sign of them, so the patrols trekked back to the *kampung* to secure an area of open ground for an airdrop.

Saturday Afternoon, 7th April 1951: Air Drop at Temenggor

The marine Demilitarised Zone (DZ) party laid out some bright yellowy orange market panels. Not long after this we heard the drone of an approaching twin-engined aircraft. The DZ party set off a smoke grenade and bright red smoke spiralled up from the *padang* (flat open ground) in over the trees and the cargo was dispatched out of large open doors in the side of the fuselage. As the parachutes floated down in a line behind the departing Dakota, I was exasperated to see what looked like all the Malays in the *kampung*, women and children included, dash forward onto the DZ. I was worried not only for their safety, but by the depressing thought of all the paperwork involved if any of them were killed by one of the loads landing on them.

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The *kampung* Malays also did something else we had not anticipated: they promptly cut the entire parachute rigging lines. We recovered the parachutes and rigging lines to return for re-use. Weeks later I received a rebuke from the appropriate HQ group that the canopies had been ruined and couldn't be used again. But these were just simple *kampung* people seeing an opportunity to get some valued string. Nothing short of shooting one of them to deter the rest would have stopped the rush. At least an invoice for the destroyed parachutes did not follow the rebuke.

Sunday, 8th April 1951: Helicopter Casualty Evacuation

The next day the small Dragonfly helicopter, which with its large bulbous Perspex canopy looked remarkably like a dragonfly, came clattering over the treetops. It did a slow turn as it sank down onto the *padang*. A huge cloud of dust was blasted from the *padang*. Once down the dust wasn't so bad and two stretcher parties ran out with the wounded *kampung* guards. In a few moments they were safely aboard, the helicopter lifted up and skipped over the trees. I thought about how hard we had struggled and for how long to extract the wounded from the ambush at 13th mile the previous October. I marvelled at the speed of this evacuation. In less than an hour the casualties would be in hospital receiving proper medical care.

Wednesday, 11th April 1951: Orang Asli, Voices from the Wind

I had sent out an invitation via the *kampung* Malays for the aborigines to visit us. The usual inducement of cigarettes, medicine and food (ration packs) were offered.

The aborigines were short, dark-skinned tribesmen who, in those days, were hunting with bows and arrows and blowpipes; they were naked, except for skimpy loincloths, and with decorative devices such as feathers and bits of bark in their hair. The patrols set off in all directions whilst I stayed in the camp to be the host. They were really quite neutral in the war, oblivious to the political divisions that divided the warring sides. They would have dealings with both sides and both sides tried to cultivate them. As they must have been aware of the local CTs and had dealings with them, I hoped to glean information. As they squatted round the camp

chain-smoking the cigarettes we gave them, I managed to get some details of the CTs they had recently seen.

I was able to surprise the Orang Asli by mentioning the names of two or three of the CTs that they knew. I replied to their enquiries about how I could know their names from so far away, by telling them, "We can catch voices from the wind, so we always know what has been said," then letting them hear the marine using his radio. Their wonder was great at this marvel that caught voices from the wind. I asked the marine corporal manning the set to keep transmitting messages to HQ and the Orang Asli were suitably impressed by the voices they heard coming back. Knowing how deeply superstitious these tribal peoples were, I hoped they would believe our magic was greater than any magic the CTs could show them.

Sunday, 15th April 1951

We moved out southwards.

Monday, 16th April 1951

We had another task to attend to, making a space for an airdrop. As we were in primary jungle with very large trees all about, it was a formidable task.

When our clearing was almost ready a time was set for the airdrop and soon contact was made with the inbound supply aircraft. Then I saw it, a twin engined Valletta. As it passed right over the clearing it banked steeply. I assumed the pilot was making a quick assessment of the tight DZ. This was confirmed when I heard the pilot's comments over the radio set when he spotted the clearing, "It would take J**** C***** himself to find it!"

The first priority among the men was cigarettes. Every package was searched with mounting despair as one after the other they failed to bring forth any. Finally, there was only one more parachute to recover, stuck furthest up a tree. With many impressive oaths, impressive in their imaginative scope even for marines, the offending parcel was dragged down. Eager eyes peered into the contents. No cigarettes! However, there was a note scrawled on a bit of torn hardboard and wedged into the webbing strap. By chance this was the last parachute recovered. On it one of the dispatchers had

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written, "Oh well, back to KL for loads of ice cream!" There were even more impressive oaths from the sweating soldiery, accompanied by dire threats made about the fate of the dispatchers if they ever fell into the clutches of the marines.

Tuesday, 17th April 1951

The routine of the deep penetration patrol continued, mile after hot, sticky mile, ploughing through the green soup of the jungle.

You could smell your canvas webbing rotting and longed to break free of the trees for a good cold Tiger beer and a long uninterrupted soak in a hot bath to wash the grime out of your hair and the pores of your skin.

Thursday, 19th April 1951

With the lack of cigarettes it was noticeable that tempers became frayed with the marines. The police made great show of making cigarettes out of what appeared to be dried grass and weeds of some sort. It wasn't long before the marines noticed during our halts, that the police still had some fags. A whole new cordial became evident, with the marines at pains to become very chummy with the police during halts. The police dispensed their improvised cigarettes freely just before the march continued. The lucky recipients taunted their less fortunate comrades. I knew they had lit up at *the* next halt without being able to see them: oaths and curses ahead. The smokes were truly foul concoctions. A cruel trick!"

Saturday, 21st April 1951

Eventually we crossed the saddle between two high mountains. The contours on the map showed we went over 4,586 ft.

We found another camp for the thirty guys we were following. Again, it had been abandoned about three days previously. It was not encouraging to find they were maintaining the same speed of march as ourselves, as it meant we were not likely to catch up with them. God! It was cold up there. We were up to the same height as the Cameron Highlands, a hill station where we put on pullovers and had fires!

Sunday, 22nd April 1951

Found another camp, this time for about fifteen people, and wondered if they had split up again. We were scheduled for another airdrop late that afternoon, which focussed the column's mind on one thing, cigarettes] Once more we stopped die march mid-afternoon and made a clearing. The Dakota supply aircraft came over at 1700 hours and the column attacked the parachuted containers like hungry hyenas. This time we got cigarettes. Having already made so much noise chopping the trees for the clearing we decided we might as well set up a base camp there, making frames for us to drape ponchos over.

Monday, 23rd April 1951

Another long uneventful march, this time with the dark cloud of depression being replaced by a heavy log of cigarette smoke. The marine mood showed a marked improvement. **They** even forgave the police for their cruel joke.

Tuesday, 24th April 1951

Today we found eight abandoned temporary huts with accommodation for twenty-five to thirty persons. I estimated they had been abandoned three or four days before.

Wednesday, 25th April 1951

During the march today I noticed an imprint in the ground. It was a bit smaller than an elephant's but with a couple of knuckles in it. I didn't recognise it although, obviously, a large animal made it. I asked the Malay next to me what animal it was. He elaborated that it was a *batak*, an animal with a tusk on its nose. A rhino! I became aware that the Malays new about the pugmark and had closed up in mutual defence. I ordered them to extend out again to usual patrol format, but was impressed at the nervousness they showed about this animal. The thought of a ton or so of animal charging us suddenly didn't make me feel too good. We never saw it, which was as well."

COUNTER TERRORISM IS NO PICNIC

Mao Tsetung said, "Revolution is not a tea party," and the CTs in Malaya made sure that the population understood that terror, not tea and sympathy, was their chosen tactic; Geneva Convention was not part of their vocabulary.

The stories in this section are a reminder that, although the SF did not descend to the level of the bestial CTs in terms of physical torture, there were occasions when mental pressure was applied to produce results.

Obviously there were moments in the heat of action, when CT atrocities had been displayed for all to see, when there was a great temptation to retaliate in kind. But, in fact, the SF's counter-revolutionary tactics, unlike those of the CT, were almost always suitable for discussion at the Vicar's tea party.

The rulebook quite rightly forbade any form of torture, but it is hardly surprising if, on occasion, the captors put pressure on recalcitrant prisoners. The British intelligence doctrine has always been that, quite apart from the moral issues, torture is likely to be counterproductive, since the victim may well tell lies in order to escape from further interrogation. However correct this doctrine may be in the context of leisurely interrogations away from the battlefield, the following stories show that unorthodox methods can produce vital immediate intelligence when 'the tea party' method fails. As I write, I note a complaint from the Federal Bureau of Investigation that, six weeks after the dastardly attack of 11th September 2001, none of those detained has given any information.

A Canine Threat

Dato' J.J. Raj (Jnr)

"AT THE HEIGHT of the Emergency, a Scottish Major and I once found ourselves facing a captured CT who was determined not to give us information about his erstwhile comrades and their camp.

Since his gang had carried out many atrocities, we were determined to destroy them. We decided that our need for immediate intelligence justified resort to unconventional interrogation methods. Having tied the uncooperative terrorist into a chair, we tethered two tracker dogs immediately in front of him, but just out of range. The dogs knew the enemy when they saw him and started to strain at their leashes, growling and barking furiously. The CT having, of course, been thoroughly indoctrinated by his leaders about the alleged ruthlessness of the SF, was petrified by the menacing sounds and the sight of the slaving jaws and large teeth so close to his face. He rapidly decided to collaborate, and the information that he gave enabled us to eliminate the gang.

The rulebook did not, of course, sanction the methods we had used and we were severely reprimanded for our breach of the conventions, although I suspect that there was some sympathy with our view that the end had justified the means.

Mindful of the brutal methods used by the CTs to cow the villagers, I thought that there was too much emphasis on conducting operations under the rules laid down for war between civilised opponents. We were not fighting against soldiers operating under the rules of the Geneva Convention, but against ruthless terrorists who had no hesitation in murdering and torturing prisoners."

Offending the Sensibilities of Visiting MPs

Dato' J.J. Raj, Jnr

"THE RURAL, PEOPLE had been so cowed by previous terrorist atrocities that many of them did not believe official reports of SF successes, and assumed that this was just government propaganda. We decided, in desperation, to bring the corpses of CTs who had been killed in action, back to Pagoh and put them on display in front of the police station. This proved to be highly effective. The locals, normally reluctant to visit the police station, now crowded round looking at the corpses and identifying them. We no longer had a problem persuading them that we were killing CTs.

However, a body of visiting British MPs described the practice as 'barbaric' and 'uncivilised' and disapproved of our exhibition of CT corpses. So we were told to stop it. As the MPs' aeroplane took

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off en-route to Britain, however, the exhibition was reopened. I suppose that the MPs had little idea of the long slog that went into the jungle war, and the vital need to persuade the people that we were winning. Nor, of course, did they realise the cost in many weary man-hours (one calculation was that 1800 hours were spent on patrol for every contact made), and a contact might result in nothing except an exchange of fire. The attitude of the MPs presumably reflected their lack of experience of operations."

A Most Considerate SEP

Leong Chee Woh

"ON ONE OCCASION we captured a Branch Committee Secretary (BCS) after a long and patient surveillance of his home town: all we knew about his movements was that he visited the town monthly to have a haircut. The surveillance teams adopted the cover of telephone repairmen, but after two days their cover was wearing thin and another party was sent in to paint the telephone poles. They worked over-enthusiastically and had to be sent back to put on a second coat. Happily, the target turned up on the fourth day and was taken in for interrogation. We had three teams interrogating the BCS round the clock. I complimented the 52-year old prisoner on his ability to endure hardship: he was a heavy smoker but refused cigarettes and refused all food as well.

On the fifth morning he suddenly broke his silence and started to tell us all we wanted to know. By the evening when we had established friendly relations, we asked what had made him change his mind and cooperate. We felt quite humiliated when he replied that he had felt sorry for us because we seemed so worn out!"

Persuading a CT Prisoner to Talk

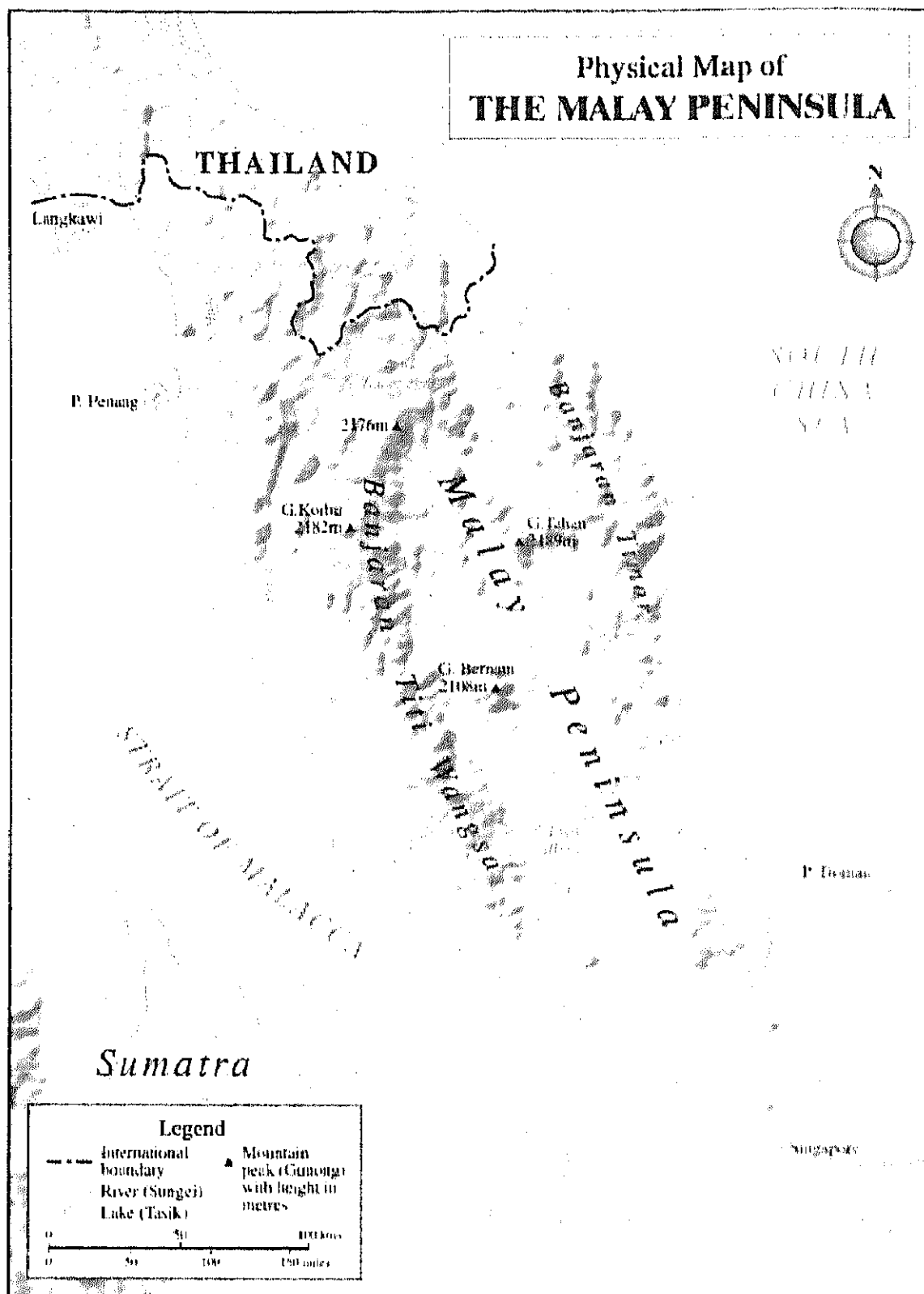
J.P. Taylor

"I WAS ONCE required to appear in court in Alor Star to give evidence in a case about a Chinese CT girl, who had been charged with consorting with CTs in the Kulim area.

After the judge had found her guilty, she alleged that I had molested her sexually immediately after her capture. The judge

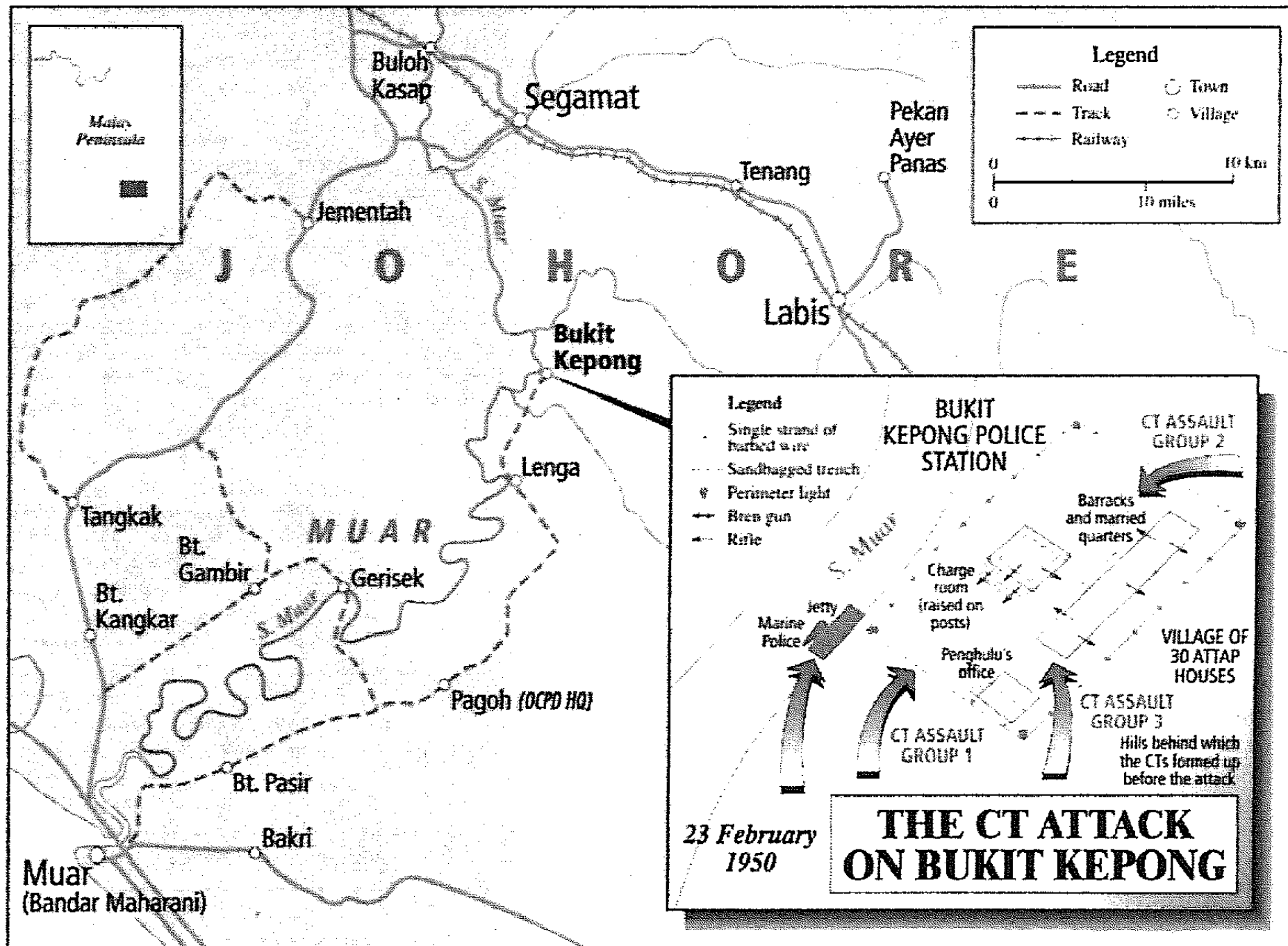
looked at me and then at the gid and did not pursue the allegation, which was entirely false.

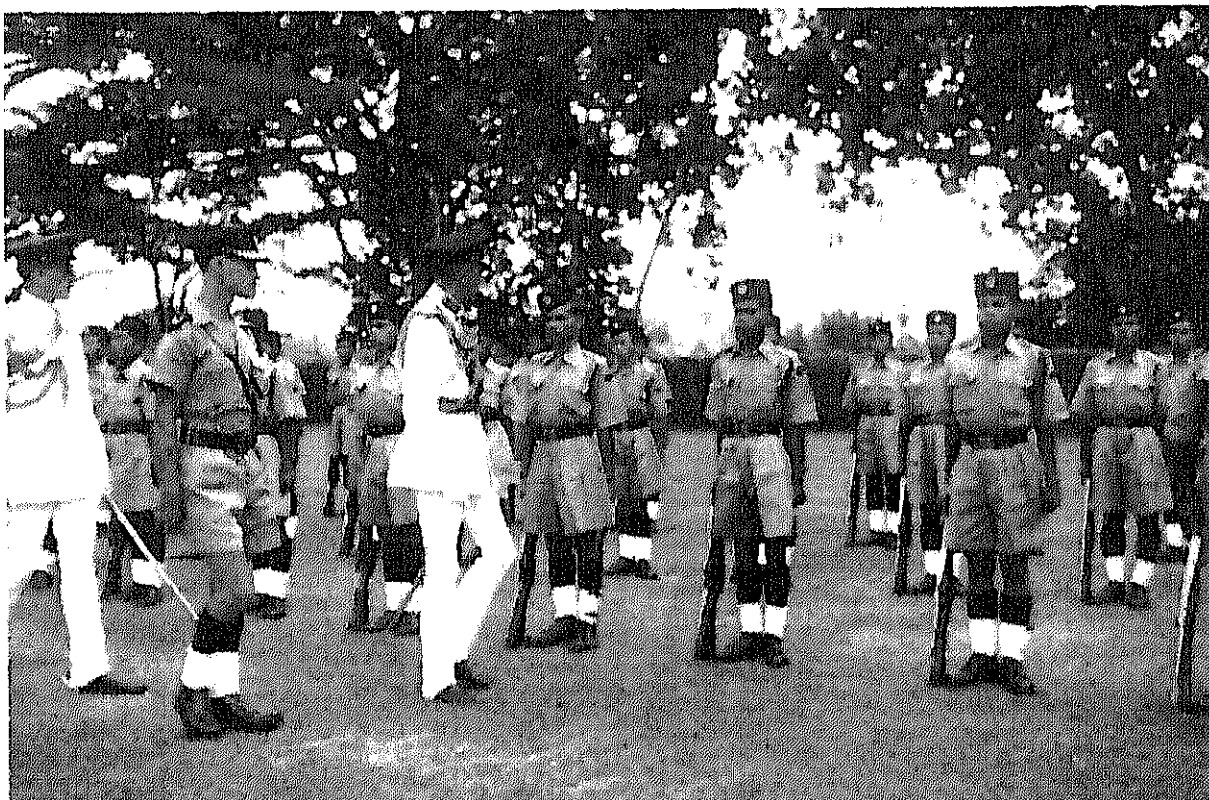
However, the truth of the matter was that she had refused, after her arrest, to give us any help about the whereabouts of her camp. So I told her that, if she would not cooperate, I would hand her over to the rest of the patrol for interrogation. The effect was magical: she started talking and would not stop. But no one laid a finger on her."











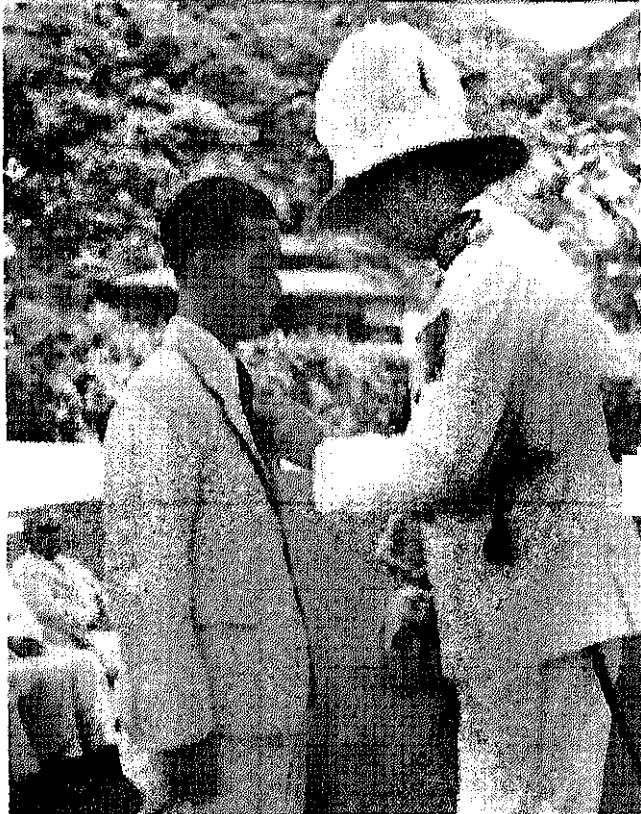
General Tempter inspects,



A Police Lieutenant and his fighting patrol.



Dato' Pilus receives a Queen's Police Medal from Sir Donald Macgillivray,



A Chinese Detective receives an aware Both he and Sir Henry Gurney were assassinated soon after.



An interesting message.





Alarm, ambush!

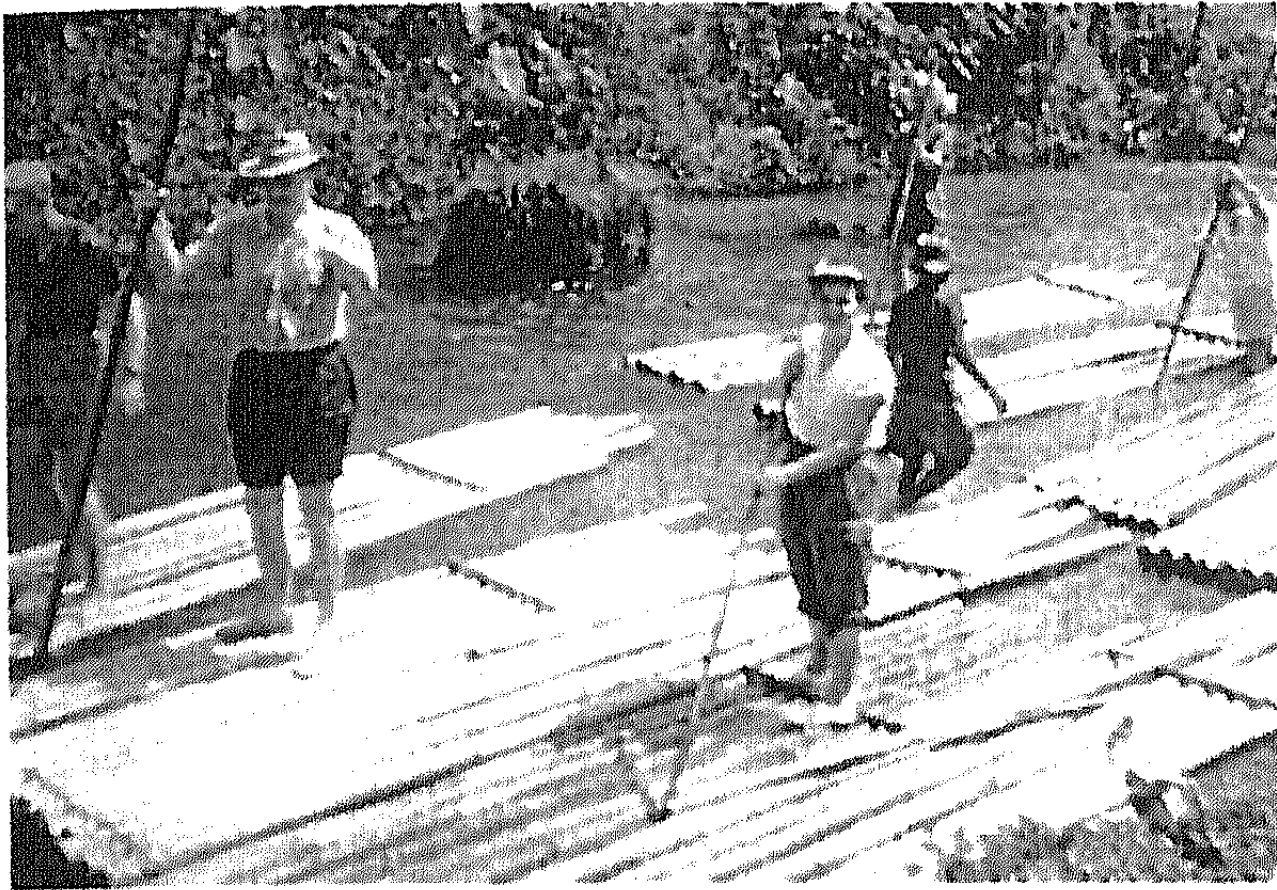


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A 14-day river patrol.



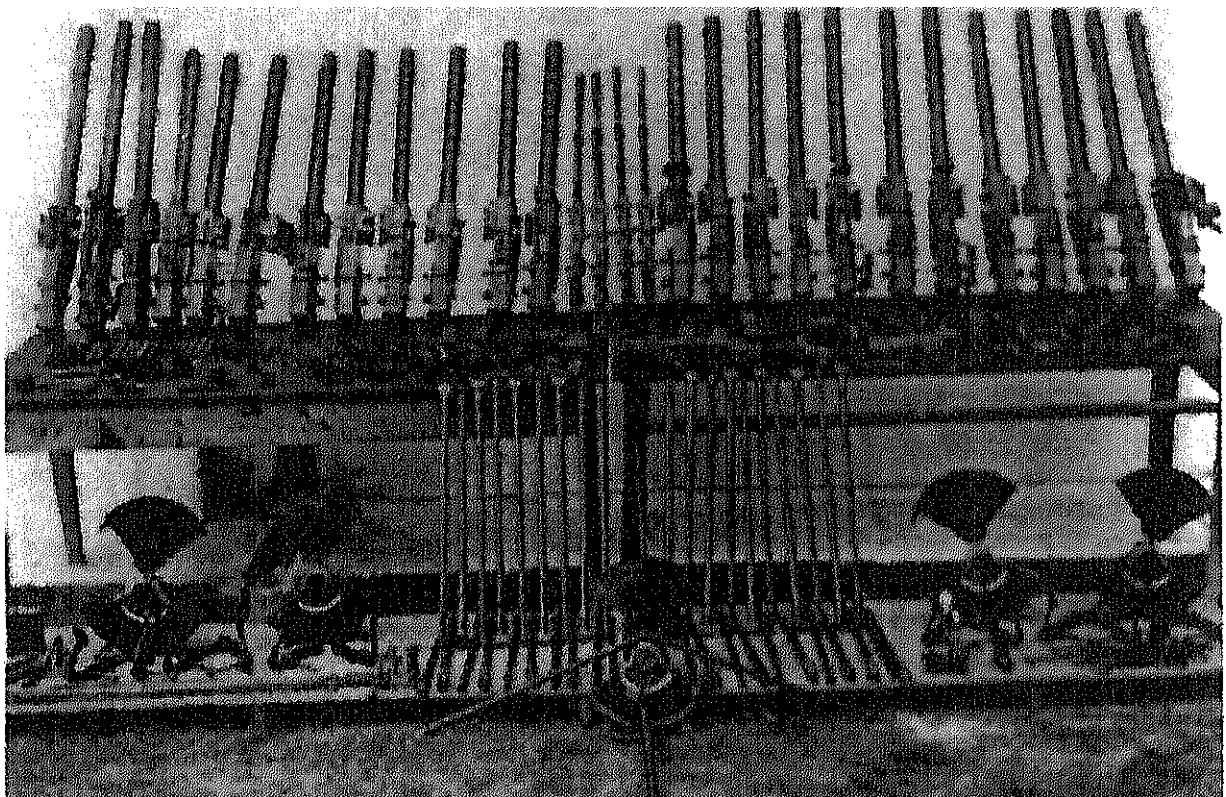


Relaxing on a river picnic.





An Orang Asli hut. (Note the steps that are pulled up at night like a dm



The weapons and armourer's took captured in a CT camp



On the range at the depot. A Malay Constable fires a Bren gun.





Two ASPs and their redoubtable Malay CT killers ready for a wedding.



A Scottish ASP pipes for an Eightsome Reel in his local club.



An ASP and his tiger cub.

*The enemy, a photograph
found in a CT's haversack.*

THE TAMIL DIMENSION

The CTs, overwhelmingly Chinese, were no better at fostering close relations with the Indians than they were with the Malays,

It has been pointed out that, fortunately, Chin Peng and his comrades had a very poor understanding of Malayan society; if they had been more thoughtful and more sophisticated in their approach, the job of the SF and Information Services (IS) would have been more difficult.

It was only with the Orang Asli, their intelligence screen and logistic support in the jungle, that they practised a 'Hearts and Minds' campaign of sorts. With the rest of Malayan society they seemed content to operate by terror and coercion, without consideration of the huge differences which existed between what they were preaching and what the ordinary Malayan wanted.

The following stories reflect the fact that, although the CTs were overwhelmingly Chinese, there was a significant Indian element in the jungle with some solid Indian supporters outside. At the beginning the Indian participation was, although numerically tiny, of considerable value to the CTs.

Fortunately, the Chinese and Indian CT leaders did not seem well suited to each other temperamentally and by 1956 there was little love lost between them.

A Secret George Medal for Inspector Tagore

Datu Tagore

Datu Tagore told me the following tale.

In his first posting as a Police Inspector he had received good intelligence about a supply operation, which the local CTs had organised using sympathetic Tamil rubber tappers on a local estate to collect food and help them to carry it from the estate to the jungle edge. The OCPD concluded that the best chance of catching the CTs was to infiltrate an SBO into the estate workforce to worm his

THE TAMIL DIMENSION

way into the group of CT sympathisers. The OCPD asked young Tagore if he would take on this dangerous task, and he agreed.

There were serious problems to be overcome in creating his cover as a rubber tapper. He was an educated middle class boy, had completed an English education and knew nothing of rubber tapping or rubber estates. Fortunately, the unlikely tapper managed to find work as an apprentice tapper on a local estate. After a few weeks when he was satisfied that he had sufficient skill as a tapper and was confident that he had enough knowledge of the customs and jargon of the tapper community, he left the estate. By then he had become one of the boys and his idiosyncratic habit of looking at English language papers was put down to 'showing off'. He explained to his new friends that he liked looking at the pictures.

Next he succeeded in his application to become a tapper on the target estate, and ingratiated himself with the tappers who were carrying out the CT supply operation, and helped them in a minor way with food supplies.

Not even the manager on the estate was aware of his double role. After some weeks, he was accepted as part of the CT supply team and so was able to inform his superior of the time when the CTs would next come to the estate to collect their supplies from the Tamil tappers and to pass on detailed information on the procedure and routes which the CT party would use.

Communications with the police were handled securely and effectively by way of a dead letter box (DLB). And an ambush plan was prepared to catch the supply party as it was leaving the estate with sacks of supplies on their shoulders.

On the night Tagore was told to wear a white singlet so that he would be recognised as a friend, when the ambush party opened fire. The party, about ten strong, was successfully ambushed, several CTs were killed and wounded, and Tagore escaped injury, despite the frenzied crossfire, as the Gurkhas went into action.

There was an amusing sequel to the operation when Inspector Tagore, dressed in his ragged tapper's clothes, rushed to hospital to visit his wife who had just given birth. The staff nurse disapproved of his scruffy clothes and barred him from entry. It took him some time to overcome her distaste for his scruff order and to accept his plea to be allowed to visit his wife.

Tagore's bravery and skill in carrying out his cover role as a tapper, and successfully infiltrating the Communist supply system,

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was recognised by the award of a GM but, in view of the delicacy of his position, he received his GM at King's House from the Deputy High Commissioner in a secret ceremony.

The Execution of DCM Perumal

Yuan Yuet Leng

In June 1956 a party commanded by DCM Chan Fei executed the notorious and dreaded DCM Perumal. The reason for the execution was a report by one of Perumal's men that Perumal had decided to bring his whole section out and surrender.

A member of the execution section, who surrendered later, gave the following account of the affair.

"OUR COVER STORY was that we had been dispersed by SF action and had gone to the Indian camp looking for liaison. In the camp were Perumal and eight of his Indians; two others had gone off to get supplies. We confronted and disarmed the Indians who did not resist; Chan Fei announced the guilt of Perumal and the Central Committee decision. Selvam then executed Perumal, after singing some sad Tamil songs.

One Indian CT, who surrendered because of this execution, voiced his wrath in a leaflet written for the Information Department, as follows:

The Chinese Communists hate and speak ill of the Indian people and Indian workers. They call Indian comrades Keling Kwai, 'Indian Devils'. They are very partial in giving food more to Chinese and less to Indian comrades. They shot and killed Comrade Perumal unjustly. Perumal joined the Communists and worked so loyally for them. To placate the Chinese higher ups he even killed Indians and wrought violence on them. No matter how hard you may have worked for them, one day your life will be in danger. You know one Communist comrade, Munandy, a member of the District Committee in Tapah who could not bear the indignities suffered by Indian comrades, committed suicide. I want you to realise it and come out of the jungle and surrender to government."

Great Calamity: Knock Twice

Yuan Yuet Leng

"IN AUGUST 1958, two Indian CTs, deserted by their Chinese courier leader, found themselves out of contact with their CT group and so left a note, prominently displayed on a tree trunk, seeking help. We did not, at first, know what the note said since it was written in Tamil, but sent for Rajoo, a usually cheerful and keen and helpful translator. Rajoo was less than amused when he found that he was required to travel, not to Sungei Siput town, but by helicopter and rope into our Q base in the jungle.

Rajoo was nonplussed by the note, 'We are in the midst of a great calamity: *Rendah adi!* (Knock twice).' But we understood immediately and Leong Chee Woh was despatched to the area to 'knock twice' and await developments. Leong said he had never before, or after, run so fast. Leong's party took cover near the tree, leaving two recently surrendered CTs (Lam Poh and his wife) in the open pretending to be comradely CTs responding to the plight of the Tamil couriers. Lam Poh knocked hard twice on a tree trunk and the sound of blows with his *parang* rang loudly through the stillness of the jungle.

Silence! Lam Poh hammered the tree trunk twice more and this time there was a single knock in reply from some distance away. The process was repeated, the single knock was now much closer and soon two worried looking Indian CTs emerged furtively from the jungle. They were delighted to see Lam Poh and reported that, although their BCM had defected, they had stayed loyal and had returned to warn their comrades.

Lam Poh then led the Indians towards the hidden Q party, and they were promptly captured. CT Mangalam offered little resistance but CT Moortky, enraged by Lam Poh's treachery, was less amenable. Eventually however, both CEPs took Lam Poh's advice and agreed to cooperate: we then took them back to our 'safe house' in Ipoh."

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Hantus and Magic on Patrol

S.R. Follows

"WE HAD JUST completed a particularly frustrating jungle patrol in which our tame SEP had ruined our ambush by opening fire prematurely, probably because he had left a brother and a girlfriend behind in the CT section which we were tracking with his assistance.

Now we were on patrol again. My tried and trusty Sergeant Shafiee was No. 2, the same SEP was supposed to be helping us and a Chinese detective sergeant from a city CID had joined us with reinforcements.

The new boy looked pretty gloomy and when I asked him why he replied that he was a Buddhist and, therefore, could not kill anyone. The conversation became heated, but regardless of my vituperation and condemnation, he insisted that he would leave the patrol taking with him the fifteen men under Kim. My last words to him were, "Be careful that you are not shot on your way out of the jungle, and F... Off!"

That night the men did not much like my choice of campsite beside a river. Shafiee told me that they said there were *hantus* (ghosts) by a nearby twisted tree. "Nonsense!" I said, but although I tried to dismiss the story from my mind, I felt that there was something eerie about the place. I asked Shafiee whether he believed the *hantu* tale, he replied, "Yes, Tuan." So the night was the worst I have ever spent in the jungle. I do not believe in ghosts, but fear is contagious.

On another patrol when I was worrying that we might have lost our way in a very difficult piece of jungle, I heard the men muttering excitedly but speaking too quickly for me to understand. Then I saw Sergeant Shafiee dressing down one of the constables. Shafiee

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turned to me and explained; the man, he said, was responsible for our problems with finding the way because he had with him a piece of *rotan* (cane) and a piece of stone, which he had stolen from a jungle devil who would not let any thief leave his jungle domain. The constable explained that he had known that he was taking a risk but that he had wanted to take the jungle objects back to his *kampung* to give to his local *Bomoh* (magic man). Very reluctantly he obeyed Sergeant Shafie's order to throw the objects away. Within ten minutes we had found a familiar track and were once more sure of our way. Was there really magic about?"

A Ghost in a Chinese Cemetery

P.J.D. Guest

"DURING THE CHINESE Festival of the Hungry Ghosts, the Chinese leave offerings of food on the graves of their ancestors. This gave an opportunity for the CTs to supplement their rations, and a chance for us to lay an ambush at the cemetery and try to shoot the CTs. Thus, at sunset when the last devotees left the cemetery, I moved in with my squad and we deployed in a circle among the graves.

These sort of jobs make for a long night, no smoking, no noise, no moving, just lying there being bitten by insects and trying to keep alert all through the dark night. As the hours passed, I was lying there wondering if all the men were still awake and found my own head nodding a couple of times.

In the early hours when the night was at its coldest and mist formed on the ground, I was jerked fully alert by a ghostly yawning sound. I slipped off my safety catch and slowly eased myself up on my elbows. My eyes reached the surface level of the large slab I was lying beside and I peeked over it as another mournful wail sounded. I peered at the tombstones upon which the eerie ground mist floated. Then, to my consternation, a body rose up into a sitting position from one of the graves.

"There's no such thing as ghosts," I said to myself and brought my carbine up. The figure that appeared to have sat up from the grave, stretched out its arms and gave another yawn, and as it did so I recognised it to be one of the ex-CTs in the ambush party. I stood up and walked over to where he was and said that he had blown the

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ambush. I gave him a pat on the ear with the butt of my carbine. As soon as I did it I regretted it. I had struck a man and others had witnessed it. I hadn't long been gazetted and now I had thrown away my career in one burst of anger.

I looked round and saw a huddle of guys surrounding the ex-CT, their arms going up and down. I moved in to stop the fracas and discovered the rest of the squad were really furious, he had frightened them as much as he had frightened me. Had there been any CTs close by it might have cost us dear."

Spiritual Comforts and Talismans

Dato' J.J. Raj (Jnr)

"ON MY FIRST DAY as OCPD Pagoh, a frail, dignified old Malay visited my office. There seemed to be a special aura surrounding him. When I offered him a cup of coffee he did not drink but merely touched the cup in what was, perhaps, a gesture of blessing. My sergeant told me that we had been greatly honoured: the visitor was an Imam (Muslim priest) called Pa' Mustahi; he was famous far and wide as a faith healer and was believed to have supernatural powers. So many people came from all over Malaya to visit him that often his visitors had to return home without seeing him. I decided that I must immediately return the Imam's call. When my escort and I arrived we found that Pa' Mustahi had mysteriously anticipated our arrival and had already prepared enough food for the whole party.

Pa' Mustahi infuriated the CTs by giving spiritual comfort to many people who had been demoralised by the Emergency, restoring their inner strength and their courage, even giving them strips of red cloth to tie round their waists as talismans. It was said that every time a CT killer squad had set out to assassinate him, he had been able, by his magical powers, to lead them astray. When I offered him police protection he declined politely, saying, "My life is at the mercy of God." We got on very well and he treated me as his *anak angkat*, his adopted child. I sometimes wonder whether it was he who gave me the good luck that enabled me to survive unscathed from a number of CT ambushes.

Whatever the explanation for Pa' Mustahi's special powers, he was certainly no charlatan, selling his services. He accepted no

money when using his God given powers to help people in distress. There is still a road in Pagoh, *Lorong Haji Mustahi*, which commemorates his good work."

The Haunting of Tras Police Station

A.J.V. Fletcher

"THE SMALL TOWN of Tras in Pahang had its equivalent all over Malaya: one main street of shophouses, sacks of rice on the pavement, off-white sheets of rubber drying on lines and wires wherever a spare bit of land presented itself, the ubiquitous pawnbroker's shop and the 'Live Forever' funerary goods store, which did a nifty line in combustible goods as offerings to the departed, wonderful bamboo-and-paper replicas of cars, motorcycles and even airliners, and, constructed with loving care and wondrous verisimilitude, a perfectly-proportioned G E C refrigerator.

The town nestled pretty much in the shadow of the Fraser's Hill range. When driving over the Gap down into Pahang you could see Tras, 2,000 ft below, if you stopped at a large and vertiginous bend called Walshes Corner about half way down to the plain. And above Tras, on the top of an abruptly rearing hill, you could make out the tiny white doll's house that was the police station. The corner was not a particularly healthy place to linger (it was near there, on the other side of the Gap, that in 1952 I was involved in clearing up after the ambush and murder of the High Commissioner, Sir Henry Gurney. But the view of the apparently endless *Pahang* jungle, the various shades of green dissolving into misty blue and purple on the horizon, were irresistible. Once, gazing down on Tras, I heard (but could not, with age-dimmed hearing, do so now!) the station gong chiming the hour, faint but clear.

Why the police station should have been placed on the top of this steep sandcastle of a hill, 200 ft or more above the village and, because of an overhang, cut off from any view of the street below, is a mystery. The good burghers of Tras, for their part, were probably glad enough to be out of sight for they were, on the whole, less than well disposed towards policemen or indeed government, in general. Many of them were dominated by the CTs. So much was this the case that, after the assassination of Sir Henry, Tras was 'resettled'

elsewhere. I was in Tras just before it was closed down. When the inhabitants knew of their impending fate, the normal tolerant grins of the celestials for the red-haired devil were noticeably lacking: adults, children babies and, I swear, even the mongrels of Tras - all had faces devoid of any expression.

Tras was part of **Raub Police District**, and when I arrived in January 1949 I had applied to take over as leader of a **full-time** jungle squad, not so much for reasons of derring-do and possible battle honours as for the \$8.40 a day jungle allowance, which meant that one could amass a fortune of £200 or even £300 on top of one's pay in six months or so. In due course I was to realise this ambition, only to discover on returning from my first jungle patrol that the new jungle rations were being issued and the \$8.40 was no more.

Meanwhile, I was to sort out the shambles of an office that I had inherited. One day, while engaged in this Augean project, I met one Basil O'Connell from KL. He was a frightfully important boss (perhaps a Deputy Commissioner) and was about to leave Malaya. He told me he wanted to see the file on the haunting of Tras Police Station. I detected no glimmer of a smile; no twinkle of an eye was in evidence. He read the file and made notes and went on his way.

The file was in the form of an 'IP', the obligatory basis for any police investigation of a crime, and was entitled ***Haunting of Tras Police Post by Ghost or Ghosts Unknown***. I remember the contents tolerably well.

Tras Police Station was, as I have said, isolated, and **access** was up an enormously long and steep flight of stone steps. Perhaps it was the remoteness of the place that persuaded the Japanese ***Kempetai***, the Military Police, to use it as their local base, and there is little doubt that some of the victims of their interrogation, who died under torture or were beheaded, were buried in the grounds of the station.

In 1946, or possibly early in 1947, a new Officer Commanding (OC), a Malay Corporal, arrived at Tras. Not long after odd things began to happen. The station lamps (of the **pump-up** Petromax variety) would suddenly dim, several at the same time, and after a few minutes would just as suddenly become bright again. Some time later the seven or eight constables of the station were horrified by the sound of carnivores tearing flesh underneath the police station, a

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wooden, artap-roofed building raised on stilts. When the quaking coppers shone torches down under the raised floor, nothing was there — but the tearing of flesh and cracking of bones continued sporadically. An inspector went to investigate but could find nothing.

Then several of the constables claimed to have heard a voice coming from a rambutan tree on the station lawn (it was too small to be a *packing*), telling the fearful listeners that they were not to squat under the tree. They could stand or sit, but were forbidden to squat, nor could they pick the fruit. The OC was one of those who heard the voice and, terrified, asked to be transferred. The investigating inspector duly recorded his statement, but his request was refused.

Soon after this the spectral voice spoke again from the rambutan tree, saying that no one was ever again to strike the station gong. This, a 3-foot long length of railway line, was suspended from a strong beam outside this and every other police station, and every hour, on the hour, a constable would belt it with a hefty cudgel, thus telling all for miles around, what o'clock it was. By this time the repercussions of these supernatural events had spread far beyond Raub. The notoriety of Tras was beginning to reach other districts and many *Mata Matas* made clear to anyone who would listen that they would go to considerable lengths never to be posted to Tras.

After many weeks of such goings-on the file was becoming well filled with statements of witnesses, on forms with the sonorous heading of *Perchakapan dalam Pemereksan* (statements in an investigation), investigating officers' **reports** and a full write-up **of the** case by the OCPD of that time.

Then occurred the most inexplicable event of all. The corporal, a married man, was with his wife in their quarters one night when, in the small hours, he was awakened by a 'great voice', as he put it, saying, "**Corporal, buka pintu**" ("Corporal, open the door"). He and his wife cowered in terror while the voice became increasingly loud and angry.

Eventually, gibbering with terror, he opened the door. What happened **then** is unclear: he and his wife screamed, bringing the men running. They found the corporal and his wife both semi-conscious and unable to speak, having suffered some kind of fit.

Furthermore; the bodies of both were badly discoloured down one side, from head to toe. They were brought in to the hospital in *Raub* and the file was now augmented by medical reports and the results of various tests. There was no apparent reason for the semi-conscious state of both (which persisted for some days), or for the blackening of the same side of their bodies. The doctor suggested the possibility of a stroke.

Understandably at this stage, the remaining staff of Tras Police Station expressed their deep desire to be transferred — to anywhere. In short, a full-blown crisis had been created. Eventually the CPO himself came down from *Lipis* and not long afterwards, following a conference at which the British Adviser and the *Mentri Besar* (Chief Minister of a Malay State), himself were present, a personal visit was made by the CPO to Tras. Perhaps more to the point, a famous *Bomoh* was consulted. After much meditation and various arcane procedures, a course of action was agreed. All the VIPs, including the *Mentri Besar* BA, and CPO etc., went to Tras and a large *kenduri* (feast) was held in the grounds of the Station. A black cockerel was decapitated and the blood allowed to spatter the area while the *Bomoh* chanted prayers and incantations. Everyone, black cockerel apart, seemed to have had a good time.

The last entry in the IP, I think by the CPO, read, 'I was asked to take the station gong cudgel and, for the first time in many months, strike out the hour, midnight. I did so and nothing awful resulted, (Thank God!) except that the cudgel broke.' This minor setback occasioned no great alarm since a long-unused item of wood is a toothsome meal for the ubiquitous *anai-anai* (the white ant).

Although I read the IP well over forty years ago and can claim neither complete recall nor total accuracy, the basic facts are as I have told them, nevertheless, and the file and Tras will always remain in my memory."

THE ABORIGINES

A post-mortem on the aborigine situation when it was no longer operationally important, concluded that in the Brooke Fort area the two local aborigine chiefs, Pangoi and Awol, had arrived at a pragmatic agreement that Pangoi would work with the CTs and Awol with the government, keeping each other informed and, hopefully, preventing problems for either of them and their adherents by informing each other of the plans of CTs and government. This picture fits neatly into the picture guessed by Follows at the time.

Commanding Fort Brooke

S.R. Follows

"IN 1954 I WAS given command of Fort Brooke; one of the isolated chain of forts set up along the jangly 'spine' of the Peninsula, in order to provide bases for our work with the aborigines. Our principal task was to win their hearts and minds, in my case we were dealing with the *Temian Send*.

The fort was isolated: VIPs might visit by helicopter, the RAF could drop supplies by parachute, and communication was by radio. We walked!

The engineer who built the fort had briefed me that six-inch nails were the gift most appreciated by the *Senoi*: three made excellent prongs for a fisherman's trident.

The fort was built in a triangular plan, defended by gun pits, bamboo thickets, interlaced with barbed wire, with a steep slope on one side.

My most important contact was Mentri Awol, a small squat man, with bowlegs, a big belly and a few black teeth in his mouth. His feet were huge and flat. We met almost every day and formed a bond despite language problems.

The Department of Aborigines, however, was not so easy to bond with. When I discovered the whereabouts of a notorious CT sympathiser and planned to capture or kill him, I made the mistake of telling the Department of my plan, and it was vetoed. They had a different job to mine. My informant was, understandably, enraged

that he had put his life at risk and I had taken no action. I continued to visit Mentri Awol's longhouse to discuss plans. I had warned him that, if we had trouble from the CTs his *ladang* would be the first to be blown to smithereens, and so far my warning seemed to have been effective.

Mentri's longhouse was typical: about a hundred feet long, holding, perhaps, about forty people. One evening, having cleaned and dressed a suppurating leg wound of one of the inhabitants, I joined Mentri to discuss my wish to meet Pangoi, the most notorious local CT supporter. It was agreed that I should trek into the jungle to visit him. I took six men with me and after a few hours, our guide pointed to a track ahead and immediately retreated to the rear of the patrol, so I took over the scout's position. The track led into a thicket and soon I found myself trapped in the bamboo thicket with a CT sentry a few yards in front, firing at me. Fortunately, he missed: when we reached the camp it was deserted. A fresh plan for an RV with Pangoi was arranged but Mentri came to warn me that I would be killed in ambush if I carried out the plan. I took heed.

Next, I was invited to meet Pangoi in his *ladang*. I spent a wretched afternoon considering how to handle this invitation, which might so easily be no more than a trap. Before I had made my final decision, Pangoi turned up at the fort. I suggested to Mentri that we should celebrate this surrender with a dance, but Pangoi refused to admit any knowledge of the CTs to me and so the Aborigine Department came and took him away by helicopter. But KL was no more successful than I had been in getting information from Pangoi, so he returned to continue his liaison with the CTs.

Much later, I found out that Mentri and Pangoi were secret allies in a pact to keep each other informed and warned of any danger from the SF. Both were on the fence, interested in self-preservation, not in assisting the government against the Communists,

The hardest thing to take in dealings with the *Senoi* was the shared food pot. Many of them suffered from a skin disease and the sight of the flakes of skin showering into the common pot, from which we all had to eat with our fingers, was repulsive. They had many fascinating habits, but eating from the common pot was not one of them."

Aborigine Rafts

Dato' Mohammed Pilus

"FROM TIME TO TIME I took a police party and some civilians up to Temenggor. We took great care about concealing our date and time of departure.

On 23rd August we set off in a troop carrier to Kuala Rui, then by the bush tracks familiar to our guides, moving fast to reduce the number of leeches that would suck our blood. We stopped every ten minutes to deal with leeches. Finally, we went by boat to a jetty near the aborigine *Penghulu's* house. This was a happy occasion of reunions, we spent the next day watching the building of bamboo *rakits* (rafts) which were, at least, thirty feet long and had three tiers, only the top deck being high enough to keep our kit dry. The Temenggor 'rafters' were incredibly skilful at taking us through the rapids.

The aborigines would accept no money for the feast they had given us or for the services of the 'rafters'."

What Game Are You Playing?

Tan Sri Mohd Amin bin Osman

Tan Sri Amin was brought up in Kedah where he was well known as a sportsman. He joined the police as an Inspector at the beginning of the Emergency and rose to the top, acting for a long period as ICP. Although our paths did not cross until Konfrontasi (mid-1960s) and we seldom meet now, I count myself lucky to have him as one of my closest Malay friends. He was most generous with his time when I visited KL in 2001.

It took a long time to bring the aborigines into the government fold, meanwhile the CTs continued to use them as an intelligence screen.

Inspector Amin was involved in the 'Hearts and Minds' campaign to bring the Orang Asli on side working as a liaison officer with 22 SAS.

Inspector Amin's horizons were not bounded by work alone; he managed to find time to gather orchids in order to win the hand of an attractive lady working near his office.

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"HAVING BEEN GIVEN a crash course in the aborigine language, I set off by helicopter with the SAS to reconnoitre, survey, carry out a census, and generally discover what the situation was in areas where the CTs had been enjoying considerable success with the local aborigines. On my first descent into a jungle clearing, I found the timid locals reluctant to come out from behind the trees.

Once presents had been handed over the conversation went as follows:

Me: *"Have you seen any of the bad men?"*

Chief: *"What?"*

Me: *"The Chinese."*

Chief: *"Oh! The Chinois. Yes"*

Me: *"How many?"*

Chief: *"Many."* (They could only count to three in their language.)

Me: (Arranging three locals by my side and adding one more.)

"This number?"

Chief: *"Many!"*

And so it went on until 14 were grouped together.

Chief: "Chukup!" (*Enough*)

My next question was about 'time':

Me: *"When did they come?"*

This time the question was answered by reference to the phases of the moon and the time the tapioca had taken to grow.

Now that a good rapport had been established, the Chief plucked up courage:

Chief: *"May I ask a question?"*

Me: *"Yes."*

Chief: *"What game are you playing?"*

Me: (*Nonplussed*) *"What do you mean?"*

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Chief: *"Well! The Chinois and you both bring the same presents, medicine, tobacco, food, but they give us seeds to plant for extra food, and you destroy the extra food we plant!"*

I tried to explain to the Asli that it was no game, the *Chinois* were bad men trying to take over Malaya and we were trying to stop them. But such concepts as communism, government and terrorism were unknown to the Asli and also well beyond my vocabulary.

The Asli's cooking method was idiosyncratic: they felled a huge tree and kept the end of the trunk alight as a sort of perpetually operating oven.

It was, indeed, a long slow business winning the 'Hearts and Minds' of the aborigines,"

Fort Iskander on the Tasek Bera
J.C. Macnab

"IN THE MID-1950S I was OC 3 PFF with an operational area covering *Selangor, Negri, Sembilan*, and *Malacca*, and responsibility for garrisoning two forts, Iskander (just inside *Pahang*) and Langkap (in *Negri*).

Langkap was a cushy three or four hour march but it took two days to reach Iskander.

During my last visit to Malaysia I went to visit Iskander once again, accompanied by Butch Walker who had been one of my platoon commanders. He recalled dropping his toothbrush into Tasek Bera. After repeated pleas by radio asking for a replacement lest his teeth fell out, eventually a Hudson flew over the fort and dropped a parachute from which dangled a small parcel containing a toothbrush and an unfriendly note from Bluff Road.

Butch had taken over from a foolish officer, who had best be nameless. The officer seduced a *Semelai* maiden who became pregnant, so he had to leave in a hurry. We asked the local *Semelai* what had happened to Lila the unfortunate maiden. She had married, born four children and was now living happily in KL,

Another memory of the fort was the death of Probationary, Inspector Ujar Singh who was killed in the Tanjong Quin area when

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the CTs attacked the river patrol under his command. The CTs had allowed the first canoe through their trap and then opened accurate fire on the second canoe killing the inspector instantly. I had flown up to the fort to investigate but, after a twenty-four hour patrol in the jungle, had not been able to find Inspector Singh's carbine. Many years later at a shoot in Scotland, a former SAS officer told me that the gun had been recovered in 1954 from a dead CT.

I telephoned another of my former fort commanders; Dato' Haji Mohd Som who told me, with justified pride, that a *Semelai* child he had taught to read and write during his time in the fort was now a senator.

The trip to Iskander was a highlight of our visit. It was heartening good to see that all the collective efforts of half a century ago had paved the way for progress. The Malaysian Government has done well."

These tales are most satisfactory pointers to the reality of the relationships between the SF and the locals. The police, like any other organisation, sometimes made mistakes but they also made many friends. They were not the ogres imagined by the ignorant who have been brain-washed into considering that the CTs and the SF stood on the same moral ground. Unlike our enemies the CTs, we frequently helped to create something good. The CTs did nothing but harm using methods, which were reminiscent of the most sadistic zealots of mediaeval times.

John Slimming and the Orang Asli

B. T. W. Stewart

There were many colourful and effective characters amongst the P/Lts and John Slimming, who wrote several successful books, was one of that band of heroes. After working in the Department of Aborigines, he lived in Burma and Sarawak before finally serving in Hong Kong where, once again, he worked for the police.

"The sound was deafening. The bamboo longhouse vibrated in response to the sounds of the aboriginal percussion band. It seemed as if the whole community was one large percussion section., hammering drums and hollow logs with their bamboo drum sticks.

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Occasionally, a large gong would join in, sometimes the women would sing, and once or twice a plaintive flute could be heard, but the overwhelming sound was of complex drum rhythms dominating the minds and the bodies of dancers, singers and spectators alike. The drumming and dancing went on throughout the night. Sometimes a man would fall down in a frenzy and the services of the *Bomoh* would be required to revive him. At dawn even the hardest dancers admitted defeat, and silence reigned at last."

This was the picture that John Slimming painted of Bacchanalian nights in the longhouses of the Orang Asli (the original people) when he stayed with them. He had started his Malayan life a P/Lt but finished in the Department of Aborigines, and in 1956 found himself carrying out a census of the Orang Asli of Southwest Kelantan. From the point of view of the SF these jungle people formed an untidy and potentially dangerous screen between the SF and the CTs. They gave little information to the government and were of considerable value to the CTs as informers and as a source of supplies. SB was convinced that the time had come to group the Orang Asli around the nearest jungle fort, on the analogy of the resettlement programmes that had brought the Chinese squatters away from the jungle fringes into New Villages. Such a programme would reduce the opportunities for the CTs to contact the Asli, and increase SB's chances of getting intelligence. So a Census had been demanded and it was John's job to carry it out. His journeys into the Ulu usually started by train from Kuala Krai to Bertam, continued by motorboat up the Sungei Nenggiri (the mother of rivers). From Bertam the river Nenggiri meanders placidly over many long reaches, flowing between jungle-clad banks, broken from time-to-time by great limestone outcrops that rise steeply, often vertically, above the skyline. Occasionally there are fierce rapids where the boat was almost submerged as it struggled against the current. Finally, after several days of footslogging, he arrived at Fort Chabai. Often he had no armed escort with him, so it was fortunate that the aborigines, upon whom he relied for his security, seemed to like and trust him

Nights were usually spent in longhouses under the protection of the local Penghulu. Food was shared with the Asli. Their staple diet was tapioca and rice supplemented with mouse deer, wild pig, monkey, squirrel and fish, or any other living creature they could

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catch, trap, net or shoot with the poison-tipped arrows puffed skilfully from their blowpipes. The rice was cooked in lengths of bamboo, all else was barbecued, and leaves served as plates. Sometimes there were kenduris, when neighbours, two or three hours' march away, would be invited to join in a feast of wild pig and dance until morning.

Orang Asli, acting as guides and porters, supported the long treks up and down steep hills and through the jungle. It was hard going since the Asli were, of course, in much better shape than their Orang Puteh visitor. John needed all the help he could get from salt tablets to cure his cramp.

The Asli customs were full of interest. Even their methods of hair cutting were strange. Every man was his own barber. He laid his locks across the blade of his razor-sharp jungle knife and tapped them with a piece of wood, thus producing a rough and ready tonsure of the pudding basin variety.

The concept of the jungle fort was that it should be well sited for defence, with good fields of fire and plenty of barbed wire all round. Each fort was garrisoned by a platoon of the PFF, and was intended to provide security for the aborigines in the area as well as a jumping off place for offensive operations. Flies were the worst feature of Chabai; resiting of latrines and vigorous assault on suspected breeding grounds were of no avail; the flies continued unabated.

The survey of the Asli was not made any easier by the fact that the communities were constantly abandoning their ladangs where they had exhausted the soil, and trekking off to virgin, fertile land. Each ladang might cover several acres, it would be planted with hill rice, sweet potatoes, sweet corn and so on, and each had to be measured for the census. And as John marched over hill and dale, he was ever conscious that anywhere along the route there might be CTs ready to spring an ambush.

One day some Orang Asli arrived at Fort Chabai complaining that soldiers had burnt their houses and destroyed their crops. However, when John visited the heal communities he could find no evidence of the alhged incident. He strongly suspected that the CTs were responsible for the story, and that his hosts, the heal headmen, knew a great deal more about the movements of the CTs than they dared tell him. They warned him not to go to certain areas, but he had to be content with this meagre intelligence indicator.

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The Kelantan SWEC eventually decided in favour of resettlement and forwarded the recommendation to KL for endorsement. KL, however, vetoed the scheme on financial grounds, so John left Malaya happy in the knowledge that his friends had not been uprooted.

His Chinese cook and his Asli friends asked him why he chose to spend his time in the jungle, sweaty, dirty, bitten by mosquitoes, and bothered by leeches, when he could have had a tuan's job in an office. They found his choice of occupation incomprehensible.

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The motivation of those who joined the Colonial Service was complex, of course, but a sense of adventure was a common ingredient and official histories of the Colonial Service suggest that the pre-war film, 'Sanders of the River', had a considerable part to play, at least as far as the Administrative Service was concerned.

The recruits to the P/Lts cadre included hard-bitten old soldiers as well as young men with stars in their eyes. Whatever the individual motivation, they made a vital contribution to the war against the CTs, particularly in the early years when government had been caught off balance.

The following certificate reflects the importance that the Whitehall Warriors attached to the role of the P/Lts.

CERTIFICATE OF URGENCY

THIS IS TO CERTIFY that Mr J.H. Grieve is proceeding to Malaya by air (Flight No. GAJPL) on the 18th August 1948, and that it has not been possible to obtain valid certificates of inoculation against cholera and vaccination against smallpox.

Mr Grieve's mission is of such importance and urgency that it is essential that he should not be delayed in the endemic area on account of his inability to produce valid certificates of cholera inoculation and vaccination against smallpox.

Assistant Under Secretary of State,
Colonial Office,
The Church House,
Westminster, S. W. I.
15th August 1948

Who Were the Police Lieutenants?

S.R. Follows

It may be an exaggeration to suggest that without the experience and leadership P/Lts provided in the early days, Chin Peng would have 'had his feet under the table in King's House', but certainly the planters and miners, working and living in great danger in the countryside, had good cause to bless the arrival of the P/Lts. Their contribution to victory as very independent and usually very effective subalterns in a Subaltern's war deserves a book to itself. The casualty figures show that they were very much at the Sharp End.

"THE P/LTS WERE dispersed throughout rural Malaya and often called upon, particularly in the earliest, darkest, days of the Emergency, to act independently and to take responsibility well beyond what would normally be thought of as the duty of a sergeant.

The original batch was from Palestine, many with military as well as police experience behind them; they and the subsequent batches were urgently required at the 'Sharp End' where brand new SCs were attempting to defend the estates and mines. The later batches came from other services and walks of life. There were infantry officers, Air Force pilots, Royal Navy frogmen, Commandos, Paras, and Force 136; all ranks from Lt/Col down. They brought with them a wealth of military experience.

Why did they join up? I am not sure. In Civvy Street some missed the camaraderie and action. Others needed a job to pay for their mortgage and keep their family. Others were seconded from the British Police. Some, perhaps, only wanted a change or even to get away from their families.

As far as I was concerned, brought up on the Boy's Own paper, it was not the conditions of service. The pay was good, plus free food and accommodation on ops (rations and a poncho cape), but a sense of adventure was part of it.

I was attending a Marine Engineering College when I saw the advertisement seeking volunteers. I had read an account by a P/Lt of his experiences on jungle ops, found it interesting, and applied.

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Within days I found myself in London with 25 other hopefuls. I found that I was the youngest and the only one without previous military experience, and feared the worst but, much to my surprise, I was one of the three selected. Within weeks I was in Malaya starting on an adventure beyond my wildest dreams.

The P/Lts were 'characters'.

I remember one who told me that his reason for joining was to collect the loot that he had buried before the Japanese captured Malaya. His intention was to buy himself out when his mission was accomplished. It sounded absurd, yet it had a ring of truth. I was amused to see in Force Standing Orders that he had terminated his contract. Mission accomplished!

One P/Lt left Malaya long before his contract ran out without having to compensate H M G. He subscribed to The Daily Worker, therefore his superiors (incorrectly) assumed that he had Communist affiliations and sent him home. In the Infantry, flat feet will do the trick; in the Malayan Police a subscription to The Daily Worker would achieve the same result."

From Hussar to P/Lt

J.D. Pobjee

In 1951 Pobjee came to Malaya as a P/Lt via the 13/18 Hussars and the Warwickshire Yeomanry.

"THIS WAS A BIT of a culture shock. I was posted to Rengam Sub District in Johore, lived by myself in a large house in a rubber estate, and was in hostile country where no one spoke English.

Before I had time to learn Malay or very much about my job, I went down with jaundice and was removed to Penang Hospital. When I returned to Rengam I was made responsible for about 400 SCs spread all round the Sub-District. For transport I had a Ford Popular and, later on, a semi-armoured Land Rover.

Since I was not an ex-Infantryman, I had to learn fast on the job reading army-training manuals before passing on my new found knowledge to the SCs.

A new policy was announced to encourage the SCs to become more active and I trained my SCs in the use of Bren guns and

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grenade launchers. I set up a rifle range on the estate. One day having, as usual, 'hosed down' the surrounding jungle in case there were any CTs lying in ambush, the trainees and I came under fire from a passing PFF unit. Fortunately, the PFF were not very good shots and no one was hurt, but my language was ripe when I caught up with the offenders.

My attempts to accustom the SCs to the sound of bullets whizzing over their heads were not appreciated by the estate management, who found bullets lodged in rubber and palm trees an unwelcome nuisance.

On one occasion as a squad moved at dusk into an unfamiliar rubber estate to set up an ambush, I saw the marks of elephant feet in one area. We waited the dawn more frightened of the animals than of the CTs. Just after first light a fierce firefright broke out and we heard the crashing sounds of an elephant charging away from the battle. Our attempts to ambush CT food caches were not very successful.

The time when tappers and other estate workers were being allowed to enter the estate at dawn was highly dangerous for the SCs, who were a sitting target for CT sharpshooters, and we had some nasty firefights during the gate operations at dawn.

My duties included interpreting for missionaries from China and other non-police duties, such as looking after a wounded Tamil, who had broken curfew to have a clandestine tryst with his girlfriend and thus became a target for a vigilant SC.

And then there was a hantu story.

A shopkeeper reported that ghosts were stoning his tin roof every afternoon, so we arranged surveillance and indeed there was a fusillade of stones on the roof during the siesta period. But it was small boys, not ghosts, who were responsible. They threw stones to divert the shopkeeper's attention while they stole his sweets.

There was a lot of bus burning in our area, the CTs rarely harmed the passengers but once they killed some suspected informers and got away into swampy ground where I was forbidden to operate. When I contacted HQ to ask for military support, I was offered an air strike since there were no troops available. It was highly satisfactory to see the rockets of my air strike hitting the swamp.

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The CTs devised an ingenious method of teasing the SC sentries: they fixed torchlight on poles and flicked them on and off to draw SC fire. We put a stop to this practice by massing all our Bren guns, loading with mixed tracer and ball, and preparing to hose the area just below the lights. The next time they played the pole game, they got an unpleasant surprise.

The most successful operation in which I was involved required me to pose as a forestry officer measuring timber: I was in civilian clothes, with pistol concealed, and escorted by two picked SCs in uniform.

The Chinese towkay (manager) of the logging gang told the CTs that they would have to lie low until the 'forestry officer' had done his job, and then they could come to collect their money and food. After two hours of measuring, accompanied by my rather dejected SCs, we left the forest, got into my borrowed car, and drove off.

The Gurkhas had put the 'measuring' time to good use and were well hidden by the time the CTs emerged. The CT party was annihilated by the Gurkhas' well aimed shots."

The Situation in Perak 1948

J.H. Grieve

John Grieve had just completed his National Service as a constable in the Palestine Police, when he received a telegram from the Colonial Office inviting him to become a 'British Sergeant' in Malaya.

"ON ARRIVAL IN SINGAPORE, the newly appointed Commissioner of Police, Col W.N. Gray, addressed us. One of the things he said proved of great importance to me. This was that we sergeants were to operate in pairs, an experienced one with one of less experience. In my case I was the one with the lesser experience: I was 20 years old, with eighteen months' police service, whereas David Garland, my partner, had about ten years service in the Palestine Police and, prior to that, had about five years in the army in India. There he had his introduction to the tropical rainforest. He was keenly interested in its flora and fauna and enthusiastically imparted his expertise to

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me when we made our first incursions into the jungle together. His tuition was invaluable.

David and I were posted to Tapah in South Perak. We lived with a planter and we all got on well. Our area of responsibility included the rubber estates and tin mines in the area from *Temerloh* in the north to approximately Bidor in the south. Our initial responsibilities were the protection of estates and mines and supervising the SPs.

After we became familiar with our area, David felt we should scout the jungle edge of a hill immediately east of Temerloh. In the early hours of one morning in September 1948, we left our Jeep at Temerloh Police Station and with SC Subramaniam carried out our patrol in the dark, finishing at dawn when we descended the hill. On reaching the flat ground we were heading back towards Temerloh Police Station when we saw a Chinese male approaching about fifty yards away. David and Subramaniam were about thirty yards in front of me. David called to the man to show his identity card, whereupon he dropped something and raced towards the jungle. I ran to cut him off, reaching the path three yards behind him. He was tugging at something underneath his shirtfront. Suddenly, I saw a Mills 36 hand grenade (British) drop in front of me. I had to stop and pick it up. The safety pin was intact, so I put it in my pocket and resumed my pursuit, but the man had disappeared in those few seconds into the *belukar*. He had been unable to release the safety pin of the grenade because it had been too splayed. We found that the package he had dropped earlier contained pastries."

The following extracts from the 'Tapah Daily Sitreps', give an interesting picture of the times that the police lived through in this early stage of the Emergency:

TAPAH DAILY INTELLIGENCE SITREPS

Enemy Action and Results

- 467 At 1930 hrs 17.11.48 at Jong Landor Estates MR 103 267
Three Tamil mine workers returning, by bicycle, from Tapah to Chenderiang through Jong Landor Estates were ambushed by about 10 to 15 Chinese. The three Tamils were wounded,

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two of the three managed to run clear of the ambush, the third Tamil was approached by the ambushers and asked to surrender his arms. The bandits made off on being told that he had no firearm. It was later reported that 600 seed rubber trees had been slashed in the area of the ambush.

468 On night 17/18.11.48 at Tapah Road Estate MR J966200

The Estate Managers reported that about ten thousand rubber trees were slashed and that Communist slogans were posted on trees and cut into the bark. The estimated financial loss is 20,000 dollars. Pol/mil proceeding to the scene to investigate report that 50 Chinese armed with *parangs* were in the vicinity. Failed to make contact.

469 At 1835 hrs on 17.11.48 at No.12 Bruseh Road, Bidor

Two Chinese, one armed with a revolver, entered a photographer's shop and held up the photographer. The bandits took away 300 negatives and 300 photos developed from these negatives. Two camera lenses were also taken. The shop is situated opposite Bidor Police Station, but the photographer failed to make a report until 1925 hrs.

Information

G2 source.... Two Malaysians are said to have taken part in the sabotage of bridges on CH, Road on 14.11.48. The agent has given names and we hope to arrest tonight.

C3 source.... Squatters are warned that whenever a party of bandits move in any area, dogs are to be tied up inside their houses.

Own Action

476 At 2050 hrs on 19.11.48 Jong Landor Estates K0925.

Three SCs encountered a party of Chinese who were slashing rubber on Jong Landor Estates. The SCs opened fire and the slashers, who made no attempt to retaliate, ran away. A quantity of Quaker Oats and a quantity of tea, sufficient for 20-25 people, were found on the scene. About 2000 trees were slashed.

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- 477 19.11.48 Bikam NR 1505
Slashers paid a second visit to the Bikam Estate. Approximately 6,000 trees were damaged.
- 478 At 0930 hrs 20.11.48 at Lubok Tumang MR K265514
Taph police acting on information arrested the local MP A B A recruiting officer. A quantity of seditious literature and a collection box containing coins were found in his house.

The United Planting Association of Malaya circulated the following letter throughout Malaya:

THE UNITED PLANTING ASSOCIATION OF MALAYA

IMPORTANT

KL

19th November 1948

CONFIDENTIAL CIRCULAR TO ALL MEMBERS

TERRORISM

Terrorists in the Tapah area have used a new form of vandalism. First reports state that 30,000 trees, in most cases young trees, have been slashed, in some cases putting them out of production for nine months in others destroying them completely.

Managers are asked to report immediately such cases to the police. In an attempt to stop this practice spreading will Managers refrain from reporting any cases to the Press.

(H.K. DIMOLINE)
Secretary

Terang Bulan

J.H. Grieve

When we were young this was a popular tune in Malaya's dance halls; the catchy tune which originated in Perak has now been appropriated for higher purposes: it is the National Anthem of Malaysia.

John Grieve sent me this piece under the heading Terang Bulan (Bright Moon), obviously remembering with great clarity the brilliant moonlight on the night of his operation.

"THE MANAGER OF Tapah Road Estate had reported that on the nights of 17th and 18th November about ten thousand rubber trees had been slashed, and that Communist slogans were posted on trees and cut into the bark. He estimated the financial loss as \$M20,000. Police visited the estate, failed to make contact, and reported that fifty Chinese, armed with *parangs*, had been in the vicinity. Bikarn Estate, also in the Tapah area, was similarly attacked on 19th November when about 6,000 trees were damaged.

David Garland and I, having arrived in the country on 18th August 1948, were then living on Banir Estate with the Manager. David Garland figured that these attacks were being carried out by rubber tappers: tappers knew the area and topography where the young rubber was; they knew how to cause maximum damage; and he suspected tappers from a Chinese-owned estate nearby, bordering on Jong Landor.

Dave proposed that we scout the Chinese estate and the Jong Landor in the early evening of 19th November. Our patrol comprised us, our Tamil SC interpreter, Subramaniam and David Adamson, the 24-year old assistant manager of Jong Landor. We set off at dusk and reconnoitred the Chinese estate, then crossed back into the Jong Landor, the time now being about 2000 hours and the full moon, having risen, was now suffusing a strong light through the rubber trees.

David and I were ascending a slight slope in the path and were about thirty yards ahead of our colleagues, when I heard voices ahead chattering animatedly in what was unmistakably a Chinese dialect. I hastened back to the other two: then we regrouped at the top of the slope and looking down saw a large fire about thirty yards away. The voices, ominously, had stopped. We approached the fire as silently as possible, crossing a stream on the way. On reaching the fire we saw by its light about two dozen rice bowls, teacups, packets of Quaker Oats, a cooking pot and some *parangs*. The beams from our torches on the rubber trees confirmed that we had surprised a gang of slashers *in flagrante delicto*.

We opened fire with our Sten guns, aiming low, David Garland and I firing a magazine each into the dimness. As we started shooting in small bursts there were loud noises of men crashing through

THI- POLICE LIEUTENANTS

the underbush. We were unable to see anyone and we didn't hit anyone. It was later established that some 2,000 trees had been slashed, but the slashers were probably not far into their night's work when we interrupted them. Although subsequent searches of the two estates, including the tappers' 'lines', by us and, reinforcements from Tapah Police Station during the rest of the night, yielded no results, the attacks on rubber trees were not resumed in Tapah Police District!"

Defending Estates in Sitiawan

G.S. Pringle

In 1948 George Pringle came from Palestine where he had been serving in the mounted (mike and, like so many others from Palestine, was thrown in at the deep end in bandit country in charge of a widely spread force of SCs.

"WE WERE DRIVEN into **Perak** in an army lorry and were dropped off along the way at our allotted estates. I and another ex-Palestinian, Hensley, found ourselves billeted on a young Scottish planter, James Chalmers, who introduced us to the admirable, courageous planters in the area.

The recruiting of SCs had already been put in hand and we busied ourselves having guard posts erected at strategic points. Then we took over the training of the SCs, a raggle-taggle collection, Malays in the main, with some Tamils and a few Chinese, all locals trawled from the various estates. To assist us in the initial stages we had the services of a Malay Sergeant. He was a charming fellow and invaluable. Having reviewed the 'troops' it became obvious that to turn them into an efficient defensive force was going to take time and, perhaps, the patience of Job! Thoughts of creating an offensive force were put on hold.

How unprepared we were for jungle warfare.

I discarded my Arabic book in favour of a **Handbook of the Malay Language**, which became my only reading matter.

We had a mammoth task but we buckled down to it and gradually everything fell into place. Our mixed bag of Malays, Tamils, Chinese and Indians knew nothing of warfare or weaponry

and at times we despaired. But we persevered. SCs began to believe in themselves and in their ability to operate as fighting units.

Our introduction to *belukar* was an education in itself. We found that the only way through this heart-breaking stuff was to jump into it and hold it down while the rest of the patrol walked over you, each man repeating the process so that the patrol moved caterpillar fashion. On a good day we reached a speed of 100 yards per hour. We also learned to wade through swamps (chest high for sergeants: chin high for men) to avoid snakes, red ants, hornets and far more than fifty-seven varieties of non-timorous beasts; and to marvel at the ingenuity of leeches as they devoured our soft parts and occasionally dropped into our glass of ale back at the base.

Patrolling had its compensations. House searches yielded an abundance of Chinese firecrackers, which were handy for simulating small arms fire during training. I don't know whether they frightened the troops but they were powerful enough to frighten me. We frequently came across illicit stills for *samsu* liquor that required destroying the still and dispersing the liquor. After a few such enforcements of the Law, I noticed that the squad seemed noticeably happier than usual. I checked their water bottles and found that a fair proportion of the confiscated liquid had, somehow, ended up in every SC's water bottle.

The thinking behind the supply of a Ford Prefect for negotiating muddy tracks and ambush alleys may seem questionable, but we were exceedingly grateful to have any transport. On returning to safe ground a dozen or more men and their British Sergeant could board every part of the vehicle and roar home like a scene from *Viva Zapata*.

Our burning need was transport. Whilst three estates had rough tarmac-roads, the others were only accessible via a pot-holed, waterlogged track, which would have tested the endurance and patience of a rally driver. On the left of these tracks we had clear vision through the orderly rubber trees, but the right hand sides were secondary jungle and the cause of much apprehension. We anticipated having to footslog our way to the outlying estates but Chalmers, gentleman that he was, came to our aid and allowed us to use his antiquated motorcycle — where it came from no one knew,

but it had a sand filter on top of the tank that seemed to suggest a tenuous connection with the Eighth Army.

Trying to arrange some sort of communication between estates other than the telephone lines was tricky and, even if we got the message, a rescue mission in the pitch dark was hazardous to say the least. The SCs needed to be as highly trained as we could make them. We used our combined knowledge and constant practice on the firing range — at least we had no shortage of ammunition. As the weeks went by, the SPs confidence grew. I learned later from our interpreter that my barked commands were quite frightening to many of the SCs; strangely enough this was a comforting thought.

One of our necessary chores was snap checks at night at strategic points to check whether the guards were alert. Gliding silently up to a sandbagged post on a dark night was not our idea of fun but, hopefully, it kept everyone on their toes. Finding guards asleep with rifles nearby, one was tempted to remove the rifles then wake the sentries up, but instructions were received that such seizing of weapons was not to take place. Defaulters were reported to Sitiawan Police Station at least once a week, and we wasted no sympathy on them,

With ambushes from the cover of secondary jungle becoming increasingly popular with the terrorists, many of the vehicles used by managers and their assistants on the estates, had sprouted all sorts of weird and wonderful plating intended to divert bullets. Our transport problems were solved when we were issued with a Ford Prefect. It was an improvement on the motorcycle, especially when, after a lengthy patrol, most of the knackered squad reached dry land, climbed aboard and tested the springs of the vehicle way beyond the manufacturer's specifications.

Now that the SCs in our area had become more confident, we felt justified in leading selected members on regular jungle patrols around the estates: 12/15 in a patrol. All were keen to go on the offensive but I found that few had any knowledge of jungle lore or had ventured beyond their *kampongs*. We were obliged to learn the hard way about crossing swamps in heavy rain, leeches, hornets, ants' nests, snakes, scorpions and the multitude of other hazards that lurk under the jungle canopy. The speed with which my water

bottle seemed to discharge its contents was remarkable. Fortunately for us, whilst on this learning curve we met no real opposition.

On these patrols wearing our jungle green, we led from the front of the squad. Instead of the issue green hat, I tended to wear a natty black beret thinking it rather dashing. (How naive can one get?). It took some time to realise that, if we met opposition, the man in front wearing the beret would be the first to go. We learned to blend, to use two scouts, and hand signals took the place of whispered commands. In addition, we manned regular ambush points and quite often worked in conjunction with the regular police patrols. I did wonder what would happen in a direct confrontation with the enemy but my question was never answered.

I subsequently transferred to the Sitiawan Regular Police Jungle Squad. This meant deeper penetration into the jungle areas working with the Gurkhas, the Malay Regiment and the British Army.

On one occasion we had searched some Chinese-owned huts and, as I emerged backwards, I accidentally stood on a small chicken which lay squirming on the ground. To put it out of its misery, I applied the butt end of my Sten to it, the rather simple safety catch slipped off and a bullet shot past my head. I was okay until a member of the patrol pointed out that my right ear lobe was bleeding profusely. I told him in true 'British style,' "Not to worry", and we went on. When I got into bed at base and I thought about how close it had been, I went a whiter shade of pale and spent a restless night!

And so the work went on, the young dashing Gurkha captain and his men were a joy to be with, and in their company we considered we were on the offensive with a vengeance, although we had no 'kills' during our patrols with them. On one memorable patrol we commandeered a dozen or so small canoes with about three Gurkhas in each and us at the rear. To see the boats gradually going under with the Gurkhas paddling furiously as they sank, then eventually getting out, emptying the boat, getting aboard and carrying on, was hilarious. Whilst we enjoyed the spectacle, river leeches about three inches long were having a whale of a time, and as Tony Hancock would have commented when we took off our jungle boots, "There was almost a leg full in there!" I should mention that the rain was bucketing down at the time! What a country!

As a mounted police officer in Palestine, despite learning a little Arabic, I always felt cut off from the people we were policing. In Malaya, having learned the language and being thrown together so closely, I got to know the different traits of each individual. The Malays with their happy-go-lucky attitude; the Tamil rubber tappers wending their betel-nut way homeward; the Sikhs with their mischievous sense of humour; the Indian clerks so polite in an old fashioned English style, and the Chinese very dependable and Industrious. Quite a mix and I have never lost my affection for the country and its people. On one substantial patrol with a regular police jungle squad and Gurkhas, we entered some serious swamp-land at dawn. The fetid water was almost chest high but stretched across the three-quarter mile swamp to a dry knoll. Stretching out to this small island were logs and tree trunks forming a precarious floating pathway of sorts. We found that, whilst most of us had to be content to slosh through the morass, others managed to balance and walk gendy across. (A good many of the Gurkhas tried this because, as you can imagine, their height placed them at a disadvantage in the deep water.) So we advanced as silently as the circumstances allowed. The tree trunks rolled very easily and the Sikhs found that by touching the end of a log, behind a British Sergeant, they could deposit him unceremoniously into the swamp — they were a mischievous bunch and, of course, the ducking worked both ways.

Then we got down to business. Our information was that our group of bandits was encamped on one of the small islands. Leading our patrol was a Chinese CID officer. As we closed on our objective, this gendeman allowed me to take the lead! Suddenly, there was a warning shout from the direction of the target, we veered in its direction and surged forward in line. I found myself absolutely entangled in about a dozen hooks from fishing lines, perhaps put there to give the bandits time to scarper! It certainly stopped me in my tracks. Apart from that shouted warning, we never saw hide nor hair of the bandits. The information had been good and evidence of the hurried exit from their camp was plain to see. Very frustrating! In the two years of patrolling and searching for bandits, I often came close, and my patrols fired off many shots at fleeting glimpses of enemy scouts. Also many bandit encampments and goods/ammo were found and destroyed, but personally I only accounted for one

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young bandit, he saw us, ran into *belukar* in panic, pointed his Luger at me and almost eyeball to eyeball, I shot him,"

MILITARY MATTERS

Special Air Service

B.A. Glass

"WHEN I RECEIVED a letter from Police HQ that I and three other officers had been posted to the SAS, the Malayan Scouts, I wondered what I had done wrong?

The SAS was a small new unit under the command of Lt/Col Mike Calvert, BA, Cantab, DSO and Bar, otherwise known from his days in Burma, as Mad Mike.

What I did not know until later was that two of the four police officers selected for the SAS had cried off. Their reason being that it was a too dangerous and too unknown a project to become involved with. I did not know then how right they were.

Perhaps we were chosen because of our knowledge of the Malay language, experience of operations and of the Intelligence requirements for the job. My first posting was to a temporary camp in **KL**, which was little more than a muddy quagmire and a really dreadful place.

John Ford joined me there, and we were interviewed by Col Calvert to establish just what our background and experience was, and if it was up to the standard he required. It was very much his unit and he set the rules irrespective of other military commanders in Malaya.

John and I were both of the opinion that Col Calvert's main problem was that he seemed to be streets ahead of most of those he had to deal with in the military. This did not endear him to his military colleagues.

A simple illustration of this was the military rule that only one compass could be issued to each nine-man section. He demanded one for each section of three men, which was the pattern in which

we operated. He got his way, although this did not increase his popularity.

We moved to Dusan Tua, originally settled by Japanese due to the hot thermal baths there. For us it was pure luxury to wallow in those baths.

The unit was made up of men from a variety of units, all of whom performed their task well: sometimes a very difficult one. An example of this was our method of communication, very primitive by today's standards. We were still using Morse; messages were encoded and then transmitted with pedal trans-receivers. These sets were outdated compared with the 68 sets used by other units, but the 68 sets did not have the range we needed.

The police had no serious communications of their own. I well remember in 1949, on a one-month long police operation, we had to borrow two Gtirkha signallers for our unit. I had a great respect for all our SAS signal men who operated under such awful conditions.

My first operation was as second-in-command to the troop commander, Sinclair-Hill, who was known by all of us as Bukit-Sinclair (*bukit*, being the Malay word for hill)! He was a charming man who led the unit most effectively. The unit covered a vast territory in detail throughout Pahang. We were on operations for one hundred and four days, which was, at that time, the longest operation there had been for any unit in Malaya.

We were supplied by air, which was following the same routine that I had learned on operations with the police. One of the things that have remained with me since those days of long ago is a hatred of tinned vegetable salad made by Heinz. However much one may hate such tinned food, one can hardly throw back rations at the aircraft. Unfortunately, it was very much liked by our commander.

Another thing I remember is that our kit, although new when dropped and issued to us, would virtually rot off our backs within one week. We often wondered how the men in General Slim's army managed to cope in Burma.

Although we had other things to think about, the Malayan jungle had some quite beautiful things to see, particularly some of the rivers and small lakes. One patrol of three men came in and said they had seen a pride of tiger cubs. When asked what they did,

"Kept very quiet and just watched as discretion was a sign of maturity and survival." A very wise and safe decision.

Finally, Col Calvert joined us and I had the task, with a couple of his men, of leading him out to the River Aur where he was to be picked up by Royal Army Service Corps (RASC) sea-going launch. Very wisely, he decided this was far too dangerous as the sea was quite rough.

Having not had a shave or a haircut for three months, I really needed one. But on going into a little Indian barbershop in the small village of Mersing I got what I wanted. I must have looked quite a sight, but he did a good job. I did not have what I was frightened of, a short back and sides in the traditional army style.

After a short rest, Police HQ asked me to return. Col Calvert wrote and asked if I could be retained for a further four weeks. At the time I was very much involved in coordinating the intelligence for the new Rhodesian Squadron.

After a very good and most satisfying rest period I, the sole survivor of the first to go from the police to the Malay Scouts, returned to the police, but I was soon asked to return to the SAS to assist in the recovery of the remains of one Trooper O'Leary. He had been lost on patrol and murdered by some *Sakais*. As I knew the area from other operations with the SAS and knew the language well, I appeared to be the best choice.

I was due to go on leave, having had a busy tour of duty. The judge, who was to hear the case against the man accused, said I was not to fly on leave until the case was over. Just in case the plane did not get me there and back again. Not exactly the type of thing to improve one's confidence in airlines.

I flew into nearby Kampong Aur where there was a small police post and where the accused was held. With an escort of two SAS troopers, we set off with the Sakai headman and the accused, in a dug out canoe, to a small mud bank where Trooper O'Leary's body was buried. The remains were easily identified, as he was one of the first soldiers to wear a gold earring, which we recovered. The accused was cooperative throughout this part of the investigation. After the body was recovered, we made arrangements for the remains to be flown out for a post mortem in Kuantan, and then

burial. The accused was also sent on to Kuantan where he was formally charged.

I returned to formal police work and, eventually, went home on leave after nearly four years. I was very hurt when I met my sister who calmly told me that I was really quite mad. Sisters have this disturbing habit of being honest."

Scots Guards
Snodgrass

"The Superintendent Personnel said, "A posting for you from Bluff Road." I was in my third month of attachments and beginning to wonder when I was to be allowed to do a job on my own. This surely must be it. "To where?" I asked. "Slim River," he said in an apologetic tone. "The Scots Guards have a company stationed there and it has been decided that a police officer should be attached to them to develop liaison with the local people and to set up a counter-terrorist intelligence gathering system."

Slim River, some 50 miles north of KL, was a small village on the main road through Malaya. It was a hotbed of CTs. In KL I had been allocated an Austin A40. The car was of a batch that had been added recently to the miscellany of vehicles then in use by the police, varying from old Morris 15cwt through an assortment of British and American Forces' wartime transport. The newly acquired British small family saloons were not the most appropriate for use in areas where every road bend and cutting could hold an armed ambush party.

Apart from a few two-men, ex-army armoured Scout Cars, the police had no bullet-proofed vehicles. The police troop carrier vehicles were thin-skinned, three-ton Chevrolets; not surprisingly, they were soon being referred to as 'coffin wagons'.

Joining in KL to accompany me on my mission were the personnel of my first independent command — one Police Lance Corporal and one Detective Constable. L/Cpl Ahmad bin Johari, was an English-educated Malay of about the same age as myself; he had been selected to be my interpreter. Detective Ah Kow was old enough to be my father; he was a dark-skinned, wizened, Hakka Chinese who, when he grimaced, displayed a glistening mass of gold

teeth. It did not take long to discover he was an opium addict; no wonder his previous commander had not objected to his posting.

We set off from KL in the small car with me driving. In the front seat, with the muzzle of his Lee Enfield No. 5 rifle sticking out of the window, was Ahmad. Ah Kow sat in the back surrounded by all our excess kit that we had been unable to stuff into the boot. He had an old Smith and Wesson .38 revolver, whilst I had my Browning semi-automatic pistol. We were not a formidably armed party ready to take on bandits.

Ahmad and I had wondered if we should dress in civilian clothes in the hope that an enemy ambush party would allow us to pass as a seemingly worthless target, Ah Kow was clad in a scruffy, old black *samfu* jacket and baggy trousers; he looked more like a bandit than a policeman. Ahmad and I decided that our greatest risk would be to be stopped by a SF roadblock and some young soldier or policeman on seeing Ah Kow opening fire in sheer panic. We opted to wear uniform.

Ahmad, who had only recently completed his basic training (he had been made an Acting (unpaid) L/Cpl for this mission), was super smart in a crisp khaki shirt and voluminous shorts — irreverently known as 'Bombay Bloomers' — and black hose tops tucked into black ankle boots, all topped by a black round cap with a pom-pom on top. I wore almost the same except that I had two shiny silver pips on each shoulder and a blue-black cap with a row of silver thread on its peak.

Some ten miles north of KL the road started to twist and turn through jungle as it climbed to the Kanching Pass. "Bad place", said Ahmad, "Big ambush here last week. Five police killed." He sank lower in his seat and worked the bolt of his rifle to slip a round into the breech. Ah Kow, in the back, cleared his throat with a loud hawk and spat out of the open window. I changed to a lower gear and put my foot down. The little car responded well and fifteen minutes later we left the forest and emerged into rubber. Ahmad gave a smile, straightened in his seat and said, "Good!"

The Company base was surrounded by coiled barbed wire. A drop barrier barred the road entry, by which stood an armed Guardsman wearing jungle green uniform and his Guard's cap. He flagged us down, his rifle held menacingly in the crook of his arm,

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and peered into the car. Seeing our uniforms he smiled, "Och, you'll be the polis whose coming to join us! The Company Commander is expecting yiz — he's over there in his office."

The Suffolks

W.J. Syrratt

Syrratt had been a war time glider pilot then joined the South African Police, but did not enjoy that experience, so, aged 24, joined the Malayan Police as a Cadet ASP,

"THOSE EMERGENCY DAYS were quite tense. It was not so much, what was happening as what might happen. Every road journey might end in an ambush and, as we settled down in isolation every night with our families, our personal weapons were close at hand.

I have nothing but praise for the planters. They relied on us to come to their assistance in the dangerous areas where they worked. Since we had no armoured vehicles and the CTs frequently staged incidents in order to lead us into an ambush, we greatly appreciated it when the planters of Kuala Langat clubbed together to present us with a locally armoured 3-ton lorry.

I arrived in late 1950 and was posted to Kajang, the lair of Liew Kong Kin, the notorious bearded bandit. Extracts from my diary read:

- 13.2.51. Our squad followed the New Brighton estate boundary looking for evidence of tracks into the swamp, found a fallen tree that led out of the estate into the jungle, and two hundred yards on the trail heard noises; two armed Min Yuen appeared. The P/Lt shot and wounded one but my Thompson sub-machine gun jammed and the other escaped.
- 14.3.51. Five squads converged on a squatter area near by, firing; broke out and one of the squads discovered a Min Yuen, camp in thick *belukar*. As we approached the camp Majid, the SC in front of me, reported that he was under fire but I was unconvinced and ordered a cease-fire. Soon enemy fire started, Majid pointed to a dense patch of undergrowth

MILITARY MATTERS

and I lobbed in two grenades. Two female Min Yuens were killed; Majid was a little miffed that I had doubted his word and showed me a spent bullet lodged in his bandolier.

- 29.8.51. I accompanied an informer and a section of the Suffolk Regiment into the forest reserve. When the leading scout gave a hand sign that he had sighted the bandit camp I expected that an Order Group would be called and perhaps a stealthy approach. Not a bit of it, I was pushed aside and the Suffolks charged into the attack killing one bandit. The Suffolks, mostly National Service, were quite splendid, always offensively minded and ready to patrol in small numbers.
- 18.10.51. 0340. Awakened by machine-gun fire near my house. This was an MPLA attack on a small post on an estate near by. The bandits killed one SC, wounded two more and took their weapons. It was a company attack on a post of seven SCs and they had little chance."

CORONATION

With Medals and Spices the Heroes March In

W.J. Hillier

The Kenyan Police had accepted Bill, a former 'Palestinian', but when he visited the Colonial Office to complete the process they said that they had lost his file and posted him to Malaya instead. Within days of his arrival he found himself in Sungei Siput, supposedly on a short posting to 'beefup patrols'. Soon his temporary posting turned into a full tour of over three years as OCPD.

"I WAS SERVING as OCPD KL early in 1953, when I received a telephone call informing me that I had been selected as Staff Officer to the Malayan Police contingent bound for London to participate in the Coronation celebrations.

General Templer had directed that every policeman in the Coronation contingent should have been decorated. The effect of this directive meant that the standard of drill was very uneven; all the regulars had been taught the same drill, but the SCs varied both in skill and method, according to the skill of their instructor or arm of service, or even custom of the regiment in which their instructor had first served.

We sailed from Singapore to Southampton, and then took the train to Woolwich, the home of the Royal Artillery. One of our numbers, Chief Inspector Arajan Singh, seeing flocks of sheep, ran up and down the corridor roaring, "Sheeps, Sheeps!" in his excitement. Herds of cows brought forth a similar response. He was a true Sikh warrior and farmer.

Our visit coincided with the fasting month of Ramadan. I had obtained a dispensation from the need to comply with religious requirements of the fasting month, but one devout regular Malay Sergeant insisted that he would, nevertheless, continue to fast as

usual. As the daylight hours in Britain in May/June range from 0400 hours to some time around 2300 hours, the requirement was indeed onerous,

I reluctantly agreed to hold a press conference. The only article I can remember seeing was in the *Daily Express* entitled *With Medals and Spices the Heroes March In*.

One day, whilst visiting a laundry in Woolwich (I was in uniform), I overheard a woman laundry worker who had overheard my conversation with the manager and mistaken me for a Malay, exclaim to a fellow worker, "Ark at 'im — he speaks better English than what we do!"

On 30th May 1953 we moved off to Kensington Gardens to live under canvas for the last few days. The Coronation Parade was, of course, a military parade, subject to military rules about seniority and precedence. To the military mind the Colonial Police were the most junior unit on parade, we were, therefore, to march furthest away from the Queen, but at the head of the procession immediately behind the first four bands, at least two of which would be playing throughout the day!

Some nights before the Coronation about midnight we toured the processional route to determine how we were going to negotiate the major buildings in the way, e.g. the gates of Hyde Park. It was considered that the best way to solve the problem was to experiment 'on the ground'. The front rank divided between the various archways and decided how many men would march under each arch and how many to the right and left. Hearing the noise of our exercise, people sleeping on the pavements got up, produced their Union flags and began cheering. The men were amazed that three nights before the Coronation crowds were already in position to see and cheer their Queen.

We were up very early on Coronation Day, cleaning equipment in our tents. We were dismissed about 1800 hours having been on parade for some eleven hours, and I was about to change when one of our reserve rank and file appeared at my tent flap, in tears. He had forgotten to pack his *sampin* (small *sarong*), and we were due to parade for Buckingham Palace the following morning. He was worried that he would not be included. I assured him that come what may, he would be at Buckingham Palace tomorrow. The

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reserve and. I fought our way through the crowds to Victoria Station, resisting all attempts by the crowds to pull us into pubs, restaurants, etc. and reached Woolwich Barracks about 2000 hours, but the man with the key to the drill shed, where all our spare kit was stored, was out celebrating — with the key! He returned soon after 2100 hours, and opened the drill shed for us, but it was about the size of a railway platform, piled to the roof with kit bags, suitcases, etc., and though we searched for an hour we did not find one item of kit belonging to anyone in our contingent. I called a halt to the search. The next day I explained the situation to the men, and said that I proposed to dress the reserve in a cummerbund and white web belt, and his velvet dress *songkok*, which would surely be enough to show that he was Malay. All agreed with my proposal to hide our reserve man in the centre rank and we marched from Kensington Gardens to parade before the Queen and Royal Family on the back lawn of the Palace.

A guardsman with a tray on which our Coronation Medals lay approached each contingent. The Guardsman was supposed to call out the name of the recipient who was to come forward and receive his medal, but names like Wan bin Sheikh Abdul Rahman were a little beyond the guardsman. I assisted him with this duty, so we had a kind of do-it-yourself presentation."

Bonfire in Kedah
J.T.W. Siston

"SEVERAL WEEKS BEFORE the date of the Coronation, I had drawn the short straw (as the most junior officer in Police HQ, Alor Star) and was ordered by the CPO, Jock Elphinstone, to obtain sufficient combustible material and construct a huge bonfire on the summit of Kedah Peak, which was the highest point in Kedah/Perlis, some 30 miles south of Alor Star. The bonfire was to be lit at 1900 hours local time, 2nd June, to coincide with a State Banquet to be held at the Kedah Club, with His Excellency the Sultan of Kedah, the British Adviser et al, attending. The CPO confidently expected the resultant conflagration to be clearly visible in Alor Star by His Excellency and the assembled guests when he led them forth, and also in Penang some 35 miles south, to impress the CPO Penang, no

CORONATION

doubt. To assist in this mammoth task, I was allowed the services of one P/Lt, Jock Chambers, half a police jungle squad and a couple of 5 tonners.

A metalled road wound up the Peak as far as the Rest House, roughly halfway. This deteriorated into a rough road trace marked out by the Royal Engineers years before when siting an important VHF mast on the summit. For the last few hundred yards there was nothing but footholds suitable for mountain goats. The logistics were, to say the least, 'challenging'. I commandeered loads of old tyres, barrels of tar, bales of straw, wood, etc. and these were carted as far as possible on the lorries and then physically manhandled by the police jungle squad up onto the small plateau on the summit. These men were absolutely magnificent and seemed genuinely proud to be helping in this gesture to honour HM The Queen.

Our work on the bonfire, approximately 10 metres high and correspondingly broad at the base, was completed just prior to 'D' day, 2nd June. Our masterpiece could be lit easily in several places at once with the aid of petrol-soaked rags and other devices such as static flares.

At dusk I left the Peak and drove back to Alor Star, keeping well out of sight of the CPO until the hour of truth. I nervously watched the night sky and, to my relief (and the CPO's gratification), just before 1930 hours on a clear night the whole sky in the vicinity of Kedah Peak glowed orange-red as the summit burst into flames. Although 30 miles south of Alor Star it was clearly visible as the CPO led his guests, including His Excellency, out onto the patio to observe this unique sight, which we had kept secret until then. We had reports the next day that the Coronation bonfire had also been visible in Penang."

NB *"It was on the same road, below the Rest House, leading to the main road to Sungei Patani, that the newly arrived CPO, Neville Godwin, was ambushed and killed when descending from Kedah Peak in 1954."*

Celebration in Mantin

P.A. Collin

"AFTER TAPAH I HAD a spell in Malacca where I trained P/Lts; they were a wonderful bunch who did well in their later postings. I was then moved to Mantin, a small town in Negri Sembilan, lying astride the main north/south road. I decided that Mantin should do its bit to celebrate the Queen's Coronation. We fixed up a loud speaker and procured a 78 record of the Grenadier Guards playing the National Anthem. The town was decked with flags and streamers and just before 1100 hours I ordered the gates across the trunk road at the north and south ends of the village to be closed. At 1100 hours precisely, with the locals all dressed in their Sunday best and the police on parade and the Union Jack flying, we played the National Anthem while the Parade presented arms. After I had dismissed the Parade, we opened the gates and traffic flowed again along the trunk road. Of course, the closing of the road was quite against the law, but there were no complaints and I think everyone enjoyed the show. No wonder I was called Colonel Blimp!"

AWARDS

London Gazette

There are several mentions in the above text of the medals for gallantry, which were won by subalterns and their men. It would take a large book to do justice to the long list of awards, which they won for outstanding bravery. The number of GMs awarded pays ample tribute to their courage and initiative.

I am indebted to James Macnab for ferreting out the following citations from the London Gazette of 24th April 1951.

Police Lieutenant Charlton, GM

An attack was planned in the Muar District of Johore against a well-defended CT camp where several important CT leaders were based. The attacking force consisted of a police jungle squad commanded by P/Lt Thomas Charlton and one Military Platoon.

When the attack was launched after a long and difficult approach march through deep swamp, the CTs reacted fiercely. A much larger enemy force armed with automatic weapons quickly surrounded the small police and military force. The platoon commander and his leading men became casualties almost immediately and the rest of the platoon was pinned down by heavy enemy fire.

As soon as P/Lt Charlton realised that the Platoon Commander was out of action and the Platoon in dire need of help, he brought his jungle Squad out from its reserve position and into action most effectively despite the heavy fire. Then, under even heavier fire and with complete disregard for his own safety, he moved up to the Platoon Commander and helped the Platoon Sergeant to carry out the officer's orders. He remained in action with the Platoon for the next three hours during which time he displayed the highest qualities of personal courage, determination

SMASHING TERRORISM IN THE MALAYAN EMERGENCY

and leadership. His conduct was an inspiration to all ranks in the military and police force.

GMs for Police Lieutenant Graver and Corporal Osman bin Adam

When P/Lt Graver and two subordinates were attacked by CTs on an old rubber estate road in the Kulai District of Johore, they returned fire and the CTs fled. Corporal Osman managed to bring down one of the CTs with a long-range shot: the other two CTs escaped, however, and took cover in a swamp overgrown with long grass. Ignoring the possibility that there might be a strong CT force lying hidden in ambush nearby, Graver and Osman pursued the escaping CTs and re-engaged them. Osman killed one and wounded the other. The CT who had been wounded in the first firefight then broke cover, carrying his Sten gun, and threw a grenade. Graver and Osman managed to kill him too.

OLLA PODRIDA

Personal Assistant to Nicol Gray

H.S. Bailey

Hugh was a Gurkha who served in Waziristan, Burma and Malaya, before resigning when it was decided that his Battalion would convert to an artillery role: he did not want to become a mathematician. I sympathise having also eschewed the artillery path in my own military days. After a short spell on the staff of Kamunting Tin Mines, he joined the police as a Cadet ASP.

For a few months Hugh was Personal Assistant (PA) to the controversial Commissioner of Police Gray, Hugh wrote:

"MY VIEW HAS always been that Gray would have worked well with Templer but, unfortunately, Field Marshal Montgomery had already "damned" Gray.

He was eager to lead and to be seen to lead.

My first experience of his view on 'showing the flag', as we travelled the country, was when I organised an escort for a visit to Rawang, a notoriously bad area. Gray was furious when he found our escort dressed not in smart uniform with silver buttons, polished boots and wearing their songkoks, but in jungle green and floppy hats. He insisted that we visited as many outstations as possible and **my** contemporaries greatly appreciated his ways and determination to share our risks.

His directive to me was that, if we were ambushed, he would lead the counter-attack personally, passing orders through me to our smartly dressed escort. He, himself, always wore his No.1 uniform and flew his police pennant on the staff car."

Hugh recalls one of the famous stories of Templer's habits.

"AFTER SOME TIME Templer learnt about the bullying which Gray had to endure from some of the pre-war planters, they were also

trying to tell Templer how to run the Emergency. Templer decided to grasp the nettle and deal once and for all with the dissidents, with maximum publicity.

Having been fully briefed on the main culprit's life style, early one morning Templer roared into his estate and stormed into his bungalow followed by the DO and a posse of other officials. Almost immediately a sarong-clad young local girl came out from the bedroom on to the verandah followed in short order by the startled culprit. Templer milked the scene for all it was worth and, spreading his arms as if to embrace his entourage, launched a vitriolic attack on the man. Templer said that he had no respect for him and would have nothing more to do with him and that the officials would make sure that his exposure would be broadcast widely.

Meanwhile SCs, estate labourers and others, alerted by the noise of the High Commissioner's cavalcade of a personal scout car with armoured vehicles fore and aft, had assembled to witness the scene and hear Templer's richest invective descending on the hapless man. Finally, Templer ordered the SCs to be removed from the estate since the man did not deserve protection.

No more was heard from the bully or his cronies who decided, sensibly, not to tangle further with the 'Tiger'."

From Waziristan to Jungle Warfare and Booby Traps in Malaya

H.S. Bailey

"SOMETIME BEFORE I JOINED the police, 'Bugle' Blake, my local OCPD, asked me if I would care to join him in an attack on a CT camp. He claimed that he had a Malay CT who was ready to guide us to the camp in the Pondok Tanjong Forest Reserve. We set off at 2300 hours. I was carrying a Reissing sub-machine-gun, a Colt .45 automatic and a hip flask of brandy.

My heart sank when I discovered that we were about to attack a hundred men with only 18 *Mata Matas*. Bugle had a shooting stick, a revolver and a water bottle and, like his men, was wearing Khaki Drill (KD) and silver buttons. The Malays were also wearing their *songkoks*. Our small force was armed with old Lee Enfield rifles, two Sten guns and a Bren, and we had no jungle clothing, no rations and no radio.

We struggled along until dawn when the scouts came crashing back as the enemy opened fire. Luckily, the CTs retreated immediately. Blake had a graze on the top of his head and was slightly dazed. The brandy came in handy. When we entered the camp we found a hundred plates and other evidence that our estimate of the CT strength had been correct. Our casualties had been one grazed OCPD and one wounded Sikh. Lucky us]

When as a Cadet ASP I started to take out police patrols, we were still using KD, wore gym shoes and had no radios or special rations. I used to wrap my food, chocolate, tinned sardines, onions and rice, into a *sarong* and sling it across my shoulder like a Mexican bandit, and so to war with my personal weapons and an old lemonade bottle full of water.

My days were full to overflowing. We returned from patrols to all the normal duties, pay parades, inspections and court cases, I never had time to think of the ever-present dangers.

Eventually, I was promoted from a garage to a small house and I had as my orderly, an elderly Malay lady who looked after me well; feeding me with fine curries and local fruit and giving me a good wiggling from time-to-time for not getting enough sleep or being away too much.

One morning I was awakened early by a report that Communist pamphlets had been scattered around near my quarters and office. When I went to inspect, I found two tall bamboo poles stuck either side of the road, each bearing the Red Flag of China. They looked innocent and I pulled one out and handed it to the inspector. As I was about to pull the other out, he pointed to a nail stuck into the pole some six inches from the bottom. And when I looked at the hole from which the pole had come, I saw a hand grenade with the pin out and the lever nearly released, held only by a very small pebble. We had been lucky. I sent in a drawing so that others might be warned and the marines took care of the disposal of the grenade.

My stint as PA to the Commissioner ended when, during a tour in the outback, he found a cadet with a broken leg and decided that it would be better if we swapped places, so I was posted to a jungle company in Kedah. The CO was a brilliant patrol leader but gave no time to administration and was paying all his men as if they were recruits.

A few days after I took over, all the Chinese deserted and went home. I transferred most of the **officers** and having, with the aid of a hurricane lamp, managed to sort out the pay problems, invited the Chinese Constables to return to duty and better pay. They all came back and were keen to work.

There was no training. Who was fit to instruct? The officers knew nothing about the antiquated, heterogeneous collection of weapons at our disposal, some could not even assemble their webbing, and I was busy trying to sort out the administration and walking in and out of the barracks getting to know the men: they all seemed very young.

I was then ordered to take my company across to a camp on the other side of Kedah. Somehow we managed to carry out the move with armoured cars, emergency drills and so on, without mishap.

I gave one of my officers the use of my little house for his wife and his little lambs (as he called them) and made do with a small room where I could sleep and hang my clothes.

Within days the promise that I would be given a month free of operations in order to train my company was broken, and I was required to provide two platoons to participate in one of those useless military sweeps which look so good on a map, but which usually turned into patrols in single file forcing their way painfully through the jungle.

We made three contacts with the CTs but the Sten guns, carried by the scouts, always let us down. The guns were new but the magazines old and weak. I sent a furious radio message to SAC Supplies, 'We have made three contacts with the CTs and in each case the Stens carried by the leading scouts failed to fire due to the new guns and worn out magazines. Please refer to Proverbs 30 — "He that troubleth his own house shall inherit the wind and the foolish shall be the servant to the wise at heart." The reply was a foolscap sheet of typed 'rocket' copied to my CPO, "If Mr Bailey is so keen on quotations from the Bible perhaps he may benefit from reading Matthew — "Set not your horn on high nor speak with a stiff neck for promotion cometh not from the north or the south but that God setteth up one and another down."

I was incensed and worried since I was due for confirmation as an ASP but the CPO assured me that I need not worry, he knew the

SAC well, they had a good laugh at my expense, but we would get new magazines.

I was worried about the training situation. The police jungle companies, 240 strong, could not be effective without training. Frightened young men needed training such as the Gurkhas had implemented by rota, thus producing some excellent results with few Gurkha casualties and many enemy losses.

And then the luck of No. 13 Jungle Company ran out. An accidental shooting in the Mess, the deaths of our OCPD and one of my men in an attack, and I was becoming weary, endlessly out with my platoons and worrying about the lack of training.

One night I found myself outside my cabin with a loaded and cocked Browning automatic, shouting to what I thought were friendly troops the other side of the trees and calling on them not to shoot.

One morning I awoke with a severe headache and visited the local medical officer. He gave me a curious look and sent me off to Alor Star where I was sedated for 36 hours. I had been in Malaya since 1948, "Too long in bad stations."

Reflecting on those days it seems that all my years in the police we were rushed; there never was time for a full appreciation of the situation, and it was seldom possible to seek advice from a senior officer.

I gave up accepting invitations to dinner. It seemed as if halfway through a decent meal, and perhaps just beginning a relationship with a pretty girl, one was always called away.

Those years of immediate action have left their mark. I still jump to do everything as quickly as possible."

Train Driving at Padang Besar

J.S.Bailey

Bill Bailey's pre-police experience was as an infantryman; first in the Queen's Royal Regiment in India and Burma then as an officer posted to the Gurkhas where he served in Indonesia and Singapore. After demobilisation he attended Manchester University, took an Arts Degree and immediately joined the RMPF.

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"IN 1951 I WAS posted to Padang Besar, a small township on the Perlis/Thai border, which had a railway station and immigration and customs officers from Thailand as well as from Malaya. My tasks included organisation of the SC patrols protecting the railway line; border patrols commanding the police station and maintaining liaison with the Thais. Apart from the government buildings there were a few tumbledown, unprepossessing shops. I had brought my wife and two-year-old daughter with me and we were the only resident Europeans until a SBO moved into the Rest House. Apart from him we never saw another European other than an occasional passenger on the train. The road to Kangar, the State capital, was closed because of the risk of CT ambush, so we had to come and go by train to Arau where I kept my car. We had no vehicles in the town.

There was one passenger train and two goods trains daily and we used them both to travel south to Arau, usually sitting in the guard's van. However, I got to know one of the Malay drivers well and he allowed me to travel beside him on the footplate, taught me *the* controls and sometimes even let me drive!

Apart from 20/30 SCs in the railway patrol, I had regular policemen manning the police station and some more SCs for static defence and patrolling on the edge of town. I led the border patrols and other patrols outside the town; sometimes I accompanied the dawn patrols along the line.

We had no derailments in my time but the dawn patrol once came across a barrier of logs and heavy stones laid across the rails. They were able to remove the obstacles before the next train arrived."

OCPD Triang

D.L. Brent

"IN DECEMBER 1952 my wife, Eunice, arrived by ship in Penang and immediately afterwards I was posted to Triang as OCPD.

This was a great experience, my first command of over 500 personnel, with B Company 4 Malay in support and also 6 PFF. Most travel was in armoured vehicles, including an armoured train, which was ready to travel at Triang station right next door to my

HQ. It would be easy to fill a book with the events and characters in Triang, which included pig shoots, a rubber estate manager turning up at a party one night with an enormous just shot python in the boot of his bright red Studebaker convertible, 0300 hours telephone call from a distant P/Lt agitated about an elephant smashing the New Village perimeter fence and guzzling the villagers' bananas, and should he shoot it! Estate manager and friend with a Chinese mistress who was a Min Yuen member; irate estate managers about this, that or the other inconvenience to them caused by police operational work; my OC, a P/Lt and former army captain and wartime Battalion Adjutant; the desolate, deserted estate manager's bungalow where the last incumbent's brains and hair were still stuck to the wall after a messy gun suicide; the character who commanded the PFF; my first SB operation all night into the early hours during the absence of my Chinese SB officer, and having some limited success but making a hash of one aspect; some excellent intelligence work by my people resulting in effective police kills

Triang District had earned a reputation as the arsehole of Pahang! It festered in the southernmost corner of Pahang State. To the north was Temerloh District and the Pahang River, to the east-southeast was Tasek Bera, Malaya's largest swampy lake area, to the south Bahau District in Negri-Sembilan, to the west was the remote border of Bentong District and the border of the State of Negri Sembilan. The entire area was heavy jungle on the fringes of which numerous rubber estates had been carved out. There were only dirt tracks but north/south through the district ran the railway link from Gemas in the south to Kota Bahru.

There was no electricity in Triang Township. Only rubber estate managers, who had their own generators, enjoyed the luxury of electricity. The OCPD's bungalow was next to the Assistant District Officer's (ADO) bungalow and was furnished with the usual sparse teak items and lighting was by pressure lamps. Cooking was with kerosene stove, and a hasty order to Robinson's in KL resulted in the delivery of our first refrigerator run on kerosene. No electricity so no fans! The ubiquitous and absolutely indispensable fan to keep the fetid air circulating and body cooling was much needed.

Our arrival in Triang possibly created a Malayan first ever record for the youngest Division One government official and wife — I was

22 years old and Eunice was 17, and in Triang, to boot, at the height of the Emergency! Eunice certainly attracted attention, young, slim, stunning good looks with blue eyes and blonde hair; she turned heads wherever she went. She knuckled down to things with enthusiasm, getting the hang of shopping, running the household, travel, socialising and picking up the Malay language along the way.

The population was concentrated in New Villages established under the Briggs Plan, including the entire area around Triang town and all rubber estate work force areas. Travel was mainly by armoured vehicles — such as the armoured scout car on which I manned the Bren gun perched in the turret for visits to security units and rubber estates.

I also had an armoured train under command. The engine in the middle had an armoured carriage at front and back and then at each end of these were two flat wagons piled with sandbags, to take the force of explosion should the CTs mine the track to try and blow us up. Travel in the bullet-proof, armour-plated, steel wagons was like being slowly cooked in a very noisy hot oven. The clanking, jolting and rattling and the unbearable heat of the armoured plating in the sun, was a test for the physical system — but better than the alternative! A morning of travelling back and forth in the armoured train left the uniform damp with perspiration and a change **of** uniform was usually needed on return to Triang. The CTs were **very** aggressive and active in Triang but **we** had built up a pretty **clear** picture of their organisation, both military in the jungle and underground — the Min Yuen — in the civilian community.

Waking up to a day's work ahead **was a mass of** possibilities **to** be coped with and stimulating to say the least. I had a good team: inspectors for crime and SB and P/Lts in charge of security groups. A P/Lt manned the combined (police-military) Operations **Room and** worked in conjunction with the Malay Regiment. The **rubber estate** managers were generally good blokes, although I recall one testy manager calling me at night and complaining bitterly **because** we had stopped his work force going into an area **because** we were running an operation there at that time. His loss of **a day's tapping** and revenue **flow** was unfortunate, **but** it had a lower priority than beating the enemy.

Another manager had a young Chinese mistress whom we knew was a member of the Min Yuen. Her role was principally to gather information and, as she was not potentially very dangerous, we kept her under surveillance in order to gather leads to other 'bigger fish' and bided our time.

Before my arrival a manager of a very remote rubber estate had committed suicide by shooting himself in the head with his carbine. The absentee owners of the rubber estate were not able to get a replacement for him and so the tappers continued tapping and selling their latex independendy. I had a strong security unit there and when Eunice and I spent an overnight stay to help maintain morale, we looked in the manager's bungalow. It was a drab, forlorn, cement block with peeling paint and a dank, stale smell. Scattered on the floor were miscellaneous items of broken furniture and broken glass, and on a wall were the blood splash stains and some hair from the head of the suicide. Suicides were not uncommon with those who found themselves in remote, unfriendly and dangerous locations."

The Case of the One-Armed Tapper D.L. Brent

"WE HAD INFORMATION that on one rubber estate there was a Chinese female rubber tapper suffering from the loss of an arm. However, when her latex was tallied at the collection point each morning, she managed to bring in a goodly flow from the trees in her allotted section. This aroused our suspicion and, as we knew her son was a member of the local CT organisation in the jungle, we decided to mount surveillance in her section of the estate. Under cover of darkness one night a section took up position. The next morning the female tapper arrived and started tapping. It didn't take long before there was some foliage movement at the jungle fringe then a figure came into view, a CT wearing a khaki uniform, cap with red star, bandoleer and carrying a Mark 4 Lee Enfield rifle. We watched him as he made contact with the female rubber tapper and both started tapping together. We rose from our positions and confronted the CT calling upon him to surrender and to put his hands up. He made a break to run for the cover of the jungle while

his mother shrieked in fear. We loudly called on him to surrender again but he continued running, stumbling over slippery ground and tree roots. A volley of shots rang out killing the CT instantly. We would have much preferred, of course, that the CT surrendered. The body was brought back to HQ in Triang and his mother was held for interrogation. I was not insensitive to the tragedy of this case of mother and son, but there was a job to be done."

Diplomacy in Pekan

D.L. Brent

"PAHANG WAS ONE of the pre-war Unfederated States, a Protectorate not a Colony and, whatever the small print in the legal documents might say, HRH the Sultan was the monarch in his State and expected to be treated accordingly whether by Malaysians or expatriate officers. John Axford, my predecessor as OCPD, a World War II bomber pilot, had clearly not been interested in protocol. The law was the law and those who infringed it were liable to land up in custody.

In April 1953 the CPO Pahang, Carr Bovell, told me that I was to take over as OCPD Pekan because the Sultan of Pahang had banished John Axford for arresting his brother, the *Tengku Bendahara* (Court Chamberlain), for conducting a lottery based on admission tickets to the park. It appeared that John put the *Tengku* in the lockup at Police HQ. This was a most unusual situation and extremely sensitive.

I declined the Sultan's invitation to ride with his polo team, as this would have entailed considerable time training and this I could not afford, I restricted myself to an occasional game of tennis with His Highness and court members from time to time.

The only slightly difficult time I experienced with the Sultan was when an SC, whom I had admonished for a minor disciplinary matter, went to the Sultan's *Istana* (palace) with some other SCs to ask the Sultan's help. In other words, I had a minor revolt on my hands! However, it was short lived. I went to see the Sultan at his riverside *istana* and had a brief conversation with him at which he agreed that the matter was inconsequential, that he was perceived as

a father figure by 'his children' and that he would, of course, advise the SCs to return to their duties immediately."

Monsoon in Pahang

D.L. Brent

Most of us have experienced the monsoon as visitors, but it was clearly a much more traumatic experience to live through a long monsoon.

"THE HEAVY MONSOON season on the east coast caused considerable changes in life styles and practices amongst the local population. The entire riverine areas on and around the banks of the great Pahang River were flooded. All village dwellings were built on stilts, and in Pekan Town all dwellings and shop houses were built on pilings or five-foot ways above most flood levels. *Sampans* replaced cars and bicycles. The monsoon season had an extraordinary effect on one's outlook. It seemed that all day, all night, the heavy rain kept thundering down on the roof without any let up. No sunlight penetrated. The days were dark and dismal. Everything became extremely damp. I recall opening a cupboard door and seeing two bright green objects at the bottom of the cupboard. When I bent down to look closer I was astounded to find that they were a pair of my black shoes which had changed colour in a couple of days, covered in green mould! Added to this was the knowledge that all sorts of creepy crawlies were harbouring under the house on top of the brick pilings away from the flood waters and on occasions we could see the latest additions swimming their way across the garden towards the house — a lizard, a toad, a centipede, a small snake!

Kaleidoscope: 1951-1958

D.L. Brent

"MY POSTING TO Kuala Lipis in mid-1952 was an eye opener. After command of 34 men in a platoon, I found myself as AOCPD of a district with strength of about 1,200 personnel — on regular police and para-military duties and dedicated military operations. Police stations and police posts were far-flung, some a day's river travel to

get to them, and altogether an incredible learning experience on many fronts — police work, intelligence, and operational activity. On short two-day ops, jungle bashing, my tutor was a P/Lt Dixon, ex-RAF about 25, who had acquired an enviable reputation with his 'Tiger Squads', most of whom were SEPs. Very sadly he was killed on a special operation in November 1952 in the Kuala Medang area, where the strength of the enemy had been badly under-estimated and he was out-numbered and out-gunned. It was my sad duty to be the OC Burial Party at Lipis, and for the two SCs killed with him. Later, in memory of Dixon, the fort built near Kuala Medan was named Fort Dixon.

On return to Malaya in March 1956, I was posted as OCPD Batu Pahat. This again was a hectic period, experience of working with Fiji Infantry Regiment (FIR), commanded by Lt/Col Ratu Penaia Ganilau. The King's Own Scottish Borderers (KOSB) replaced them and, while the previously 'casual' camp of the Fijians was suddenly alive with whitewash and red paint all over the place, they didn't quite match the Fijians for kills and surrenders.

Many, many anecdotes — various operational successes. 2/Lt Paul Manuelli of the FIR, while leading a patrol to the north of the District, was suddenly confronted by an enraged bull elephant, which picked him up with its trunk and threw him; he fortunately survived. Later Paul became Chairman of the Bank of Fiji and then Minister of Finance. On his wall is a cartoon by me relating to the incident. In our operations room we pinned every incident on to our large maps with coded-coloured pins for each category of incident. We wondered what colour pin to use for 'Fijian thrown by elephant'.

The Fijians 'uplifted' one of the two cannons from the front of Muar Police HQ. Nobody discovered where it went until I recognised it in front of HR HQ at Queen Elizabeth Barracks in Suva in 1981. The KOSB WO and Sergeants' Mess kept a large Malayan honey bear chained near their Mess, its favourite diet being treacle and beer.

Unrequited Love

D.L. Brent

"IN DECEMBER 1957 I was posted to Johore Bahru as OCPD. Johore Bahru, the capital of the State of Johore, was on the other side of the causeway from Singapore.

One small insignificant event, which sticks in my mind because of its incongruity, occurred over the Christmas festive season. That afternoon I was in my office at District HQ just in front of the causeway approach when one of my crime inspectors told me there had been a murder in the Scudai vicinity, a semi-rural area just outside Johore Bahru. We got in my car and went to the scene of the crime. The local sergeant was waiting at the roadside and took us to the crime scene. There was a narrow footpath on a gentle hillside covered in thick *Lalang* where the murder had taken place, and the body of a young Chinese female lay to one side. Deep knife wounds had been inflicted in the chest and throat and there was considerable blood over the clothing and the earth and grass underneath.

The sad story was one of unrequited love by a young Malay youth for the young Chinese girl who was a rubber tapper. Apparently she had not responded to his approaches for some time and on this occasion she had rebuffed him again. In passion he had stabbed her several times and she fell and quickly died.

The Malay youth then ran for help and gave himself up and was arrested. The circumstances were pretty clear. The body was lifted into a police Land Rover and taken to the hospital. We left the crime scene and returned to my office. By this time it was about 1830 hours and it just so happened that afternoon that the Police Officers' Mess was holding a Christmas Party for officers' children, which I was supposed to have been at earlier to join my wife and small son, Tim, aged three-and-a-half. They were already there when I arrived and the scene was one of happy mothers and children opening presents, laughing and running about. The table was loaded with goodies to eat and pieces of pulled crackers were lying around, altogether a scene of joy. I suddenly noticed on the back of my hand a patch of dried blood, accidentally rubbed off onto my hand at the scene of the murder, and I was struck by the appallingly incongruous situation — to see, amongst all the celebration, joy and innocence

before me, the fresh blood of a tragically murdered young girl and to feel the absolute chasm of difference between the two separate worlds. I quietly put my teacup down and went and washed away the blood."

Riots in Singapore

D.L. Brent

Singapore, a Chinese city, was always a potential problem for Malaya. Across the Causeway Malay culture was predominant: south of the Causeway the vast majority were of Chinese origin. David's short excursion into Singapore is a reminder that there were other cultural differences. We were at the sharp end and they were (usually) in a peaceful merchant city where commodity exchanges, not exchanges of fire, were the order of the day.

"SINGAPORE HAD BEEN for a long time a hornet's nest of Communist subversive activity, and a source of recruits for the MCP. On 24th October 1956 riots erupted. The riots finally resulted in 13 dead, 123 injured, 70 cars burnt or battered, 2 schools razed, 2 police stations damaged and the arrest of 1,000 people. The Singapore Police requested aid from the Malayan Police and the CPO Johore, Claude Fenner, ordered me to take a riot squad and armoured personnel carrier to Singapore, and we drove into Singapore arriving at the Beach Road Police HQ. The area OC suggested that I might like to bunk at the Officers' Mess. I thanked him but declined, preferring to stay with my men at the police station to make sure that they were looked after, fed and ready for action. I slept on a spare table in one of the offices.

The next few days were hot, sweaty and tiring as we patrolled the streets in the area, aware of the hidden eyes observing us from behind closed shutters, and prepared in case of any retaliation with thrown acid or explosives. In the event nothing untoward transpired and the curfew was finally lifted. We bid farewell to the police station and drove the long journey back to Batu Pahat.

A few days later a letter of acknowledgement was received from the OC Beach Road Police Station, Singapore, in which he commented on my sub-standard appearance with unpolished badges and

buttons!! Unbelievable! In my view this was just another reflection of the mind-set of certain types in the Singapore Police and the chasm of difference between those who lived in the cosy, cocooned metropolis of Singapore and those who lived and worked in much tougher, down-to-earth and sometimes remote conditions in Malaya — worlds apart.

I was to look back at this and to contemplate that my arrival in Singapore was curiously quite symbolic. On 16th December 1941 after the Japanese Army had by-passed Penang my father, Captain Lionel Brent, OC 'B' Company 3rd Battalion Straits Settlements Volunteer Force had, together with his men, made their way south to Singapore where they remained in the defence of Singapore. When Singapore fell in February 1942 my father was taken POW and sent to the 'Death Railway' in Thailand where he died about a year later."

The Chinese Language School

H. Bruce

I had, as ASCA Federation, been responsible for the creation of the language school, which had to be invented in a great hurry to remedy the appalling shortage of Chinese speakers in the Malayan Government. The same tidy minded Whitehall Warriors who dreamt up the ill-fated Malay Union Constitution had created the gap; they deckled to abolish the pre-war Chinese Protectorate.

The Braces and all the other instructors did a magnificent job and most of the students seemed to enjoy the crash course.

Gus Fletcher, who has been a major contributor to this book, was one of the star pupils and went on to a full-time course.

"MY LATE HUSBAND, Robert, was die first Director of the Government Language School set up in the Cameron Highlands to provide crash courses in Chinese dialects for government officers. Most of the students were police officers.

We drove up to the school in convoy, military vehicles fore and aft; their guns ready to rake the jungle. It rained all the way. There were no incidents but we knew that death might be just round any sharp comer on the road or, indeed, anywhere in ambush country. A

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Chinese, suspected of carrying food to the jungle for the CTs, was shot in our garden one morning as he tried to run away when challenged.

Occasionally we visited K.L., not in convoy but in our Morris car. One day I was on the way back with a police officer who was one of the students, at the wheel, when we approached the Mth mile he pressed the accelerator pedal onto the floor and shouted, "Put the gun on my knee with the handle by my right hand." I had never handled a gun before, "Quick, Quick under the lanyard." I did not ask what was going on, but my teeth were chattering and not from the cold. When we stopped at the next police post our student explained that he had seen a Communist cap lying on the road. The next day our newspapers told us that an SEP had shot his comrade and his cap had fallen off as he ran across the road on his way to surrender.

There was little for the school staff and students to do apart from work (which was, of course, the reason why Cameron Highlands had been chosen).

Most evenings we sat in the hotel lounge chatting when my ears were so filled with jungle stories that I felt that I had lived in the jungle all my life. Not surprisingly, these normally active young men, many from the jungle squads, found it difficult to adjust to this inactive life. Classes every day were all very well but Sunday was a blank, and this led to many student pranks.

On one occasion we were asked if we would lend our Morris to accompany a Jeep up a newly-made road to the top of Gunong Brinchang. The view was superb, but I did think it would have been a stupid thing to die for: 'First woman up Brinchang'.

One abiding memory, apart from the high spirits of our splendid young students, was of the huge bluebottle-like flies that bred prolifically in the cabbage fields. But this irritant paled into insignificance when our reservoir was devastated by a landslide and we had no more running water."

Sealed Orders at Colombo

P.A. Collin

"RETURNING FROM LEAVE, we did not know until we arrived at Colombo what our next posting would be, and this was a source of considerable anxiety. During the three weeks at sea, a generous amount of alcohol was consumed. At Colombo the Government Agent came on board and handed each of us our sealed posting orders. We had been listening to the BBC during the voyage and I had noted that there had been some particularly nasty incidents in Perak. I was a little concerned to find that my posting was to Perak, and for the last few days at sea I was probably more horizontal than vertical.

I arrived in Tapah to find that I was working with a company of the Gordon Highlanders and stayed in their HQ bungalow. I remember no major outward successes during the period but the CTs achieved no major successes against us, which speaks for itself,"

Selamat Jalan: Farewell

P.A. Collin

"MY FAREWELL TO Malaya took place in Seremban where I had been responsible for all SCs in the State, but I also had time to play a lot of sport. It was a wrench saying goodbye to Malaya and my Malayan friends such as my orderly, a Cantonese hillman called Woh Ah Bee. But with *Merdeka* looming ahead, it was time to move on.

The send off at Seremban Station was memorable indeed. As the train drew into the station I was paraded on the platform in uniform in full view of the public and other passengers. Then a brother officer stripped off the epaulettes that carried my badges of rank, to loud applause, and *then* I was bundled onto the train with everyone clapping and roaring good wishes. It was an emotional moment, which I savoured privately as the train pulled out of the station."

Escorting Banishees to China

P.A. Collin

"WHILE STILL AT Balik Pulau I was chosen as the 'Joe Soap' who would escort a party of fifty CTs back to mother China. The bump was a nightmare but somehow we completed all the paperwork and set off on a slow boat to China! The voyage was painless. The amiable skipper provided generous supplies of Bols gin. I had fifteen Malay policemen as an escort party and the banishees caused no troubles.

Our first stop was Hoihow where Chiang Kaishek's KMT were in charge. We stayed outside the three-mile limit and I watched, with some misgivings, the approach of a large launch filled with soldiers. When the launch came alongside, the soldiers, who were armed to the teeth, swarmed aboard. Since, as far as I was concerned, the banishees were my responsibility until formal handover was completed, I posted sentries outside the doors where the formalities were being carried out, and mounted a Bren gun covering the top of the gangplank. The atmosphere was tense and I was relieved when the small Hoihow party had been handed over and signed for, and the launch drew away. Rumour had it that the KMT gave the ex-CTs the choice of donning their uniform and proceeding to the front or else. I do not know what happened to them.

We sailed on with the rest of the party, now forty strong, and handed them over to the Hong Kong Police who were ready, in turn, to put them across the border into Communist hands.

Our slow boat had further ports to visit before returning to Singapore, so we had a week off in Hong Kong where I managed to organise a programme which included escorting a Reuter's correspondent round the New Territories, and a visit to *HMS Amethyst*, just returned from her amazing dash down the Yangtze River through heavy shell fire and was severely damaged. We were very impressed."

A Shock Trooper's Progress

P.A. Collin

"I WAS POSTED in 1950 to Kluang, Johore. One extraordinary memory of that period is the tale of the Gurkha who was wounded during the retreat in 1942, with the Japanese in hot pursuit. He had remained in the jungle ever since waiting to be picked up by his comrades, somehow managing to keep himself alive using his *kukri* as an agricultural tool to grow tapioca and other plants for food. When the Gurkhas found him, the blade of his *kukri* had been worn down to a few inches of steel. He was issued with a new *kukri* and a new uniform, and was soon seen marching proudly on duty.

Another, less happy memory, is of the bloody CT ambush, which they sprung upon us when we were driving to Yong Peng.

I was posted as OCPD to Rengam, a township about ten miles south of Kluang, so I was back in familiar territory in central Johore. It was a District full of rubber and oil palm estates, and the main railway line from Singapore to KL ran through our railway station.

By now the CTs had perfected the techniques that they had learnt from Force 136, for blowing up railway lines using gelignite and gun cotton line, so we had frequent derailments to deal with.

The police station looked down on the village of Rengam and my modest accommodation was situated inside our wired perimeter, about thirty yards from the station. Close behind us there was a company of Gurkhas, and the relations between military and police were excellent.

The planters were, as usual, terrific and I visited them as often as I could, by day and night. I devised a contraption that looked like a very large compass upon which I plotted every estate in my District so that if firing broke out, I could point the arrow in the direction of the firing and get some immediate indication of which estates might be involved. This was particularly valuable if the battle was taking place in an estate that had no radio communication, since the CTs had learnt to cut the telephone lines before launching an attack.

I remember solving, to my own satisfaction, a slightly awkward situation when local *towkays* (shopkeepers) or local luminaries left presents of food or drink on my doorstep. Government regulations were explicit; presents should be given back to the donor or placed

in the Treasury, but I decided that the best way to handle such matters was to invite people to a party where I would announce the name of the donor and share the presents with the guests. This saved face all round, but I do not suppose the Treasury would have approved of the solution."

As Secretary for Chinese Affairs in Malacca I was frequently faced with the 'gift' dilemma. I admire Sandy's solution but fear that I would not have been able to adopt it successfully in Malacca. I did, however, have the pleasure of presenting the Treasury with a live chicken one day.

"I shall always blame Rengam for exposing my weaknesses in the matter of filing systems. I plead in mitigation that to deal with total efficiency with the torrent of bumph which poured out from HQ, mostly labelled Top Secret, Secret or Confidential, would have required a huge amount of office time, which I could not afford, if I was to remain personally involved in active operations. So, I decided that anything marked CONFIDENTIAL, or above, would go straight into my wall safe (thus, of course, ensuring that it would be forgotten). We had, after all, been sent out as shock troops not paper wallahs.

One day, Officer Commanding Special Branch (OCSB) breezed into my office unannounced and said, "Let's have a look at your secret files, Sandy," and, in great dread, I moved to my wall safe, opened the door and out cascaded all these important sensitive papers. There was an embarrassed hush, and then OCSB said, "Let's get this sorted out, shall we?" It took some time but we did!"

Only Joking!

P.J.D. Guest

"I WAS RETURNING on patrol from Kampong Bersia. The path followed the bank of the large Sungei Perak. At one point the bushes and trees thinned out, leaving only the *Lalang* about three feet high, and isolated bushes. As we entered this area, the two leading scouts went to ground and waved us to get down. I crept up to the scouts who said there were people on the opposite bank of the river.

Through the grass I saw two men, obviously Chinese from their skin colour, at the water's edge. One was squatting washing, whilst the other was standing and putting on a green shirt. It seemed certain that only CTs would be around in this empty, abandoned area. But we couldn't get to them, as the river was about 300 feet wide. So the only thing we could do was to take pot shots at them. The two scouts and I exchanged some rude comments about accelerating their digestive systems, and raised our weapons, two .303 rifles and my .300 American carbine, ready to fire. For maximum fright effect I said we were to all fire at the same time, and then we opened fire. The figures moved with impressive speed; in a flash they vanished into the bushes and their speed suggested neither had been hit. We didn't laugh, but said, "That'll scare them."

Next moment there was a couple of loud cracks overhead and then several more. Hell! We were being fired on! We hit the deck as ever more fire power rained down on us and lay really flat as the shots cracked through the grass around us. I muttered, "Take cover," to the other two. Which was a pretty stupid comment in view of the circumstances! We crawled, very flat indeed, back to the men behind us. The unit comedian piped up with, "Did we win?"

Our mini salvo at the start of the contact might be called 'Only Joking!' but we couldn't stay there indefinitely and eventually moved off, through trees, bushes and bamboo; everybody bent low as we went. It was the only firefight I ever remember walking, or crawling away from, but there was nothing we could achieve. An incident such as this would simply be logged as a contact with no result. On the ground things were more tense, it certainly gave us a very bad fright!"

No Swearing Please!

P.J.D. Guest

"THE; CONVOYS FROM KL into Pahang carried radio sets that were linked to HQ in KL and to Police District HQs. One day a convoy commanded by a P/Lt was ambushed along the route. He immediately radioed to KL and, against a background of the shots and bangs of a noisy firefight, we heard, "Ambush at Milestone 18. Send up armoured car."

Next we heard the sound of bullets hitting the P/Lt's truck, shattering the windscreen, as he continued to use the radio. His oaths were fluent and impressive. We then heard the cool voice of KL Control, "Baker two: do not swear or use profane language over the net: Over!" The screeching reply was, "You'd f***** well shout if you were where I am having my d*** shot off."

Hoodwinking the Bus Burners

P.J.D. Guest

Diary 29th August 1951

"WE RECEIVED A REPORT that die bus from Kuala Kangsar had been stopped at the 91st mile and burnt on a wooden bridge. Among the passengers was a policeman from our transport section, travelling in civilian clothes. He had been down to Circle HQ at Kuala Kangsar and was returning with parts for one of our vehicles, which he had stowed on the roof of the bus. He realised they were going to burn the bus and that he would lose his spare parts, so he approached one of the CTs and said he was a lorry driver working for a Chinese businessman up in Grik. He said he was bringing back spare parts for the lorry that was out of action and was worried at losing the parts, as his employer would be angry. One of the uniformed CTs was sent up the ladder. The parts were lifted down and returned to the policeman. The important spare part was later fitted to the defective vehicle, which was thus returned into police use. A well-planned ambush by CTs."

A Noisy Tea Party

P.J.D. Guest

"JAN CAME OUT to join me and we were married in Singapore. Not long after we had arrived in Temerloh, Jock Stonier turned up. I invited him to tea at 1600 hours. What a transformation from previous bachelor days, cups of tea instead of pints of cold beer!

We had a table and chairs placed on the lawn just outside the front door of the bungalow. Jock and I put our weapons aside. We sat relaxed in our chairs, with the warm afternoon breeze floating over us enjoying the afternoon and the sandwiches, cakes and tea

provided by Jan. All seemed well with the world. Suddenly, there was a burst of firing from the rubber trees about two hundred yards away. Jock and I dived for our weapons and rolled onto the lawn with weapons facing the sound of the firing.

Jan had just gone to fetch more tea and turned back to face us, a reflex possibly more connected to the sound of her crockery breaking than the gunfire. She stood there bemused to see two grown men 'playing cowboys' until I yelled at her to get down. My tone upset her a bit as she had, at that point, no idea just how serious we were. I wished we hadn't left our spare Sten magazines indoors. To take Jan's mind off the immediate problem, and to have more rounds to hand if things turned nasty, I shouted to Jan to "Fetch the magazines." She scrambled back indoors and emerged soon after proudly calling out, "I've got them, *Times* and *Newsweek*!" I didn't have the heart to say anything other than, "Thank you Jan," as she handed me *The Times* and Jock the copy of *Newsweek*."

The Execution of Nine Ah Lims

P.J.D. Guest

"February 1955

SOME TIME AFTER moving into the second bungalow, I woke suddenly one morning. The early grey light that heralds the dawn, just before the sun rises over the equator in all its tropical beauty, flooded the room. I lay for a moment in the half-light; the realisation came to me with a jolt that I had just heard a shot not far away. I slipped out of bed and reached for my Luger pistol. The close proximity of the shot concerned me, was it a long overdue attack against the vulnerable bungalow target?

It was with some relief that I heard the sound of the Land Rover coming, but then it stopped. The silence felt deeper and lonelier now. I guessed the men had debussed and entered the rubber further up the hill, to sweep downwards towards the bungalow. Not being sure if anyone was waiting outside in the hope of luring me into the open, there was nothing to do but sit tight until the police section arrived.

Finally, the Land Rover drove to the bungalow; they had come across the body of a Chinese rubber tapper. He had been shot

through the back of his skull and was dead. Nearby, they found a young Chinese girl aged about ten years old crouching behind a rubber tree. The child told the police that she tapped the rubber area next to her father and like all tappers they had started about 0500 hours. Whilst she was tapping four Chinese men came out of the darkness and spoke to her. They asked if a certain man tapped rubber around there. The name they sought was the name of her father. She replied that he was, "Over there." The men went off and she carried on tapping. A little later there was a single shot, which sounded very loud in the quiet of the morning. She attributed the shot to the four men who had questioned her and she feared for the safety of her father after the shot sounded. She stopped tapping and hid at the foot of one of the trees.

Later I heard that the CTs had been looking for a police informer and guessed or found out that the informer's name was Ah Lim. This was a very common name. The CTs did not know which Ah Lim was the informer, so they assigned one of their execution squads to set about killing everyone of that name in the area. They eventually killed nine people named Ah Lim and, in the course of their killings, they did kill the informer.

It was essential to bring Jan up to speed, but how to mention there had been a killing only sixty yards from our isolated bungalow and, therefore, to be extra vigilant without alarming her? To her great credit and with two young children in the house, Jan made pretence of not being alarmed by the news. Over the coffee and toast I suggested it might be a good idea to know how the Luger worked and Jan casually agreed. We went over immediate actions; call the police; there was the possibility that the line might be cut, in which case to fire two shots to raise the alarm. With baby Kenneth gurgling away under the playful attention of his elder brother, we moved on to safety catches; hair triggers; aiming with a two-handed grip and magazine release and replacement. Then target acquisition, "Shoot at the nearest target." "Shoot first and shoot at the largest part of the target, the chest. If the target keeps moving, keep shooting." After this, whilst hugging the children, I cautioned Jan to be extra vigilant but not alarmed. Then kissed her, handed her the Luger with a flippant remark not to lose it, as the paperwork would be a nightmare, then I left for H.Q.

Grenades and Informers

P.J.D. Guest

"ONE THURSDAY EVENING, returning from the office, three of us visited a shop in the local town, and sat down at a table near the front to have a beer and observe the traditional bustling scene, which preceded Friday, the Muslim's Sabbath.

Suddenly, we heard the unmistakable sound of a .22 cap exploding followed by the ominous clattering sound of a metallic object rolling across the concrete floor of the shop. Trevor Bailey, the DSBO, yelled "Grenade" and the three of us threw ourselves on the floor. I remember lying half under the table with my hands clasped over my ears waiting for the inevitable. Time seemed to stand still and then I realised that I was counting the seconds — four, five, six, seven. There was no explosion. Bob Moorfield, who had obviously been doing the same thing, shouted out "It must be a dud. Let's get to buggery out of here." The three of us scrambled to our feet and beat a hasty retreat into the street.

Once out of the shop, we grabbed a number of by-passers and asked them if they had seen anything or had witnessed anyone running away. Of course, nobody had seen anything or, if they had, they were not prepared to admit it.

Bob, using his powers under the Emergency Regulations, immediately imposed a 23-hour curfew on the town, which meant the townspeople were confined to their houses and only allowed out between 1700 hours and 1800 hours to enable them to buy food and other necessities. Anyone found on the streets during curfew could be shot on sight. Bob let it be known that, until the culprits were found, the curfew would remain in force.

On the third day, deputations of Chinese and Indian businessmen presented themselves at Police HQ and pleaded with Bob to remove the curfew. It was ruining them and the town would die.

Bob lectured them like a Dutch uncle and told them that he had no intention of taking the curfew off until the culprits had been found. He said he was quite certain that somebody knew who the perpetrators were and that he would wait until these people came forward with information. In the meantime, the curfew would remain and if they all went bankrupt that was their problem.

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The following day an anonymous telephone caller, gave the names of three Chinese who, it was alleged, had been involved in the grenade throwing. One, an itinerant ice-cream vendor, was named as the person who had actually thrown the grenade while the other two were said to be members of a local Communist cell. All three were arrested, and admitted to being involved in the incident and, since their offence carried the death penalty, agreed to sell out the other members of their cell in exchange for the promise of deportation to China instead of being hanged.

So much for honour among thieves."

A Foolish Informer

P.J.D. Guest

"ONE NIGHT I received a night time visit from an Indian PWD overseer.

He told me that the CTs were in the habit of visiting the PWD labourers' lines at night to collect food, medicines, and cash donations. These visits were conducted on a regular basis and usually took place fortnightly following the labourers' paydays. He said that there were normally two terrorists involved. One visited the labourers to collect donations while the other kept watch.

I gave the man a payment from the slush fund to keep him sweet, and asked him to let me know if he had any further information or any definite date for the next visit. During the next couple of weeks the Indian contacted me on a number of occasions and acting, on his information, I set several ambushes all of which were abortive. I was becoming annoyed with my informant and began to wonder if he was playing me along to obtain a few dollars from the Secret Service funds. My sergeant was fed up with the whole thing and only wanted to get his hands on the person who was feeding me with false information.

But one evening my Indian turned up again. He was grey with fear and was so obviously frightened that I decided he must be telling the truth. He told me the CTs were going to make a visit later during the evening, and pleaded with me for assurance that we would kill them since, if they escaped, he would be a marked man. I

told him not to worry and that if the CTs did, indeed, turn up, they would not escape.

I telephoned the police station, asking the duty officer to turn out the police jungle squads, the duty officer was unable to reach my sergeant and reminded me that I had previously agreed that the police jungle squads could be stood down. Since there was no other immediate alternative, I called my batman and asked him if he would like to accompany me to lay an ambush. He seemed quite pleased at the prospect and I issued him with a Sten gun and magazines. I took my M1 carbine with a folding stock.

The PWD labour lines were a few hundred yards away, on top of a rise alongside the Temerloh/Mentakab Road and outside the defended area of the town. At the rear, they overlooked a flat area of ground intersected by two large monsoon drains that carried storm water from the town into the nearby stream.

Ghani and I made our way towards the PWD lines. It was pitch dark and had been raining. There was still plenty of cloud overhead through which the moon occasionally broke.

When we arrived at the PWD lines, I posted Ghani on top of the rise overlooking the rear of the buildings as I anticipated that our expected visitors would approach from that direction. I told him to keep his eyes open, to watch my back and to open fire on anybody who moved.

I made my way to the bottom of the rise and settled down on a track, which ran alongside one of the monsoon drains towards the rubber estate at the far side of the open area. The mosquitoes were out in droves following the rain, and it was not long before I was being eaten alive. I put up with it for as long as I could bear, but eventually decided to cover myself over with my poncho cape, which I had taken with me because of the rain. I made an observation slit through the neck of the poncho and waited. It was uncomfortably hot but at least I was protected from the mosquitoes.

Eventually, I reached the stage where I could no longer bear the heat and decided that, mosquitoes or not, I must get some fresh air. I sat up and threw the poncho off. As I did so, the moon came out from behind a cloud and I found myself looking at an armed and uniformed man who was approaching and was no more than 15 feet from me. The recognition was instantaneous. I swung my carbine

up, pushing the safety catch onto automatic as I did so, and squeezing the trigger. He stopped, half-turned to his right and started to level his weapon at me. Fortunately, my reactions had been a little faster than his. He gave a yell, turned and took off without having got a shot away. As he ran I gave him another burst and Ghani also opened fire from his position on the rise above.

We carried out a search of the area and found a heavy blood trail leading from the position where I had first seen the CT, to the main monsoon drain, which ran at right angles to his approach path. The blood trail petered out at this point. We searched the drain without result and carried out an extensive examination of the ground in an effort to find out where he could have gone. It seemed to me that our man must have had to re-cross the monsoon drain in order to escape, but this was about eight feet wide and, in view of the large amount of blood that he had lost, it seemed unlikely that he could have jumped across. We searched for almost two hours without any result and eventually called the search off. I was bitterly disappointed, but went home and slept.

At sunrise there was a commotion outside my house, and Ghani appeared holding on to an elderly female Chinese rubber tapper who was gabbling something about a dead body in the rubber estate across from the PWD lines. She led us onto the estate where she pointed out a khaki-clad figure lying on the ground. It was our CT, when we examined the body we found that he had three bullet holes in the lower part of his stomach and had obviously died from loss of blood.

We draped the body over the front of the Land Rover and drove back through the town to the police station; hoping that the locals would take note and that possibly someone might be able to identify him. It subsequently transpired that he was a D C M and was already listed on SB records. In the event we got ourselves into hot water over this episode, some locals complained to the DO over the way we had displayed the body, and he agreed with them. We were reprimanded and told not to do it again.

My informant duly collected a substantial sum of reward money for his efforts and was also transferred to another location for his own protection. A few months later, he was stupid enough to make a visit to Temerloh, driving a new car and flaunting his new found

wealth. The following evening he and two companions went out on a drinking spree. Their bodies were found, tied up to trees, with placards hung around their necks identifying them as running dogs. All three had been hacked to death with *parangs*."

Not Nairobi but Sungei Siput

W.J. Hillier

"MY PREDECESSOR, Bill Poundall, was a colourful character who had first come to Malaya in 1920. When wounded in the buttock by a Sten gun round accidentally fired by a planter whom Poundall had gone to assist, he complained loudly, "If you shoot me up the arse when I come out to help you, I shall have to reconsider my position!"

I did not take over my predecessor's quarters above the police station, but arranged to stay in a nearby estate bungalow. I was thus able to turn the OCPD's flat into a barracks to house the young policemen who previously had been scattered around the town in shophouses. The new arrangements were a great success; we improved security for men and weapons, as well as significantly decreasing our response time. On my first two responses to incidents with my newly formed jungle squads, we arrived before the CTs had time to disappear into the jungle, and managed a 'kill' each time. I put these heartening results down to 'rapid response'.

But we were not always so lucky; on one occasion when we charged out to deal with a burnt truck incident on a local estate, we came under rapid and effective fire from a hill to the left of the road, I fired back from under my Jeep and shouted to my men that, unless they took part in the counter-fire, we would all be killed. I could see the movement of CTs creeping up on us through the Lalang grass, where I was taking cover. Meanwhile, however, I also saw the Gurkha section, which had accompanied us, moving round to out-flank the CTs. The CTs, very sensibly, decided to break off the action.

I was no longer so sure that immediate response was the answer when a vehicle had been burnt. This type of incident was a favourite CT dodge to lure SF into an ambush. We suffered three casualties. A detective and the estate truck driver, who had come with us to

provide transport, were both killed and my Malay driver lost an arm; I got off with a bullet through a sleeve.

I took the Malay driver on as my bearer but, unfortunately, he and my host's Chinese cook quarrelled so bitterly and incessantly that I had to find him another job so he became a stallholder in Kuala Kangsar, where he flourished for many years."

A Churchillian Interest

W.J. Hillier

"ON THE AFTERNOON of 31st December 1948 a patrol of the 4th Hussars' armoured cars was ambushed in my district, and I set off with a strong patrol to investigate. We moved with considerable caution in extended order along both sides of the road. But this time we made no contact; the CTs had abandoned the ambush area. However, we were able to get all the wounded Hussars back to base before dark.

There was a curious sequel to this incident. Late one night in mid-1949, Police HQ telephoned to instruct me to return immediately to the scene of the Hussar ambush, search and secure the area and await developments. No explanation was offered for this strange request. With 45 men from my jungle squads I duly carried out my orders and, as dawn was breaking, returned to the main road. There I found a senior planter standing by, I supposed that, like me, he was standing by for an unknown reason, but I did not question him about his presence. So we waited by the roadside. Then about 0800 hours an impressive procession of army and police vehicles appeared. At the centre of the convoy there was an 'up-market' civilian car out of which stepped Mr Anthony Eden, the British Foreign Secretary. I was then asked to tell him all I knew about the ambush of the Hussars.

When the convoy left I was none the wiser about the reason for this session with the Foreign Secretary about an incident that had taken place six months before. It took me a little time to realise that the visit was almost certainly connected with the fact that the Prime Minister, Mr Churchill, had served with the Hussars at Omdurman in 1898, so Mr Eden had felt the need to brief himself thoroughly in case his master should ask about the ambush."

Banished to Grik

Dato' Mohammed Pilus

"BEFORE THE WAR, Grik had been considered a punishment post; now it was also a dangerous one at the end of a narrow, winding road, perfect ambush country, and surrounded by jungle, perfect country for CTs to hide in.

Grik had four P/Lts and, like most of that breed, they were good material: well trained, disciplined, courteous and a credit to Britain. Many of them gave their lives in the Emergency.

Grik was a small one street town, with a population of fewer than one thousand, and facilities were primitive, water from a well, electricity at night only, and our communication telegraphy wire primitive.

I had an unfortunate brush with the local British Army unit when we shot a lurking CT down in the nearby rubber estate. My aborigine tracker brought him down with his first shot. My British Army neighbour complained that he should have been told so that he could mount an operation. I politely refused my OSPs suggestion that I should apologise: I argued that we would have lost valuable time had I not acted immediately.

One of our regular duties was escorting the Treasury truck to Taiping. On one occasion when I had taken an escort of ten men and a sergeant, we came under light fire as we entered the danger area, but the CTs did not follow up, and they did not use automatic weapons. I thought about this odd incident and decided that it had probably been intended to lure us into the jungle, where a large party with automatic weapons would be lying in wait.

From then onwards we used prophylactic fire. Our Bren gunner would fire a few bursts at any likely ambush spot: during the rest of my time in Grik, there was only one serious ambush so, perhaps, my prophylaxis was effective."

Pride Comes Before a Fall

R.A. Ruegg

The author cannot remember the date of this incident, but clearly the detail of the battle remains fresh in his memory.

SMASHING TERRORISM IN THE MALAYAN EMERGENCY

" **O N E D A Y** SB fixed a meeting to take place in Kuala Kangsar between a heavyweight female D C M , name forgotten, and her mother, SB and some detectives, took up surveillance positions nearby the meeting place and watched the D C M , who was armed, turn up as planned. But armed bodyguards escorted her as well and we had no intention of engaging in a gun battle in the middle of Kuala Kangsar. So we changed our plan and decided to continue surveillance, but to wait for a more appropriate opportunity to tangle with the D C M . Skilful surveillance enabled us to follow the D C M on her way back to the jungle. She, underestimating the skills of her foes, rashly decided to spend the night in a New Village. We surrounded the village and then a small SB team moved towards the house where the D C M was lodged in the loft. She hurled her grenade at the SBOs and one officer was injured, but in her excitement the buxom lass fell out of her loft and after a fierce struggle was taken prisoner. Later, under interrogation, the D C M told us, "I did not worry when I heard that there were police and soldiers about, but when I saw SBOs approaching, I took the pin out of my grenade."

Avoiding a CT Trap

R. A. Ruegg

This is a story of the CTs firing on a police station not as a prelude to attack, hut as a ruse to draw police reinforcements into a well-laid ambush.

The Malay proverb 'Pelandok melupakan jerat, tetapi, er at tiada melupakan pelandok' ('the mouse deer forgets the snare, but the snare does not forget the deer') was, sadly, sometimes apposite in such situations, and many casualties were caused by such CT tactics. On this occasion a canny, experienced senior officer judged correctly that the CTs were not aiming to capture the police station, but to massacre the reinforcements.

" **A T A B O U T** 2100 HOURS one evening, the PC in charge of our outpost twenty miles along the Ayer Puteh Road, telephoned to say that his station was under terrorist attack. The sound of gunfire was only too evident over the phone. We were short of transport at that

time so the OSPC commandeered the Kemamam bus, into which he packed as many PCs and SCs as could be spared.

I was put in charge and sent ahead in the official A40 car. The obvious possibility of an ambush at the 15th mile to the left, high off the road was mentioned but, of course, we felt that we had to do something.

The OSPC decreed that we should go hell for leather for the police post, but we were delighted when the OSPC's Standard Vanguard overtook us at the 5th mile, and the driver passed on the OSPC's order for us to return home.

The OSPC had telephoned the CPO (H G Beverley) to brief him. The CPO had said that the information from KL was that the CTs had adopted the tactic of creating minor incidents in order to lure SF rescue parties into ambushes, so he had ordered our return.

We kept in touch with the OC Police Station Ayer Puteh for the rest of the night, and the fact that the telephone line had not been cut suggested that the police station was not the real target of their operation.

No one was hurt because the OCSB kept his head and made his men and their families remain in their *kubus* (sentry posts). By daybreak the shooting had ceased. We found ample evidence that a large body of CTs had been in ambush positions at the 15th mile, ready to shoot up whatever reinforcements were sent to the aid of the police station.

Cognac and Fire Engines

J.T.W. Sishton

"THIS INCIDENT IS SAID to have occurred in Ipoh circa 1949-1950. It concerns our ASP, alias Willie, formerly army and Palestine Police.

Willie apparently had an incredible capacity for brandy, some say two/three bottles a day, but always with decorum. At that time he was also addicted to *Mah-Jong* (Chinese game played with tiles) and regularly played with Chinese *towkays* in certain Chinese hotels in town.

One day at noon whilst indulging in his two favourite pastimes, Willie heard the bell of a fire engine passing the hotel. As a conscientious and well-trained PO, Willie immediately got into his

car and followed the fire engine intent on rendering what assistance he could at the scene of the fire. He was in uniform, complete with pistol. By that time of day Willie had probably consumed a bottle of brandy and completely failed to consider, as he drove along, that the fire engine had left the municipal area and was heading for the jungle. After several miles the fire engine had halted at the scene of a fairly routine bus burning. Armed and uniformed CTs were busy confiscating Identity Cards (NRICs) from the frightened passengers at the side of the road and searching for Running Dogs. In the smoke and confusion, Willie, by then considerably sober, had the presence of mind to leave his car and mount the back step of the fire engine, which was of the old-fashioned variety with a turntable.

Removing his police headgear, he donned a spare brass fireman's helmet, covered his epaulettes with crossed hands and climbed along the engine until he was partly hidden under the turntable. Willie sat there motionless until the CTs had finished their work and withdrawn without even spotting him.

On emerging from the fire engine, Willie is alleged to have changed back into his police headgear, assumed control of the situation, and subsequently returned to town.

The Investigation Paper would have made good reading]"

NB "As the quantity of brandy Willie consumed throughout the day increased, this seemed to have an inverse effect on his sobriety, enabling him to behave with complete decorum at all times."

In came a Slim Brown Arm

J. T. W. Shishton

"WHEN STATIONED in Alor Star in 1953, I had occasion to visit the border crossing post of Changlun, some 30 miles to the north. Two P/Lts, Jack and Derek, were in charge of the post.

I stayed overnight and after dinner we all sat on the floor with the Tilley lamp to avoid random pot shots aimed at the bungalow by CTs firing from outside the perimeter fence. The following morning Derek, armed with the newspaper and his carbine, went to visit the 'loo'. In the absence of water borne sanitation this consisted of the usual 'bandit sentry box' at the bottom of the garden, serviced

through a trap at the rear by a bucket system. Suddenly we heard shots and ran to the back door just in time to see Derek stumbling from the latrine with his shorts around his ankles.

Apparently, the man had arrived to empty the buckets and, unaware the Tuan was inside, had silently inserted his arm from the rear and deftly changed the buckets. This so startled Derek that he instinctively pressed the trigger of his carbine, putting several rounds through the roof. This, undoubtedly, improved the ventilation of the 'thunder box'. It also gave rise to the oft-repeated phrase, 'When in came a slim brown arm'."

The Perils of Over Confidence

J.P. Taylor

"AT THE END of 1951 I had, temporarily, taken over a platoon in my jungle company, to allow the platoon commander to take a day's leave. I led his platoon into the jungle in an operation to follow up an air attack by Venom fighters.

During the approach march when we were close to the scene of the air strike, I spotted a *basha* with its roof off and walked towards it, assuming that the inhabitants had evacuated the area after the air attack. I could not have been more wrong. The 9th Platoon, 8th Regiment MRLA, was in occupation and a fierce firefight ensued.

Although I managed to kill the Deputy Commander before the CTs broke off, I wondered what the outcome would have been had I made a different assessment about the *basha* hut and taken the elementary precaution of assuming that it might be occupied."

The Thunderers

Yuan Yuet Leng

"THE EMERGENCY INFORMATION SERVICE (EIS) broadcasting vehicles were known as 'Thunderers', continuously beaming our messages up into the valleys and hills.

On 26th February 1958 a CT called Fong Loy, surrendered and on being asked if he had heard the Thunderers he said, "F***ing Hell: I was bloody deafened by it." "Where were you?" asked the DSBO. "I was in the *Lalang*, right in front of the big trumpet!"

A CT Reports on Operation Ginger

Yuan Yuet Leng

Dato' Yuan calculated that over three hundred CTs were eliminated in 'Operation Ginger', killed, captured, surrendered. Many of the so-called SEPs were, in fact, CTs captured in SB operations and 'turned' into collaborators.

The fifteen-month operation had been successful in many ways; 53 fire contacts with CTs, the discovery of nearly 500 CT camps, large and small, and about a hundred dumps of food, arms and equipment.

SB had certainly contributed hugely to these SF successes.

"IN AUGUST 1958 we recovered some CT documents, which included a CT report on *Operation Ginger*. It gave a heartening description of the excellent effect that our operations were having on the CTs in the area.

"The enemy have applied a total food blockade... meanwhile artillery and aerial bombardments are more frantic and erratic than before. The majority of the smaller trees are broken in half.

All food purchases are recorded: and soon central cooking will be imposed.

Comrades persist in the struggle, but some of the corrupted ones are unable to bear the hardship."

In February 1959, after the killing of Central Committee Member (CCM) Siu Ma by his bodyguard, a document was recovered reporting on SF operations.

"The attacks consist of nothing but a military and psychological offensive, but the enemy's attacks differ from those in the past... the most prominent difference is the longer duration — 16 months. Secondly, the attacks are on a whole district. Thirdly, the enemy searching is more exhaustive than before. The enemies psywar operations are very timely and thorough."

However, the document assessed that, it would take 8/9 years to tackle all our districts. Perhaps if the remnants of the CTs had not withdrawn to Thailand, that, might, indeed, have been the case."

A Rash Advance on a CT Camp

J.P. Taylor

"I JOINED UP AGAIN partly because I thought that life had other things to offer apart from premature entry into marriage.

I was sent off immediately, without further ado, to train estate and mine guards near Batu Gajah. The training was farcical. As there was no practice ammunition to use on the range, we could only teach the SCs how to hold their weapons and some foot and arms drill. In my time the SCs were not put to the test, but in 1950 an estate manager and five SCs were ambushed and killed in the area. In Kedah, however, I was involved in a major ambush when the OSPC and his driver were killed and four PCs wounded, and the CTs melted away into the jungle with all the arms and ammunition from the leading vehicle, including a Bren and thirty magazines, before a counter-attack could be launched.

In 1951 when I was commanding a jungle company in Central Kedah, I was told that air reconnaissance had reported a suspected CT camp near Padang Lembu New Village. Only one of my platoons was available to follow up this information. The platoon commander was on leave so I led it myself. The plan was to carry out an air strike and to follow through with my platoon. As so often in such affairs, things did not go entirely according to timetable, and we were over a mile from our target when the air strike took place; three Venoms using rockets and cannons.

Soon after we had moved off towards the target, the leading scout signalled that he had seen something. I halted the platoon and went forward to see for myself. When I joined the scout I saw the tip of an *attap* hut and, rashly assuming that it would have been abandoned by the CTs after the air attack, moved on alone past the sentries to investigate. Some seven or eight yards away from the hut I became aware of some unpleasant facts. One, a powerfully built male Chinese was advancing towards me; two, several pairs of eyes were looking at me from another hut and three, my platoon was blissfully unaware that they were close to an occupied camp.

As the man turned away from me I opened fire and saw him fall. The CTs then opened fire on me from both sides and one CT, armed with a sub-machine-gun, was prodigal with his ammunition. I

then threw some grenades and the CT slipped away. We did not recover the body of the man I had shot but learnt later that he had been Vice Commander of the 9th Platoon of the dreaded 8th Regiment; the unit which later murdered the CPO, Neville Godwin.

I was very conscious of the number of the errors that I made that day, starting with the fact that I should not have been there in command of the platoon, and was about to go on leave. I should not have gone forward alone after making the hasty assumption that the CTs would have been scared out of the camp and I should instead have infiltrated two stop sections round the back of the camp and then mounted a noisy frontal assault.

Fortunately, the CTs too had made a foolish mistake. They had built the last 100 yards of the track to the camp in an 'S' shape to give the sentry a good view of anyone approaching but, since one of the hut roofs could be seen before the 'S' section had been reached, the attackers, not the defenders, had the advantage. No doubt the sentry was severely criticised, but we had been given cover by heavy rain.

The operation yielded useful intelligence on the support that the New Villagers were giving to the CTs."

Good Hunting by P/Lt Graver, GM, on Kali Malaya Estate

J.C. Macnab

"ONE DAY IN 1954 Bob Graver received a message from the manager of Kali Malaya Estate that CTs had been seen on the estate earlier that morning. Bob immediately went to the estate where he was told that there were five terrorists in the party, but others might have been nearby.

With the aid of the estate map, Bob interrogated the rubber tappers who had seen the CTs and was able to pinpoint the actual spot with reasonable accuracy.

He set off by vehicle with the only two SCs available, the estate area security unit being already out on patrol. On the way he was stopped by a member of the public and told that four male and one female CTs had been seen at about 0830 hours crossing the road a little further on, travelling southwest.

Bob and his party searched the rubber up to the jungle's edge for about two hours but found no signs of anyone entering the jungle from that part of the estate. He then moved south to search another part of the estate. When they stopped for a rest, they saw the party of terrorists about 250 yards away moving southwest through the rubber.

Bob ordered his two SCs to spread out in line and they managed to get to within about 50 yards of the CTs, they then followed the CTs until they saw them approach some rubber tappers. At this point, one of the SCs opened fire. The CTs fled with Bob and his party in hot pursuit. Bob Graver overtook and bypassed one of the struggling terrorists. As he ran past him, Bob yelled to the two SCs behind him to shoot the terrorist, which they did.

Bob ran on with his two SCs following him and seeing another terrorist about 150 yards ahead, fired a burst from his carbine and killed him. They ran on for about another 150 yards when they saw the remaining three terrorists running in front of them, but obviously tiring. Bob stopped his party and they fired 12 rapid rounds and saw two of the terrorists drop. One was only wounded and was seen behind a log trying to clear a stoppage in his sub-machine-gun. As he raised the gun to fire, he too was shot dead.

They continued in pursuit of the one remaining terrorist as he fled through the rubber. Bob caught up with him and with a short burst of his carbine shot him dead.

There then began the job of collecting the bodies. As they turned over the body of a female terrorist, a grenade with the pin out fell from her hand. The firing pin struck and Bob and his men dived for cover. Fortunately for all concerned, the fuse failed to burn and the grenade did not explode.

A pistol, a rifle, a Thomson machine-gun, the hand grenade and assorted ammunition were recovered.

The two SCs who were with Bob Graver in this action were SC 26483 Hussein bin Lumat and SC 23611 Ismail bin Karson. All three had previously awarded the CPM. "

Bob Graver: a Doughty Warrior and Man of Few Words
J.C. Macnab

"IN ADDITION TO his G M and CPM, Bob Graver received three High Commissioner's Commendations for valour.

Bob was a very quiet person, not at ease in social gatherings, shy and perhaps, a bit dour. A man of few words who, when expressing an opinion, did so briefly and succinctly. Underneath it all he obviously had tremendous grit and he took his job very seriously. He made a real effort from the start to learn the Malay language and to understand his men. He was invariably well turned out and was respected and liked by his SCs. He was an inspired leader when the situation demanded.

When I first met him it was clear that he was reliable, but I found it difficult to know what he was thinking. He tended to be inscrutable and poker-faced, particularly when receiving orders or instructions. He was certainly a bit of a loner.

I remember after the incident on 30th November 1950, gendy chiding him, pointing out that I had told him not to go into the Hylam Kong area without a proper escort. He raised his hands in the air, pursed his lips and shrugged his shoulders. Looking him straight in the eye I said, "Graver, you are a Bolshie bugger, aren't you?" there was a pause and I saw a twinkle in his eye and we both laughed!"

BYWAYS

Those who survived jungle operations, ambush and counter ambush, lived their off-duty life to the full, and in the time honoured way of warriors down the ages, celebrating comradeship and survival. But not all the tales in this section are about celebrations lubricated by Tiger beer.

Four Legs

Snodgrass

"THE CPO ASKED, "How old are you, lad?" at my arrival interview. "Twenty-one, Sir," I replied. "Good to start at a young age," said the 'old man', who must have been at least thirty-five, "What police training have you had?" "None, Sir! I was told to report in London and we were pushed on to a plane, and here we are." The CPO gave a look that made me feel that it was my entire fault, it was I who should have arranged to be trained; what on earth was I doing reporting for duty as an untrained officer? Disgraceful.

"Good heavens," he sighed. "We'll have to do something about that. Can't have you wandering around with two pips on your shoulder and not a clue what to do." Two Pips! First day of joining I was called a sergeant and no sooner do I report for duty, I have two pips. It took me three years in the army to be able to wear two pips. The truth of the matter was no one had bothered to tell me that I had been appointed as a Cadet Assistant Superintendent.

"We'll start you off doing a constable's job for a week," said the chief. "You will be attached to an experienced PC and watch what he does. Then, on a weekly basis you'll do the same with a corporal, a sergeant and then longer with an inspector. At the same time you will read as much law as you can, and study to speak, read and write Malay." I wonder what I will do in my spare time, thought I. "And don't forget," he went on, "You have to pass your law and language examinations as soon as possible."

Not far from the square in what used to be known as Batu Road, is the Coliseum Bar, Restaurant, Flotel and Cinema, a relic from the past. You have to search for it now.

SMASHING TERRORISM IN THE MALAYAN EMERGENCY

There were two basic reasons for going to the Coliseum Restaurant. A Saturday evening thrash around town always kicked off there. The proprietor understood and, amongst other things, provided tall coat stands by the bat-winged front door on which could be slung the carbines and pistol belts of rubber planters and others in town for the night, enjoying a break from the stress of terrorist infested areas. Also, it was a gathering point for young police officers who had just been pallbearers for one of their compatriots killed in action with CTs. Many is the wake which took place there, ably assisted by gallons of Tiger beer, many pink gins and fish and chips or lamb chops and carrots, consumed at tables set with soiled tablecloths and cluttered with bottles of chilli, tomato and other sauces.

Outside, behind the bar, was a rough, un-surfaced area for car parking. A self-appointed car park attendant was a teenaged Chinese boy who had only one leg. To be able to move around, he supported himself on a three-legged stool, and he could move fast. Customers knew him as *Empat Kaki* — 'Four Legs'. If you were unwise enough not to slip him a generous tip as you went into the bar, when you tottered out — Surprise! Surprise! The sides of your prized vehicle were defaced with deep scratches. At the height of the Emergency, SB moved in one night and removed Four Legs. It seemed that he was a CT intelligence agent. How many secrets he managed to glean from police officers chattering amongst themselves, nobody ever knew."

Rosie: Queen of the Strippers

David Brent

I too, met Rosie, when I was Secretary for Chinese Affairs Penang, and, like David, attempted to enforce the standards demanded by the society of those far-off days. I too interviewed Rosie in my office and gave directions on the modesty required of her and her troupe.

When I attended her first performance, flanked by the doyens of the Penang Chinese community, they gave a very modest show, so I did not have to invoke the law. I suspect that in David's case a quick 'whip round' by the local dealt easily with the fine.

BYWAYS

"A MEMORABLE EVENT in Batu Pahat was the arrival in town of the famous Rose Chan and her troupe. Rose was known as the 'Queen of the Striptease'. There was a theatre stage in the local amusement park and her troupe was scheduled to appear there. However, in keeping with the social mores of the times, Rose was required to sign an agreement at the District Office that when bare-topped females in her troupe appeared on stage in any tableau they were not permitted to move. Furthermore, she was required to pay a deposit of M\$2,000 to guarantee compliance, to be forfeited if there was any breach of the agreement. It was my onerous duty to go and watch the show the first night which I found most entertaining. The audience was thrilled. But, it was my 'regret' to observe that the delightful young lovelies who graced the stage not only moved about but also did so with much enthusiasm and vigour! The next morning I called one of my inspectors in to my office and instructed him to attend that night's performance and report to me first thing the next morning. He confirmed exactly my observations, and I reported the matter to the D.O. The outcome was that Rose lost her deposit, but I suspect still went away with a handsome profit."

A Visitor in the Bed

D.L. Brent

"PEKAN DISTRICT IS one of the largest in the country, covering huge jungle and swamp areas with scattered villages, a long coastline and the Royal Capital of Pekan. Through the northern part of the district flows the mighty Pahang River, placid and docile most of the year but a swirling, raging torrent in the monsoon season — December to February — flooding everything in its vicinity and pouring into the South China Sea. Pekan was the seat of the Sultan of Pahang, His Royal Highness Sultan Abu Bakkar, who had three *Istanas* in Pekan and one in Kuantan, four wives, all in Pekan, and a polo field.

From Pekan, both the D.O. and myself used to make periodic visits to the villages on the banks of the Pahang River. Starting up river early in the morning, the trip by boat would take a whole day, arriving at the only government Rest House in the area. The Rest House was a simple timber bungalow with verandahs and a couple of bedrooms with mosquito nets over the beds. On one occasion

John Melford, the new DO of Pekan, arrived at the boat landing below the Rest House and wandered up to the bungalow, while the boatman and his orderly carried up his bags and gear and left them in the main bedroom. As his orderly made up the bed with the bed linen John had brought, John stripped in the adjoining bathroom which had an external door leading down some steps to the back of the building, and eagerly poured cold water over himself ladled from the large Shanghai jar in the corner, enjoying the relief as the sticky sweat washed away and left him feeling clean and refreshed. He towelled down and donned a clean short and slacks and, while seated on the verandah preparing some last notes of his day's journey, watched the warm evening close with a gentle fading orange glow. He enjoyed a brandy ginger ale and a simple dinner. It had been a long and tedious day.

John ducked under the mosquito net around the bed and relaxed with his *sarong* loose around his body according to local sleeping protocol. It was a very warm evening and John soon fell asleep. About half-an-hour later to his consternation, John was awakened by somebody climbing into bed with him. Now, John was the quintessential English gentleman, a very proper bachelor and very sensitive to his responsibilities as a pillar of morality in the community. The form creeping into his bed was definitely female from the contact of soft warm flesh next to his; and the unmistakable cloying sweet floral perfume popular among village maidens that now enveloped the inside of the mosquito net penetrated his confused senses with the realisation that a female was attempting to share his bed with him. Horror! John shoved the lady away shouting, "Who's that?" A muffled scream, and the maiden fell on the floor and fled the room through the back door. John thought about waking up the Rest House contractor but decided that discretion was probably the better course, and he climbed back into bed.

John later pieced together the mystery of his uninvited inamorata at the Rest House. Apparently, a young Malay Home Guard officer, whose duties included visits to the various villages in the area, also used the Rest House. A village maiden, with whom he was having an affair, would discreetly enter through the back door to the bathroom and join him in bed. The young maiden had got the dates mixed up!

John was mightily relieved that the matter had not resulted in any further complications with the problems amongst the Islamic communities of the district, who had strict codes of conduct with regard to male-female relationships."

Problems with Matron

A.J.V. Fletcher

"ONE DAY, after a month or so of estate work, I found several perfectly formed itching rings on my arms and wrists. This was diagnosed as tropical ringworm and I was removed to Kuala Lipis 60-70 miles away, where there was a hospital with 'facilities for Europeans'. By the time I arrived my ringworm had spread to such an extent that, although I was otherwise completely fit, I felt that like a leper in Biblical days, I should be ringing a bell and calling out 'Unclean'. Unclean!'

The hospital was a long, low building with wide verandahs, open sided and with an *attap* roof. My room was huge and, although there were four beds in it, I was in sole possession. The treatment was to consist of being liberally anointed with a substance called 'Whitfields Ointment', which killed off the critters, which produced the rings. Two very jolly and pretty nurses, both Chinese and of about my age, brought me tea, fruit and newspapers from time to time, and lying back on my pillows, I began to enjoy the sybaritic advantages of being *hors de combat*.

I was aroused from my reverie by a voice from the room next to mine. There I found a young Malay Lt in the Malay Regiment who had been wounded in the legs in a road ambush. His name, he said, was Hanif; would I like a drink? We had several Tiger beers and a couple of brandies, and I returned to my room and sank into a deep sleep.

The following day Hanif called me again for pre-lunch drinks. I also had a memorable home-cooked Malay meal (my first), produced by his wife and brought along by his orderly. He suggested a couple of after-dinner drinks that Sunday evening, after a siesta. The 'couple of drinks' ended up as a veritable Bacchanalia, and late in the evening the two nurses joined us, the four of us singing English, Malay and Cantonese songs. Before the nurses and I lifted Hanif

from his wheelchair into his bed, he asked me if I would be so kind (his orderly having gone home), as to put a box containing a few empty bottles under the bed in my room as he had accumulated, "Rather too many, old chap." (He had been to Eaton Hall in the UK for a six-month course and had assimilated the local idiom). I agreed and tottered happily to my own bed.

The next thing I remember the following morning, is being harangued by a virago who told me she was the hospital Matron. Did I think I was in one of my dirty police stations? How dare I abuse my patient status with an over-indulgence in alcohol, etc. Then she pointed out two large boxes of empty bottles that had been under my bed. I could hardly believe my bleary eyes. Hanif had foisted on me a mass of empty beer, whisky and brandy bottles, which he must have been accumulating over several weeks in the hospital before my arrival. I had a dreadful head and could only lie there while the diatribe raged. At length, fixing me with a basilisk glare, Matron delivered a Parthian shot: military and police patients were, she said, allowed a bottle of beer with their dinner but she would ensure that in my case this privilege was withdrawn and, furthermore, she would report me to Police HQ in KL. **With that** she swept out.

I reproached Lieutenant Hanif for overdoing the empties; he was regretful and charming and gendemanly as only **a** Malay **can** be, so that I felt myself a boor for having chided him, and we remained friends.

I was in hospital for three weeks. The two **young nurses decided** that I should learn a few words of Cantonese. By **dint** of **assiduous** parroting of their words I reached a standard that satisfied **them**. I should, they said, smile at the Sister (**a** married Chinese **lady called** Mrs Keong) and say to her "Good morning Mrs **Keong**, how are you?" It never occurred to me that these two angelic young **things** were mischievous and devious. When I greeted **Mrs** Keong, what I actually said was, "Good morning Mrs Keong, **I love you.**" **Mrs** Keong's face was a study. **"Who tell you say that?" she snapped.** I floundered my way out as best I could, and **later had a word or two** with the two little angels. Mrs Keong, who had **a** shrewd **idea as to** who was behind the plot, forgave me."

Ramona
Snodgrass

"AFTER SOME WEEKS of attachment under instruction by an experienced Inspector, a charming elderly Tamil officer who embarrassed me by saluting and calling me "Sir" at every opportunity, I was moved to a spell with the Vice Squad in CID.

Jack Tyler, the Deputy Head, was a splendid man. A tall, thin, dark-complexioned Englishman with a bristly, black moustache and bushy eyebrows. His subordinates, Malays, Chinese, Indians, Eurasians and Europeans alike, adored him.

I think I had better take you out and show you some of the town's vice spots," said Superintendent Tyler. "Right, I'll meet you in front of Central Charge Room at seven o'clock. Scruff order," said the boss. "Take a revolver because we don't know what we may run into." Nobody in the police had taught me to use firearms. Thank goodness for army service.

I had interpreted scruff order to mean wearing a crumpled short-sleeved shirt and a pair of baggy old slacks, the pocket of which was large enough to take my 9mm Browning. The boss's idea of scruff order was an immaculate long-sleeved shirt with a Thai silk cravat and perfectly pressed trousers. "We'll start off with some of the night clubs — some of the seedier ones," said the superintendent, glancing at my crumpled shirt. "Then, to end with, we'll have a look at *The Worlds*."

Some of the 'hole in the wall' nightclubs were, indeed, gruesome. At each one it didn't seem long before whispered messages were passed around and people began to drift away. I was fairly sure it wasn't because of my rumpled shirt.

The *Happy World* was an enormous dance hall with an American style six-piece band on a platform at the far end. Along the two sides of the hall were chairs with small tables between them, occupied by demure, pretty young Chinese and Eurasian girls dressed in slit-to-the-thigh *cheongsams* (gowns). When the band struck up, young men, who had each purchased a ten dollar book of tickets, extracted one of their twenty tickets, presented himself to the chosen girl, bowed in true old-fashioned way, slid his ticket

under the girl's handbag on the table beside her, and took her in his arms.

"Allo, Jack," said a silky voice behind me. I looked round to see a gorgeous young woman approaching us, smiling at the boss. "Oh, hello Ramona," muttered the superintendent, "Care to have a drink?" The girl slipped into a chair between us. "This is Ramona Rodrigues," said Mr T, "She was Miss Malaya a couple of years ago."

I was regretting my dishevelled appearance, when I felt Ramona's leg make contact with mine. A few moments later, under cover of the tablecloth, Ramona's hand alighted on my knee. I glanced at her. She was chatting to Jack, but realising that I was looking at her, she turned and gave me a slow, lips-parted smile. Suddenly, she froze: I looked down, "Gawd! She's found the pistol!" I realised.

Some weeks later I left the Vice Squad and went to the Magistrate's Court to be exposed to court procedure. On my first day my mentor, an elderly British Chief Inspector, told me to sit with him at the prosecutor's table and watch what he did. "The magistrate is a funny old boy," he said. "A great stickler for protocol. He confuses everybody by wearing a monocle stuck in his eye at an angle. You never know who he is looking at."

I looked up and saw that my Chief Inspector was on his feet, like everyone else in court, bowing obsequiously towards the enormous bench. Standing behind it was a short, tubby European with an eyeglass set at a rakish angle. He sat down; "I see, Chief Inspector, we have a newcomer in court who has failed to observe the dignity of process," said the monocle. "Kindly tell him to stand and bow to me."

My instructor nudged me. I flushed, and feeling like a reprimanded schoolboy, I got to my feet and bowed so low that my forehead almost touched the table. A titter ran round the court, "That's better," pronounced His Honour. "Call your first witness." "Call Miss Ramona Rodrigues," thundered the Chief Inspector. Something icy clutched at my heart. Ramona was looking very pretty. She obviously was very nervous; she gaped in awe at the magistrate and then peered around the court. I tried to become invisible.

Suddenly, she saw me. She broke into a big grin, leaned forward and, with a wave of her hand, cried "Allo, Dahling!" The monocle

fell out of the magistrate's eye. To give him his due, he refrained from any other display of alarm. However, he did declare a ten minute recess, making it clear to the Chief Inspector that I would not be welcome to his court for the rest of the hearing."

Jammy Bastard

S.B. Hurst

Steve Hurst was a National Serviceman, who worked in Police HQ, Bluff Road.

"I WAS SHARING a tent in Johore during an inter-unit shooting competition with soldiers from infantry units scattered around the Peninsula. Eventually, the dreaded question came,

"What company are you with mate?"

"Oh! I'm detached."

"Which mob are you attached to?"

"The Civvy Police."

"Where?"

KL.

"Jammy Bastard." The cry went up. But there was no contempt or envy, only admiration. They wanted to hear fables of the bright lights and wild women. I wanted to hear tales of the jungle, but to them that was boring. So I told them stories, which I had no need to invent.

I had started off on a troop ship destined for Korea, but when we reached Singapore, I was posted to KL, where I joined a small elite team, which included silent and, at first, aloof NCOs and two young women in the map room. I saw a different part of KL every day, since General Templer had ordained that everyone should vary their daily route to HQ to make life more difficult for the enemy.

On my first day I needed a lot of help to penetrate the various security barriers on the way to the Keep, the 'Holy of Holies' in the centre of Police HQ.

As a newcomer, I had to look and listen carefully to survive in this world of most sensitive secrets.

I was frequently reminded that the military role was to assist the police, and the system seemed to work well as a result of General

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Templer's powerful personality. We gave the same service whether our customers were Brigadiers or Deputy Commissioners.

I was very conscious of my good fortune in this post. Although I had not wangled it, I knew full well how lucky I was to be detached from my parent Corps (Transport) and outside the normal military world.

My army trade was 'Tactical Sketcher', trained to plot the routes of convoys after nuclear war: but HQ Malaya decided that the best thing to do with me was to post me to fill the vacancy of Topographical Draftsman, which should have been filled by a trained RE Sergeant. Fortunately, my training in graphics and draughtsmanship were probably better suited to the task than those of an army-trained sergeant. There was plenty to do, the work expanding to keep abreast of changes in Vietnam, and increased US interest in South East Asia.

The Keep was a rabbit warren, which included old cells that we could use as paint stores or secure drawing offices where the most sensitive work would be done, behind a door guarded by an armed sentry. The windowless map room, the size of a large living room, lay behind a locked steel door. It housed five huge map boards on which we plotted the progress of the Emergency, incident by incident.

My first day was monthly map changing day. P/Lt Gough, formerly a major in the British Army, greeted me with, "Can you do this, new feller what's your name?" "Yes Sir!" said I, not having a clue as to what was entailed. "You don't call me Sir! P/Lts on contract are called Mr. You can salute gazetted police officers, if you like, but always salute WRAC and WRAP officers, or they'll have your guts for garters."

My first months were dominated by the French disasters in Vietnam, which seemed to match a steady advance of Communism in the region. The new map showed South China as a great red udder, with Communist dominated territory in Annam and Laos dangling from it like a teat. Sometimes I would chance upon some senior officer contemplating the map and wondering whether he would ever see his family again. The 'domino' theory seemed all too real, and there was much talk of the Third World War starting in South East Asia.

Gough and his companion, Lane, soon discovered my weakness in conventional map training. Gough's phrase to remedy my weakness on coordinates was, "For Christ sake remember that a map is like a woman, you've got to get across her before you can get up her." Frankie Lane was a less rounded man and our only point of social contact was football, although even here we were divided; I played Rugby Union, he played League. We were as chalk and cheese.

The mediator between us was an old soldier called Sid, who had survived through infantry and Royal Army Service Corps (RASC) to arrive in Bluff Road. When I asked him why he did not seek a sergeant's third stripe, he replied, "You know me mate; stripes go up and down on my sleeve quicker than a tart's drawers."

One of the features of our office was a fine full-length mirror that Sid had somehow managed to 'win'. It brought all sorts of men and women to our office to check their turnout. One of our regular visitors was Suleiman, a Malay driver, who was something of a dandy. My replacement greeted him with "Suleiman, you are looking very beautiful." Suleiman replied, "Yes, today I am feeling very beautiful!"

I remember very clearly the busy contingency planning which accompanied the deteriorating situation in Vietnam. Some French historians claim that the British were indifferent to the French problems, but it did not look like that to me. We were kept busy. At the end, when Dien Bien Phu fell to the Vietcong, I happened to be on duty with signallers at HQ Malaya, and heard the radio messages passing to the French Army in Saigon and Hanoi. The rage and pain of the French signaller was clear as he said, "***Dien Bien Phu est tombe. Nous sommes tous futus.***" (Dien Bien Phu has fallen and we are all

It was clear in the map room that our successes in Malaya were not by battalions and brigades rolling up the CTs, or by bombardment and bombing of jungle areas, but by small patrols focussing on groups hidden in the jungle.

I was allotted the task of weekly visits to General Templer's residence. On my first solo, I reported to the General's military assistant, producing my best imitation of a crashing Guards'-style salute. At the end of my visit he said, "Have you any civilian clothes,

if you have, would you wear them on your next visit; all this crashing of boots frightens the secretaries."

Eventually I was introduced to General Templer who, typically, became engaged in animated discussion on how we might improve the presentations. The military assistant was amused and even more so, when he discovered that I was not a regular soldier but an art student from Oxford.

I knew a fair number of police officers and discovered that there were serious rifts between factions. The Malay cadre did not love the Palestinians. On one occasion I was ordered by a senior officer of the Malay cadre to "Get out and tell your master to ~~f***~~ off." Gough invited me to return to the charge and tell the senior officer to "Stick the sketch map up his arse." But I suggested that this might be unwise.

Gough (not his real name) was a casualty of the war. He was a well-educated man; spoke Malay and Chinese, and a bon viveur, an endless womaniser, and gambler, with financial worries to match. He found peace irksome, and having finished the war as a major, joined the Palestine Police to get away from men he despised in his old civilian drawing office.

When he arrived in Malaya he barely had time to give basic training to the SCs on the estate for which he was responsible, before the CTs launched a major attack. They were driven off, leaving several of their number dead on the perimeter wire.

Frankie, on the other hand, had little education and, I thought wrongly, little emotion, until he told me, just before he left on a jungle patrol, that he had shot a female CT with his Sten gun, on automatic. He said, "When I saw t' state of t' lass, I spewed my ring. I'm not ashamed to tell thee lad, I cried like a babe."

When I returned to Oxford, I missed the comradeship and tolerance of the army, and no one wanted to hear about Malaya, so I shut up like many others, and put my diaries in a box."

Visitors from Westminster

S.B. Hurst

"THE STRUGGLE FOR South East Asia, as all progressive people will agree, was fought between the People's Armies of Liberation (PAL)

BYWAYS

on the one hand, and the Colonial Imperialist Oppressors (CIO) and their Running Dogs, on the other. Paddy Waring agreed that he was a bloodsucker and a Running Dog, most cheerfully, as the number of empty pint glasses increased on the table and the monsoon flies invaded the tin-roofed shack that served as a NAAFI. But Paddy was of the *petit rentier*, or *Kulak* class, so he had nothing to gain from the onward march of the freedom loving Asian people.

Though he wore neither pip nor crown on his shoulder, and only three stripes as an Emergency Sergeant on his sleeve, Paddy was a person of consequence. He owned a horse that ran in the Singapore Gold Cup. Mr Waring senior was a bookie well known in the East End of London, who lent his soldier son the capital to buy eighty percent of a racehorse (the sum to be paid back with interest on demobilisation). We formed a syndicate to buy the rest of the horse and each had a minor share in Paddy's investment. (The fact that the beast lost race after race, and our investment dwindled, has no relevance to this story).

Paddy and I agreed to differ over politics. He was a paid up member of the Bow Conservative Club, whereas as a student I was one of the League of Socialist Youth. Being of the Left, I look forward with anticipation to the arrival in KL of a fact-finding visit by members of Her Majesty's Opposition.

Paddy saw them before I did. He was in Singapore, his horse had won and he treated himself to a night at Raffles Hotel, Raffles was, like every decent hotel, out of bounds to BORs. But, wearing the white suit and with a pretty nurse companion, Paddy looked like a gendeman of the turf.

To Raffles came the Opposition Delegation to stay in the best rooms in that famous hotel. The delegation from the Labour Party was impressive, and its two most prominent members were the two former ministers of the Crown, Aneurin Bevan and his wife, Jenny Lee, who never tired of telling people that she was a miner's daughter who grew up in poverty.

I entered the drawing office, early in the morning, to find Gough examining his medal ribbons and sleeking his yellow moustache, a bad sign which usually indicated a hangover. "Hey! Corporal, you're a Socialist, how'd you like to show this bloody Labour Delegation round? Explain the political situation. Right up

your street, eh?" Great was my excitement, mixed with awe, at the chance of meeting the heroes of my youth and the seductive Jenny Lee. I should have known my superior better. Gough, once a major in the XIV Army and former sergeant of the Palestine Police, had an ulterior motive for letting such a moment of glory pass, even if it meant an hour in the company of those whose politics he detested.

Now back to Raffles. As the politicians enjoyed their pre-dinner drinks, generously refilled, the organiser outlined the proposed visit to war-torn Malaya. Meanwhile, Paddy tipped one of the waiters to move him to a table close to that of the Delegation. "You'll enjoy this," he told his companion. The first performance was by Nye Bevan, who refused to wear a tie at dinner. This was against the hotel rules, the couple were entertained by the burly Welshman shouting at a very small, Chinese, inscrutable Maitre D, who refused to serve dinner until the ex-Minister put on a tie. A smiling Malay waiter arrived with a bow tie on a silver tray. Bevan put it on.

The next cabaret turn was by Miss Lee, who made a fuss, loudly, about the wine. It was poor quality and was too cold, not the right type of wine to go with the fish. So it went on, until Paddy's great roaring guffaw echoed through the dining room. He told the girl that it was better than Drury Lane or the Abbey. His pur/Jed partner stared at him uncomprehending. Paddy sat there, laughing, nodding, and all but joining in the conversation. At last the great ones arose, replete. "All paid for by the party faithful and honest toilers back in Blighty," as Paddy told me a week later, when the politicians had flown home, satisfied with the best food and wines that Raffles' kitchen and cellars could serve. "And here's the best bit of all. As the Delegation assembles in the foyer, what do I do but nip out ahead of them, onto the steps, where their official cars and *syces* (drivers) are waiting. Jennie Lee turns to Nye, "Now let's go and look at some slums," says she. And the whole overfed gaggle of 'em gets into their cars and off they go to weep and wail over the poor and needy Chinese, victims of British colonial oppression."

I accused Paddy of making this up and, anyway, only Raffles carried sufficient prestige and our elected leaders work hard and play hard and deserve the best.

The former ministers flew up to KL for the day, in a specially fitted-out RAF transport plane with fighter escort and some of the

lesser MPs took their lives in their hands and toured the battle fronts. Although I did not hear the sound of cannon or heavy machine-guns echoing through the streets of sleepy KL that day, the Delegation arrived at Police HQ with an escort of police heavily armed and a scout car of the 11th Hussars. They did not stay long but, no doubt, many a tale of danger and derring-do went the rounds of the House of Commons' bars when they returned home safe from their adventures.

Thinking themselves well informed about the colonial situation in South East Asia, the politicians were sure that they had all the facts at their fingertip before they set foot in the map room. Neither P/Lt Gough nor Captain Howard could sway their high-minded and tunnel-visioned picture of the war. They returned to Singapore before the equatorial night fell with all its terrors. Our heroes did not meet drunken BORs in the Batu Road: Somersets who had spent the last month up to their armpits in swamp water, or Hampshires who had been stuck in bamboo clumps, waiting in ambush for nothing. The politicians might actually have heard the voices of the people. But these, after all, were only uneducated, brutal civilian soldiers, too young to vote, therefore their views counted for nothing.

Denied the privilege of shaking hands with my heroes, meeting no ex-ministers, greeting neither orators of note nor decision-makers of consequence, I entered the drawing office with a heavy heart, to find Gough sitting at my desk. For once he was smiling: as he wrote busily in a little notebook. It would take a heart of stone not to rejoice at the sight of so contented a policeman. Every cloud has a silver lining and it's an ill wind.....

We must leave the comfort and luxury of Raffles and return to the Front Line. "Where is the Front Line?" asked a visiting US Senator, touring the hot spots of the War Against Godless Communism. Freddie Gough, P/Lt. in Charge at Federal Police HQ, Bluff Road, kept a book in which he recorded the fatuous questions and ridiculous statements of visiting politicians. His favourite was another American, this time a Congressman, "Do the aborigines understand the full significance of Communism?"

Postscript

"EVEN MAKING ALLOWANCE for Gough's prejudice against politicians of either faction, several officers agreed that the delegates, having read Professor Purcell's version of events in Malaya, were not prepared to believe anything told them by either police or soldiers, or anyone else who sang from a different hymn sheet.

Until I read Jennie Lee's autobiography, I believed that Paddy invented the Raffles incident. But as I read I began to wonder. Like many visitors from Western Europe and the *USA*, Jennie Lee was full of admiration for all she saw in the USSR."

JUNGLE TALES

A Hornet's Nest

S.R. Follows

*Sarang tebuan jangan dijolok mati kena ketubung.
Do not poke a hornets nest or you will be stung to death*

"ONE DAY, on patrol with a Sikh jungle squad, I saw one of the men step on a tree trunk lying across the track. The trunk was rotten. There was a little crunching noise, then a humming sound and suddenly the jungle path was full of leaping figures, and the air full of what looked like large wasps, their bodies coloured with yellow bands.

The patrol retreated in disorder and regrouped some distance back; we were all badly stung. I was not cheered by the Malays reminding me of a saying that hornet stings can kill a dog. As I prepared to lead the patrol on a detour round the offending log, one policeman reported, apologetically, that he had dropped his rifle in the melee: beside the hornets' nest, so now I had to find a way of recovering it despite the angry swarm. I planned to throw smoke grenades on the nest, and then launch a concerted rush to recover the weapon. Our attack was successful but, despite their frantic speed, the patrol suffered further nasty stings. We were a sorry sight, covered in swelling and rashes and in pain, and treated tree trunks with great respect thereafter."

A Tiger and a Human Salt Lick

Tan Sri Mohd Amin bin Osman Amin

"ONE EVENING we had stopped for the night after a gruelling six days on jungle patrol, my sergeant took the first spell as sentry, and we agreed that I would take over from him at midnight.

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After our evening meal I lay down and dropped off into the deep sleep of *the* exhausted, but my slumbers were soon violently disturbed by the loud roar of an animal and the loud yell of a startled human being. When the hubbub had died down, the sergeant gave me the following explanation.

As he squatted in the jungle, peering into the dark on sentry duty, he had suddenly felt something soft and moist touching his moustache and instinctively tried to swat the 'something' away; but his hand had encountered brisdes.

It was a tiger's muzzle, and presumably the tiger was enjoying the salt on the sergeant's luxuriant moustache, and was as startled as the sergeant, and roared loudly before loping away without waiting to investigate the surprising phenomenon that it had encountered. The sergeant, equally amazed, yelled loudly before he worked out what was going on.

We went back to sleep and the tiger did not return to its human salt lick."

Ensnaresd

S.R. Follows

"ONE AFTERNOON, treading delicately as leading scout, I felt something grip my ankle and then, in an instant, I was hanging upside down. I had walked into one of the extremely effective native game traps consisting of a noose attached to a strong, flexible sapling, which as soon as something was caught in the noose sprang up and dangled the victim in mid-air.

My patrol quickly came to my aid and we saw the funny side of the incident."

Fire Ants

S.R. Follows

"ON ONE PATROL I had climbed halfway up a tree in order to try to pinpoint our position. Busy with map and compass I felt a vicious sting on the back of my neck and soon, slapping ineffectively, I found myself covered in ants; the branches above were too slender to take my weight, so there was no way to escape except back down

through the ant army to the ground. It was murder: they stung me everywhere.

When I hit the ground, Shafiee said, "We call them *semut api* (fire ants) and there are usually no ill effects." "Weill That's something," I said."

ANIMAL TALES

Baby Crocodiles

D.L. Brent

"AN AMUSING INCIDENT occurred in late 1953. An Orang Asli came downstream to Pekan from the deep jungle. He had brought with him 38 baby crocodiles in order to claim a government reward. It transpired that this was his first foray out of his jungle habitat for very many years, and that he did not know that there had been a war and that the Japanese had occupied the country. And we had to advise him that the pre-war regulations on rewards for baby crocodile tails, no longer applied. So a despondent jungle resident left to return to his habitat, a little wiser and poorer, sad to say.

The baby crocodiles posed a problem, but we emptied the sand in the station's fire buckets and filled them with the baby crocodiles and water from the river in front of the building, and transported them to my bungalow. There I had my orderly dig a pit in the back garden and sink in a huge discarded iron-cooking bowl, which we filled with water and surrounded with chicken wire. So the infants found a good home and were regularly fed with nearby swamp fish.

The story of the baby crocodiles in my garden, travelled far and wide and came to the notice of the King's African Rifles (KAR) Officers' Mess in Kuantan, who asked if I would donate a few baby crocodiles to reside in the fish tank which, I believe, sat in the middle of the dining table! This I did, and in return they gave me a spotlight (used on their armoured cars) for me to use with my boats on emergency trips at night, which could be pretty hazardous in the flood season with large floating tree trunks and branches looming out of the darkness and crashing into my boats. My previous requests for spotlights to Police HQ in Kuala Lipis had met with unconcern and no response. We owed our Orang Asli friend a favour, as his baby crocodiles got us our much-needed spotlight!"

Elephants and Bears

D.L. Brent

I have never had trouble with boars or bears (except my Burma Honey Bear which had to go to the zoo), but I can add to the stories of elephants the fact that in the early 1980s they were causing mayhem in Malaysia by treating young oil palm plants as blissful 'bonne bouches'. When the planters dug ditches and installed electric fences the elephants rapidly regrouped and used tree trunks to cross the 'tank traps' and to smash down the electric fences. They know how to learn from experience.

"BATU PAHAT AND Yong Peng were both bad areas for terrorist activity, although the situation was much better than in the earlier years of the Emergency. Shortly before I arrived, the dramatic and highly successful bombing of Goh Peng Tuan's camp in the Kluang District nearby was the beginning of the final defeat of the M C P military organisation in the region.

When the Fijians left Batu Pahat they were replaced by the KOSBs. As with the Fijians, we had excellent relations with them and their bugler took over early morning reveille as my wake-up reminder each day. They kept a Malayan sun bear. The sun bear is smallish, dark brown almost black in colour with a yellowish patch on its chest and a yellowish muzzle. Locally known as a *bruang*, the sun bear lives in the jungles and is mainly nocturnal. Reputedly, the sun bear cubs are very cute and attractive and make good pets but when fully grown are short-tempered and not too safe. When I saw the sun bear at the Mess it was a fully-grown specimen and chained up and was being fed beer and golden syrup! But there was nothing placid about it."

Pythons and Wild Boars

D.L. Brent

"ONE OF THE colourful characters in Triang was Knud Staugard, manager of Triang Rubber Estate. The manager's two-storied residence was about ten minutes drive. It was a brick and concrete building quite pleasantly furnished, surrounded with barbed wire

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and floodlit at night with several **kubus** around it. Next to the house Knud had a small zoo in a simple netted enclosure — some small crocodiles, **pelandok** (mouse deer), a squirrel, a porcupine and some ducks, which all lived together in apparent harmony.

Knud was a stocky, well-built man with blue eyes and light brown hair, devoted to his Chinese workforce and his job. He did very well as manager, and indulged himself with a big, red, Studebaker convertible V8 with white wall wheels, plenty of chrome and a torpedo-shaped grill front, which was illuminated from the inside! Not exactly the anonymous style of transport one would select to avoid fast recognition and ambush. But I think it was Knud's way of saying, "Do your worst."

My first meeting with Knud occurred at the 6 PFF Officers' Mess. The Studebaker's big wheels crunched up on the gravel and the vehicle came to a halt with Knud jumping out and calling, "Come! Come! Look what I have." Everyone sauntered out of the Mess holding their drinks, curious to know what Knud had as he went to the back of the car and opened the boot. The ladies gasped and drew back in horror as we saw a huge python curled up in the boot. It seemed that as Knud was driving to the party he saw a very big python across the track, he slammed on the brakes, skidded to a halt, grabbed his M1 carbine and rapidly put four shots into the python's head and killed it instantly. He loaded the snake into the spacious boot and came straight to the Mess, about another four minutes' drive. Although quite dead the python's coils were still moving: quite an eerie sight.

We would go pig shooting on Triang Estate. This usually involved driving shortly before nightfall in Knud's armoured Land Rover to a particular far division on the estate where the adjacent jungle was very dense. We would then line up and space apart about 50 yards facing the jungle edge about 80 yards away and wait to catch the wild boar coming out of the jungle as daylight faded to fossik around fallen rubber nuts, roots and other food, sometimes causing damage to the rubber trees. Hopefully, several boars would emerge at about the same time, at other times we might only get one.

The tough part was getting the carcasses back. We would cut down a branch to make a carrying pole and, with the boar's legs

lashed together slung on the pole, we would carry the carcasses and load them into the back of the Land Rover. A nice leg made a tasty change of diet.

There were many stories about the tenacity and courage of the wild boar; it is more dangerous and courageous than the tiger with its slashing tusks. Knud said that it has been known for a charging boar to keep coming on even when hit several times by bullets. Once when we changed our hunting method and went into the jungle to try and track down wild boar, I came across what seemed to be a lair inside a very large, thick thorny bush. When I approached a deep roar startled me. When I moved slightly closer there was another roar and some scuffling. Knud came up behind me and advised that we should move well away. He said, "It is a wild boar protecting its lair, possibly with a new litter, and it wouldn't be worth taking any chances given our closeness." So I learned that wild boar can roar. It may not be exactly like a tiger's roar, but it's enough to stop you in your tracks if you are close enough."

Slow Loris and Other Animals

D.L. Brent

David's collection of local animals will strike a chord with many of us who served in the tropics. I only got as far as a Honey Bear, presented to me by a Calonel of the Kachin Rifles in Burma, and monkeys, of course.

"ONE EVENING we were driving back to Pekan. The road was an easy drive, and when we were about halfway I observed two litde red glowing lights in front of us. There was a Slow Loris in the centre of the road staring at us in fright. The Slow Loris moves in very slow motion. This one was a male with a dark brown stripe running down the centre of its back. It turned around clumsily and put on full speed straight down the middle of the road in the beam of the car lights. Full speed was about 200 yards an hour and not much help at all for the litde fellow, so I dropped a sack over him and dropped him in the boot. When we got home I opened the boot and put him into an empty cage I had on a back verandah. We kept the Slow Loris for some months and he became quite tame and

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would sit on my shoulder and wander about the house. We fed him on fruit and an occasional live *chikchak* and he remained in good condition.

One day during one of my periodic visits to riverside villages up stream, I came across a dwelling with a young male macaque monkey (in Malay, a *keras*) in a bamboo cage. On inquiry the family were happy to part with the monkey for the princely sum of six *ringet* (currency, about fifteen shillings). At home I had a small wooden crate converted into a house with a doorway and a tin roof. This was fixed at the top on an 8-foot pole and situated on the lawn in front of our verandah lounge area. Abu could climb up and down his house pole and run around an area at the bottom of the pole. Monkeys make ideal pets, particularly if they are acquired when young. The grooming habit seems ingrained and Abu would often sit on my shoulder and sift through my scalp to look for small sweat crystals which he enjoyed nibbling. Monkeys also make excellent 'watch dogs'. Whenever a stranger came near the house Abu would race up the pole to his house, climb onto the roof and jump up and down shrieking noisily.

When I was posted to KL we were allocated a chalet next to the botanical gardens. Abu's pole house was installed at the back of the chalet facing the direction of the botanical gardens. Unfortunately, there was a roving band of macaque monkeys in the botanical gardens. They obviously saw Abu as an intruder to their domain and attacked and killed him. He had been a wonderful family companion and we missed his antics greatly.

One morning the Sergeant OCSB asked if I was interested in having a male *musang*. One of his relatives had come by a baby *musang* and didn't want to keep it. The *musang* is Malaya's mongoose and when I went to look at it I was very taken with this bright alert little animal. It was a young male, quite small and very tame and inquisitive. So Musang, as we called him, was brought to our house and became a house pet. Musang was into everything he could find — testing this, turning that over, tasting things and finding out all he could about his new home. He had an incredible sense of balance and would race along the narrow back of the lounge chair without a hint of falling off. He was very mischievous too. The main target of his humour was our cat. Musang's idea of a joke was

to scurry off behind a door when he knew that the cat was going to walk past any minute, and as she passed leap out on to her back and hold tight. The cat would go into a state of shock and rush about scampering all over the place to try and dislodge Musang. This rarely succeeded. Surprisingly, the cat didn't seem to bear a grudge against Musang in between the rodeo bouts when they got on quite well together."

A Garden Owl

P.A. Collin

"ONE NIGHT WHEN I was driving home, travelling at about 40 mph, I heard a colossal thud against the nearside wing. When I got out to investigate I found a large bird lying in the ditch; it had obviously flown into the car and knocked itself out. It was a Malayan garden owl. I picked him up and put him beside me on the front seat and christened him George. George's arrival at the Gordons' camp caused quite a stir. I found him a towel rail to perch on and he seemed to be recovering, but it was clear that he had severely damaged one wing and we needed a vet. It was an eerie experience waking in the morning to find myself eyeball to eyeball with George, but over the next few weeks we became firm friends. He was a beautiful looking bird. Although I never measured him, I think he stood about fifteen inches tall.

But there were many things to be attended to. The most immediate need was to meet George's dietary requirement of one live bird per day. Fortunately, the Malays accepted this and somehow managed to supply George's needs. It proved more difficult to get him to a vet. I had the utmost admiration for the brave PC who set off in a bus attempting to control George on his wrist and sympathised with the passengers who were, presumably, not used to travelling with a wild owl.

When George's wing showed signs of recovery, I took him down on my arm to introduce him to the Jocks. I warned them not to try to stroke him or suddenly thrust out a hand, but to no avail. There was at least one Jock with a sore and bloodied finger.

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As the wing got better George began to fly around the bungalow when I let him free. One day after circling he flew off into the jungle. I missed him."

DIY War Dogs
A.J.V. Fletcher

"I **DID NOT** see the order, emanating from some wizard in KL, to each Contingent HQ ordering one hapless District from each State to find, house, feed and train to track down CTs in the jungle, a posse of local dogs. All I know is that the District chosen as the fall guy was the one in which I was stationed at that time. The argument advanced by the canine expert in HQ was that it was not necessary to go to the expense of importing trained tracker dogs from the UK and that local canines, born in Malaya and already acclimatised, could be turned into as good, if not better, substitutes.

That our District was to be the choice for this experiment was not greeted with wild acclaim. A parade of our SCs produced a young Tamil lad called Murthy, whose father had not one, but three, dogs back at home and Murthy assured us that he got on well with them. So Murthy was detailed off to be the dog recruiter, feeder and, in the fullness of time, trainer.

The trick was to find enough or, indeed, any suitable dogs. A local planter gave us one from a litter of puppies presented to him by his boxer bitch of impeccable pedigree, but of a lascivious nature, who had formed a misalliance with a no-account estate dog. The new recruit was only about four months old and had large paws almost like the feet of a shire horse. At the slightest sign of interest he (it was a male), would flop over on his back and wriggle expectantly while waiting to be tickled. This did not seem very promising, although the hope was that as Oliver matured he would become more ornery and wolf like. We were allowed a sum of money to build kennels and an exercise pen and these were constructed by the local PWD carpenters. These were Tamils and it was an unfortunate fact that Murthy, hitherto of a retiring disposition, had allowed his new position of 'in charge of dogs', to go to his head so that he barked out machine-gun bursts of Tamil at the workers throughout the construction of palatial premises for the quadrupeds.

Oliver had the new quarters to himself for only a week or two before the next arrival. This was a gift from a local butcher and had been employed as a wild boar hunter. The Chinese butcher made much of his generosity in giving us this dog and his desire to do his bit to help the government in the struggle, but the dog (a bitch) was missing bits here and there, notably an ear and a piece of a rear leg and other honourable wounds resulting from many a battle with ill-tempered wild pigs. It was also apparent to anyone that this was a superannuated animal that was interested in two things only: eating and sleeping for both of which, particularly the latter, she displayed a wonderful propensity. She was an affable old thing when she was awake, however, and someone gave her the name 'Narco' (the butcher said she was called 'Melly', which was probably his version of 'Mary' we thought at the time) insofar as she answered to anything, which was not often, any one of these names seemed to suffice.

I am no longer sure after such a long time about where the next two dogs came from. All I remember is that one dog was a huge animal, who frightened everyone who had need to deal with him — and this included Murthy, a small and slighdy-built lad who could have been picked up in the slaving jaws of this new arrival, who had something of the bear in him — and an unusually large brindled bull terrier. The last of the canine warriors was another gift, this time from a *chettiar* (money lender) who had been given the dog in part payment of a debt and who obviously rued the day he had accepted it. This was not a beautiful cur: apart from any other defect it had more than a touch of mange. The government vet, in due course, cured this. The local populace, fascinated by the whole affair, often came to the kennels to stare, to speculate and to marvel at the cunning plan of the authorities, for it was common knowledge that these animals were going to spell doom for the *orang jahat* in the jungle.

All these dogs, dominated by the huge bear-like animal known to all of us as 'Gajah', now entered upon the happiest days of their hitherto unremarkable and in some cases disadvantaged, lives. That they had clearly never eaten so well in the past soon became speedily apparent, as they increased their avoirdupois almost by the day. Each day Murthy would walk them, one by one usually, but

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occasionally in twos (with some difficulty, particularly when it was Gajah's turn when it might appear to the onlooker that it was Murthy being walked by Gajah!) What no one had worked out, however, and the order from KL did not provide much help in this respect, was how they were to be trained to sniff out and track down the enemy: indeed, as the weeks went by and the canine sleuths increased in weight and girth, they became, no doubt, contented, if surprised, at their improved lifestyle, less inclined to do anything much other than eat and sleep, perhaps taking their cue from Melly/Narco who had started out as she meant to go on.

Irascible letters from HQ as to what progress was being achieved caused a certain amount of worry, so Murthy was told to take the trainees into the nearest tract of jungle where, provided with an aniseed-soaked rag (supplied by the ever-helpful vet) and escorted by members of the jungle squad, he was to lay a trail. This was a total failure: the dogs, at first enlivened by their new surroundings soon became lethargic and were, at no time, interested in aniseed. Even worse, one of the *Mata Matas* unwarily stepped on MeUy's bad leg and was bitten. It was fortunate for him that the ancient Melly had few teeth, and those pretty loose, but the fact was that the dog was *haram* (unclean) so a great deal of *susah* ensued.

Things went from bad to worse and even the most sanguine of us began to realise that none of our animals was ever going to do anything positive still less to track a CT. Murthy seemed to take it all badly and, although he continued to trot his charges around the *padang* his heart was not in it. The locals too lost interest and the dogs became sleeker and ever fatter and more somnolent.

The OCPD, who bore the brunt of HQ's criticism about the lack of progress, became increasingly tetchy on the subject and, rather in the manner of King Henry II, asked who would rid him of these turbulent canines? One day, with great courage, strengthened by a desire to recoup some of the great sum spent upon the animals, the AOCPD found a Chinese entrepreneur who was willing to buy the dogs, the kennels and their exercise pens as well as the remainder of their month's rations, as a job lot. The AOCPD sold them lock, stock and barrel. I remember seeing from my office window a very large lorry with all these items on the back but particularly

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remember the sight of a collection of happy, fat, but puzzled dogs. The subsequent row was of Vesuvius-like proportions."

Brush Contact with a Tiger
S.R. Follows

"MY PLATOON WAS a mixture of Malays, Chinese, Eurasians: Moslem, Hindu, Buddhist, and Christian. Our common aim was to rid their country of Communism. Like me, they had heard too many stories of the ruthless, vicious actions of the CTs. We hated them.

One day as we settled down in ambush positions, we heard the sounds of movement coming ever closer. All our weapons were pointing to the sound; then a magnificent tiger appeared sniffing, alert, suspicious and superb, and then it roared and leapt away."

Sprayed by a Cobra
P.J.D. Guest

"ONE DAY, in particularly difficult jungle, I took over from the leading scout. I was bent forwards, trying to read the compass bearing when I heard a loud hiss and saw a shower of what looked like spitde striking my chest. I guessed what it was — a cobra - and didn't look up. Fortunately, since I always kept sleeves rolled down, hat pulled well forward and collar up; the spitde did not hit my face, eyes or arms.

I went into rapid reverse, and the whole patrol concertinaed into me. When I gasped to the Sikh Sergeant that there was a snake up front, he replied, "I know" and calmly pushed the reptile aside with a stick remarking, "It's a big one" and warned me not to touch the spittle.

Later, when I examined my shirt, webbing equipment and hat, I found that the spittle had bleached out all the colours."

Unlucky Tracker Dog

There is a widely told story of a tracker dog that suddenly stopped in the middle of a pool of water and lay, motionless, in the middle of the pool refusing to acknowledge any command from its handler.

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The patrol, which was following up a CT party after an abortive firefight, could not understand why their dog, normally well disciplined and responsive to every command, had suddenly gone motionless. The handler poked the dog with a stick and felt a tingling sensation, and the dog continued to lie motionless. Eventually, the patrol noticed that the high-tension electric cable crossing the water had been severed by a stray round during the firefight and had fallen into the water thus making the pool lethal and electrocuting the dog.

This sound like a tall story but I have had it from several sources and it was recorded in a regimental history. It seems as if this bizarre set of coincidences did actually occur and, had the dog not been ahead of the patrol, the leading scout would presumably have been electrocuted instead.

Decoying Village Watchdogs

Leong Chee Woh

"DOGS PRESENTED A formidable problem to patrols trying to make a surreptitious approach to a rural village. These mongrel packs provided the villagers with a first-class alarm system; the dogs would sense the approach of a patrol long way off and their barks and yaps would advertise their presence long before the villagers had detected them. Various ruses had been tried to lure the dogs away but without success. The canine alarm system continued to plague us since the owners of the dogs chained them up if they left their houses.

I too kept watchdogs, and when brooding on the problem we faced and considering new solutions, I suddenly remembered that when my bitch was on heat every dog in the neighbourhood came to visit her in my compound. Since most of the visitor dogs were strangers to me, I presumed that they must have travelled some distance in response to the scent of a bitch on heat, so it seemed to me that her scent might be a more effective lure than any we had yet tried. The next time my bitch came on heat, I soaked a cloth in her blood and, carrying it in a bottle, took it off to the jungle. I spread bits of the cloth around some distance from a village and, to my great satisfaction, saw the dogs all coming out in response. This trick served me well on operations thereafter."

Q MATTERS

Working on Q Operations

Leong Chee Woh

"AN IMPORTANT WEAPON in the anti-CT armoury was the Q Squad, a section of police officers masquerading as CTs. One of the Q ploys was to lure CTs into Q squad camp, unload their weapons and remove the fuses from their grenades while they were sleeping and then, when the CTs awoke, reveal themselves as SF. In these circumstances the CTs, recognising the weakness of their position and surprised by the attitude of their captors, would usually surrender without a struggle. The CTs were surprised to find that the SF did not torture and kill their captives, contrary to all that they had been told by their leaders. Usually the Q squad included an SEP, preferably a former member of the target group, to bear witness to the good treatment meted out to SEPs by the government.

Before entering the jungle, Q squad members were carefully inspected to ensure that everything they wore and carried was the same as the CTs used. They had, for example, to take account of the fact that CTs who had been in the jungle a long time, developed acute senses, and could detect the smell of soap, food or tobacco at a long distance. For this reason, smokers had to smoke raw tobacco leaves, which tasted much like burnt paper; cured tobacco was forbidden.

Part of our CT-style equipment was the canvas hammock, which required considerable practice to sleep in; they invariably decanted beginners onto the ground below.

It was tough working in Q squads. Talking was not allowed, and when we were out of the jungle, we had to stay out of the sunlight in order to maintain our jungle pallor. But the Q system contributed significantly to the elimination of the CT in Central Perak."

With Q Squads in Perak

J.S. Bailey

"IN 1956/57 I **WAS** posted to Ipoh as DSBO. My staff included inspectors Leong Chee Woh and Bernard Thong, two of the bravest men I have ever known.

I remember vividly one Q operation in which they were both involved. The plan was to use the services of a newly surrendered Branch Committee Member (BCM) to try to persuade the 20 CTs, that he had just left behind, to follow his example. We had little time to prepare the operation as the ex-BCM had left his camp on the pretext that he was going to make contact with another CT unit, so he would be expected back in camp in a day or so. Our operation section consisted of the SEP, three Chinese inspectors and me. We started our approach with a helicopter ride just before dusk. The landing spot had been chosen on the advice of the ex-BCM as being far enough from the camp not to disturb its inhabitants, but near enough to keep our approach march short. Unfortunately, the spot proved to be unsuitable for landing so we all had to jump out from about eight feet above the ground.

We made our camp for the night, and the next morning led by the SEP, we marched off towards the CTs. We halted quite close to diem, well hidden by the jungle, but we were able to see their camp in a clearing across a re-entrant. The SEP and inspectors Leong and Thong finalised their plans for entering the camp. It was agreed that I and the other inspector should stay out of sight until we were called forward by a signal from the inspectors but, if things went wrong, do whatever we could to help. But I hate to think what would have happened if things had gone wrong. Our team moved into the camp after an exchange of recognition signals with the CTs and had to wait for what seemed like an eternity, for the successful signal. It was a very tense time not least because I could not see the whole camp and so often lost sight of the Inspectors as they moved about. Then, to my great relief, I heard the call that was the agreed 'success signal. All the CTs had agreed to surrender.

But we had a long march ahead of us to get the SEPs to the RV at the edge of the jungle where our transport would be waiting. By now it was about noon and our ex-BCM had estimated that the RV

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was three or four hours march away. Our route lay through primary jungle so we had to proceed in single file; we moved with the ex-B C M and two inspectors in front, another inspector in the middle and me at the rear. This was the first time I had ever been at the rear of a column; my previous experience was of leading, not of marching behind, and this time I was behind a column of almost thirty men. There were some steep slopes to negotiate and, although the inspectors said that they had not been setting a fast pace, I had to trot most of the time to keep in touch. My jungle green uniform was black with sweat and I was soaking wet as if I had fallen into water. We reached our RV without mishap just before dark and found our transport awaiting us, and eventually delivered our ex-CTs to their new billets.

There was an amusing sequel to the operation. An army major, our liaison officer, had gone off with one of our inspectors to celebrate the mass surrender and the celebration went on until the wee small hours. A few days later at a coffee morning, the Major's wife told my wife that she would be obliged if I would refrain from keeping her husband out drinking in future. Fortunately for the Major, my wife kept her counsel. This was not the first time that a husband had used my reputation in order to calm an irate wife."

A Dodgy CEP

Yuan Yuet Leng

"ON ONI- OCCASION we took three CEPs out on a Q operation, although we were far from certain of their reliability. My report on the operation was as follows.

We changed into CT uniforms and arrived at our RV at 1800 hours on the jungle fringe.

In view of our doubts about the three CEPs, we kept them surrounded, and the SBOs in the party took turns to watch them throughout the night.

At about 0300 hours there was a heavy downpour. At 0500 hours when dawn was breaking, C.W. Leong shouted, "Ah Loke (one of the CEPs) has run away". He had slipped away during the heavy rain. He was eventually recaptured some month later.

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Ah Loke was the only CT in the history of Q operations who had the dubious honour of being captured and induced to surrender twice. He was not popular in SB after all the trouble he had previously given by returning to his comrades with news of our methods. There were, undoubtedly, officers whose minds turned to the possibility of eliminating him. He was terrified.

In 1993 I met the 59 year old Ah Loke, now retired and with his family. He told me the following tale."

"When I was first captured, I was interrogated by you and Leong while my two comrades were interrogated by a Chinese-speaking European, and another big European. After the interrogation, we compared notes. I said that I had been treated quite well; they told me that I had been lucky; their 'boss' European had been aggressive and thumped the table with his gun.

Since I had, personally, shot one or two soldiers in ambushes, I decided, nevertheless, that it would be wise for me to escape."

EPILOGUE

IT WOULD BE natural to seek tributes to the brave police from the senior officers of their day but, for obvious reasons, fifty years on this is not possible. Moreover, unlike more conventional wars, the Emergency did not give rise to the writing of major works by commanders nor, indeed, since technically it was not a war, there were no battle honours and citations from which to borrow appropriate quotations. Gent and Gurney, two High Commissioners were killed while still in office, the first in an air disaster, the second in a terrorist ambush, and neither General Templer nor Tengku Abdul Rahman wrote autobiographies. So I have turned to words used by Tun Hanif, a distinguished former IGP, who has long been an enthusiastic supporter of works by police officers who, having been at the Sharp End, have written about their memories of those days.

In his foreword to 'Operation Ginger' Tun Hanif said, "Hopefully Dato Seri Yuan and his contemporaries will write more so that the nation will remember forever that their present progress, cohesion, economic prosperity, peace and stability, owe much to these once young and vibrant men and women of Malaysia, who served with great distinction and valour."

It is in the spirit of Tun Hanif's words that this book has been written as a tribute to the gallant men and women who performed so courageously and effectively.

Were General Templer still with us, I am sure he would have approved whole-heartedly of our endeavours and given us some colourful quotes as well, the mildest of which would probably have been "Bloody good show." Tengku Abdul Rahman would also, I am sure, have done us proud. Unfortunately, I came too late to the current task to enlist the support of those two wonderful men but, having known them both, I am sure that both would have been enthusiastic supporters of Operation Sharp End: a tribute to the crucial role of the Malayan Police in the First Emergency, in

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achieving a unique victory over a Communist guerrilla armed insurrection.

Field Marshal Lord Carver had this to say about the campaign:

"The Malayan Emergency was an exemplar of counter-insurgency, and those who participated have every right to be proud. The greatest credit must go to the people of Malaya who made great personal sacrifices! saw with sound sense where their real interests lay, and employed considerable political skill, imagination and restraint in attaining their ends...and General Templer was the man-of-the-hour..."

It was a magnificent team effort, to which the police made an outstanding contribution."

After that quote from a Field Marshal, I leave the last word with a former British Sergeant, Gus Fletcher.

"Most of the British ex-Palestinians and the SCs were very young, I was nineteen and many of the Malays were younger still. The relationship between these youngsters from two entirely different backgrounds and cultures could have been tricky. The Emergency was barely six weeks old and things seemed critical but the kampong lads were wonderful - full of fun in their new strange world. They adapted extraordinarily quickly and close bonds were forged between the young Britons and Malays with miraculous speed, but sadly the Malays and their British Sergeants soon suffered heavy casualties. That the CTs were cruel and merciless, mostly alien, enemies, goes without saying. When at an impressionable age you have to remove a pig spear from the stomach of a rubber tapper pinned to a tree by the spear and left to die a lingering agonising death, or pick up the bodies of two Chinese miners executed in front of their families by 'elimination' squads as 'running dogs' by driving eight inch nails through their foreheads, one has little affection for those responsible.

Although I began to hate and loathe the CTs, strangely, I also found myself reluctantly admiring the SEPs and CEPs for their organisational powers and usually superb jungle craft. But there was another dimension. Many of them had gone into the jungle barely literate. Now, after years of indoctrination in their jungle camps, they were literate and had about the wider world, albeit in a biased

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way. Clearly they were not more refined, but they were no longer the ignorant lumpen proletariat that they had been when they first joining the CTO. It seemed as if one effect of their daily class work in the jungle camps was that they had learnt to listen and to give straight answers. When you operated with them in the jungle you felt that you could trust them. The cynic would say this was because they knew that their own chances of survival would be greatly improved if their former comrades in arms were eliminated. But whatever the reason we all found that in some respects their years in the jungle seemed to have made them trustworthy and reliable when 'the chips were down'."

ANNEXES

FOUR POLICE COMMISSIONERS

INTRODUCTION

I OWE AN immense debt to Stephen Hurst who shared with me the fruits of his diligent researches into the archives. Without Stephen's work my conclusions would have been less certain but in the light of all the evidence available to us it seems that justice has not been done to Gray.

Unfortunately none of the four Commissioners left an account of their stewardship. We can only touch on the subject with the aid of a few oral and written memories by those who served under them, or in the case of Gray disobliging commentaries by his pre-war predecessors, and the report of a Police Mission sent to Malaya.

By chance I met all four Commissioners between 1945 and 1997, although as a junior MCS Officer I was certainly not working at their level, and unqualified to make any judgement on their performance.

The note on Gray is much longer than the notes on the others because of the controversy that surrounded him.

H.B. LANGWORTHY

LANGWORTHY HAD BEEN a naval officer in World War I before he joined the Malayan Police. He suffered from ill health; nevertheless, by 1941 he was CPO Selangor. He was not in Malaya when the Japanese invasion took place and so was available to lead the police element of the BMA.

I met Langworthy in Pallavaram, the BMA camp near Madras, where we were preparing for the move to Singapore. He seemed, as others have reported, a pleasant gentleman of the old school.

He had a difficult task. Most of the senior police officers had been interned in the war and few were fit for duty; the Police Force was inevitably demoralised and disorganised after three and a half years under Japanese command. Terms like desertion and collabor-

ANNEXES — FOUR POLICE COMMISSIONERS

ation were bandied about and officers who had endured years of privation in Japanese camps might understandably be envious of those who had enjoyed 'a good war'. Langworthy himself had leap-frogged over older officers. It was a credit to him that despite ill health, he managed to preside successfully over a four-year programme of rehabilitation.

Just before the Emergency was declared Langworthy went on leave and was invalided out of the Service. He does not seem to have had any premonition of the insurrection to come. Immediately before he went on leave he reported that he had sufficient forces under his command to deal with the situation.

Perhaps Langworthy's greatest achievement was the healing of wounds as the Force expanded to its pre-war levels.

COLONEL GRAY

CLEARLY WHOEVER SUCCEEDED Langworthy would have faced extraordinary challenges requiring great managerial skills, and superb leadership qualities. The Force had not fully recovered from the Japanese occupation now it had to expand at break neck speed and to recruit, train and learn paramilitary skills while engaged in battle against a well armed, jungle trained terrorist force.

Before the war Nicol Gray had been a surveyor and had worked in Australia checking boundaries. His military credentials as a highly decorated Royal Marine Colonel and his counter terrorist credentials as Commissioner of Police in Palestine (1946-1948) were impeccable. The Palestine Police Force liked his style and so did Sir Henry Gurney.

He brought with him sorely needed reinforcements in the shape of former Palestinian Police, including hundreds of British Sergeants (later known as P/Lts) whose principal task was to fan out into the countryside, to provide leadership and training for the SCs, hastily recruited from their *kampongs*, and now stationed on estates and mines. They were welcomed with open arms.

Apparently neither Dame Marjorie Pelham the Colonial historian nor any of her colleagues interviewed Gray. The sources upon which they relied were all retired police officers who were, with one exception, highly critical of him, so he does not come out well in the publications that mention him.

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John Gullick, who was Secretary to the Police Enquiry Committee, which finished its work in early 1950, has confirmed that there was nothing in their report, which lent substance to the allegations against Gray. One Malay officer told me the tale of his OCPD who, having used his initiative to produce a DIY armoured vehicle, was greatly worried when told that the Commissioner was about to visit. But Gray far from reprimanding him congratulated the OCPD on his initiative. This does not sound like a man who was implacably opposed to the use of armour.

The following accounts from 'subalterns' show that not everyone shared the critics' view. In a subaltern's war a 'gung ho' General can win respect if he is seen to care for the welfare of the junior officers and the fighting troops.

H.S. Bailey wrote:

"I FIRST MET Gray when I had just arrived to take over a new Jungle Company in Perak. I found a newly constructed camp with no men, no arms, no vehicles and no staff, and while I was surveying this dismal scene the Commissioner descended. He took me aside and told me that since he did not have the resources to set up a new jungle company, he had decided to ditch the whole project. However, he had decided to make me his P.A. I protested that I would not be much good at the job since I had no small talk, Gray's riposte was, "nor do I."

Social life in the evenings at the Commissioner's house in Kuala Lumpur was not demanding. The height of excitement was an occasional game of 'mouse catch' played by a few friends whom I had been asked to round up especially for the occasion. It was a silly, simple, and rowdy game and we had jolly evenings. The mice were corks with a string tail attached and one member of the party, armed with a saucepan, had to try to catch the mice, points being awarded or deducted according to performance of mice owner and mice catcher.

Moving from a remote outpost I did not have high expectations that I would be a polished or even useful P.A. However I soon learnt how to separate the sheep from the goats, who to let in and who to bar.

My first order from Gray was to acquire a dinner jacket, trousers and black tie.

Gray was a big man with a large head and a square jaw. He seldom smiled and talked little; he had a penetrating way of looking at people. He discouraged 'shop' at meal times. But he was by no means without a sense of humour. He liked to laugh and chuckle and then he would become warm. One dinnertime we discussed Surtees and the time when Jdrrocks asked the huntsmen to report on the weather and a voice came back, "It's plaguey, dark and smells of cheese." Gray found this extraordinary funny and collapsed in laughter.

Gray was a strange man. I am inclined to accept the judgement of Field Marshall Montgomery that Gray "Was a man of power and great resources who did not know how to release and make use of his talents."

His concerns for the safety of his men were real and deep.

This brings me to the vexed question of Gray's view on APCs. His critics have accepted the *simpliste* allegation that he was opposed to the use of armour but that was not his position. He took the line that an APC could easily change from a protective shield to a metal coffin if a grenade was lobbed into it, and young, barely trained men, became frozen in a state of shock inside the metal walls. A well-placed grenade could slaughter everyone within the APC more effectively than any small arms. The only effective counter action was to debus and attack.

Gray had, in fact, indented for armour but it was not yet forthcoming. The loudest protest against Gray's alleged antipathy to armour came from planters and since he did not bother to defend himself the myth grew.

As to the turf war with Jenkins over the intelligence machine, I never met Jenkins but I remember Gray complaining that Jenkins was playing politics, giving intelligence to some departments while withholding it from the police."

Gus Fletcher wrote:

"ONE DAY THE Commissioner, arriving at a country railway station, leapt past the group of senior planters and other worthies who were looking forward with relish to the opportunity to educate 'this

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outsider'. Gray dashed up to the two ex-Palestine Policemen shouting, "What are you two young buggars up to?" This was a ploy much appreciated of course by the two young men, but hardly designed to endear Gray to the patrician planters."

Comment

GRAY WAS VILIFIED by the old Malaysia hands and the media, but never wrote or even spoke in his own defence. The most damaging of the criticisms was that he eschewed armour and, therefore, was responsible for unnecessary casualties. I have considerable sympathy for the proposition that a little armour is a comfort, since I spent the early 1950s as a Chinese Affairs Officer, driving around unescorted in my private car, conscious of the fact that my predecessor had been killed in an ambush as he drove his un-armoured car along the same roads.

The facts as they appear in the archives do not support Gray's accusers. Since APCs were not available he had to make the best of a bad situation. In any case he knew, as did his military colleagues, that armour could not be a total panacea. A well-sited, well-prepared, well-armed CT ambush party would not necessarily fail because of the presence of armour.

One solution that might have helped substantially was the armouring of the driver's cab so that the vehicle would not be trapped in the CTs killing zone, but armour is heavy, the roads were hilly, and the trucks light.

Before Gray left 900 APCs, 200-armed escort vehicles and 500 armoured personnel vehicles were on order.

The other accusations against Gray are easy to deal with.

- (a) Although Gray was not a policeman, he was an experienced soldier and counter terrorist expert, and many UK Police Forces at that time were commanded by ex-soldiers.
- (b) True he was not a Malayan, but then neither were Gent, Gurney, Macgihivray, Colonel Young or General Templer.
- (c) The charges that he had surrounded himself with a Palestinian Praetorian Guard and favoured Palestinians over Malayan officers for promotion were not substantiated in the Report of the Police Mission.

ANNEXES – FOUR POLICE COMMISSIONERS

Those who knew Gray and saw his good qualities were agreed that he was his own worst enemy. A modicum of normal diplomacy and socialising might have taken the sting out of the arguments. As it was no one ever heard Gray's explanation for his policies, they only heard the voices of his critics.

I met both Gray and Young. It is hard to imagine two more different types. One who was taciturn to the point of rudeness and the other a suave conversationalist. Arguably each man was a good choice for his time. The early days required a paramilitary type but once the SF began to dominate the CTs, it was appropriate to have a professional police officer and to emphasise the virtues of normal policing. However, it seems a little bizarre to suggest that in 1948 priority should have been given to normal policing methods. When the bullets were flying, throats being cut and torture being applied, the citizen's first requirement was physical protection against the terrorists.

Gray held the fort at the most crucial time and by the time he left Malaya the CTs were on the defensive. He won two important policy battles; that the police should have their own intelligence branch and that the army was in support of the police, not vice versa, but these were Pyrrhic victories. He retired silently, without protest, having done his duty as he saw it. His successor, Colonel Young, did not endorse the charges levelled against him by the 'Old Brigade'.

The Malay proverb says a tiger leaves its skin behind when it dies and a man his reputation. [*Harimau mati meninggalkan belang manusia mati meninggalkan nama*). Gray's reputation was shredded and remains in shreds as far as published works are concerned. But as Cloake, Templer's biographer says, "It was an achievement to have coped at all in such tumultuous times."

Colonel Young

THE THIRD COMMISSIONER was the antithesis of his predecessor.

He was a lifetime career policeman, had never been a fighting soldier, and enjoyed a reputation as a charming and an effective publicist.

Like Gray, he was vulnerable to the criticism that he did not know Malaya or its language, and had no Colonial Police experience.

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Moreover, it could be argued that he had no relevant expertise in the field of counter terrorism. His personal charm disarmed such criticism.

His relations with General Templer were cordial: even before their arrival in Malaya Templer was conducting light-hearted correspondence with his future Commissioner.

Just as General Templer reaped the benefits from plans and policies worked out by Sir Henry Gurney and General Briggs, so Colonel Young benefited from Gray's groundwork in dealing with break neck expansion. Teething troubles such as lack of equipment and weapons were beginning to be overcome.

Young also benefited from the high prices commanded by Malayan primary commodities as a result of the Korean War, since the economy was buoyant and the Treasury could afford to be generous.

His reputation stood high with most of his police colleagues, although there were those who thought that his Operation Service initiative was an overrated PR exercise.

His close rapport with Templer and support from London enabled him to get resources that had been denied to his predecessor, but, like his predecessor, he had to fight to maintain the independence of his Force against the inevitable military pressure to subordinate the police to the army. One evening Templer himself proposed to Young that the military should be put in charge, and Young threatened to resign. The matter was closed by a telephone call later that evening from Templer who said, "Was I talking cock just now, old boy?"

During his short tour of fifteen months Young was able to streamline the Force and to reorganise a body, which had grown rapidly and haphazardly to meet pressing operational demands.

When he visited the US on a speaking tour he did an outstanding job as an ambassador for Malaya: the fact that he had come up through the ranks no doubt endeared him to US audiences brought up to believe that in Britain the old school tie mattered more than ability.

Young criticised the lack of authority given to the CP and lack of training officers; problems that had also plagued Gray.

ANNEXES — FOUR POLICE COMMISSIONERS

Young made three important contributions a) reorganising the Force and reducing it in size b) establishing a Special Branch separate from the CID and ensuring that it got full support from the whole of the Police Force c) putting the Malayan Police on the London and international map. Young's showmanship was a powerful weapon in recruiting support for finance and equipment.

His private papers clearly show that he respected his predecessor's contribution and understood the frustration with which he had been faced, such as lack of authority to promote officers on merit rather than age and seniority (Gray had called it a system of Apostolic succession).

Young's final contribution to the healthy development of the Force was his choice of Carbonnell to be his successor.

W.R.L. Carbonnell

THE TWO LEADING candidates to succeed Young were Catling, the ex-Palestine CPO Selangor, and Carbonnell, pre-war Malayan and Head of SB.

Carbonnell was a popular choice; he had emerged after three-and-a-half years in Changi Gaol, half-starved and ill, but still cheerful despite everything.

He had graduated with a good degree and a rowing blue and applied to join the Sudan service, but on learning that he was to go to Malaya, enrolled immediately in SOAS for a course on South East Asia. Young moved him swiftly from Kelantan to Kuala Lumpur.

The Times obituary (1993) recorded that he had first come to Templer's notice as an officer who liked to lead men in the field far from the assisted comfort of his office. But he was also an efficient administrator and a fluent Malay speaker, and he seemed an ideal candidate, although he was No.20 on the seniority list.

When he became Commissioner, although the CTs were already on the defensive there were plenty of problems on his desk, not least pressures for reduction in numbers, euphoria on the Colonial Office's part, and budget cuts. His correspondence with Young describes these problems, and Young gave him what comfort he could. Carbonnell's most important achievement was probably that he held the Force on a steady course during the transition to Independence.

CONCLUSION

IT CAN BE argued that each Commissioner was the right man for his time. Langworthy, well suited to the task of restoring morale to the Force, Gray an effective paramilitary leader. Young's skills appropriate for the task of consolidation and streamlining the unwieldy Force, Carbonnell the safe pair of hands to steer the Force from colony to independent nation.

TWO SECRETARIES GENERAL: LOI TAK AND CHIN PENG

INTRODUCTION

THE ONLY THING these two men had in common was their meteoric rise within the ranks of the MCP. Loi Tak progressed from immigrant dockworker to Secretary General in six years and Chin took over at the age of 23.

But whereas Chin moved seamlessly from teenage Chinese nationalism to communism and anti-colonialism, we do not know what motivated Loi.

In the history of Malaya, Loi probably made a more significant contribution than Chin. By helping the British and the Japanese to put the Party leadership out of action, he reduced the MCP's capacity. Probably his most important act was his directive forbidding the Party to forge a military alliance with the Japanese Army or to wage war against the British. Had the Party been directed to collaborate with the Japanese and to oppose the British return by armed struggle, the British forces would have been faced with an opposed landing, and with circumstances analogous to those which faced the Dutch and French in Indonesia and Indochina, and created chaos in both countries. Such a scenario would have taken Malaya in 1945 directly from the comparative peace of the Japanese occupation to a civil war. Loi's directives gave Malaya a breathing space of almost three years before the Emergency began.

Chin, on the other hand, never came near accomplishing his ambitious objectives, although for over a decade he and his comrades made life miserable for the rural population by stubbornly prolonging the campaign.

Once appointed to the Secretary General post, Loi was soon able to act as a lone dictator as his comrades were eliminated. Chin's leadership style seems to have been more in line with the Communist theory of collegiate debate and democratic centralism. He never

acquired the extraordinary aura of omniscience that Loi had somehow acquired.

We can only speculate on Loi's background. Chin as public enemy number one with a large price on his head, was well known. He was an extraordinary young man. He had little formal education, no experience of the world outside Malaya, yet he took command of the Party at the age of 23 and remained in charge for forty years.

The Malaysians benefited from Loi's activities; since so long as Loi remained in charge there was no armed struggle. As soon as Chin took charge armed struggle came back on to the agenda. Chin does not attempt to argue that his revolt brought any benefit to Malaysia as a whole.

LOI TAK

Loi Tak (alias Wright) Agent Extraordinaire

INTELLIGENCE RECORDS ON this man have not been released. We can however read the MCP's official post mortem on their absconded leader, since a translation was included in the MSS Fortnightly Journals and Chin Peng's book adds to our knowledge of Loi. We can only speculate about his early life, his recruitment, and his performance for over a decade, as a secret agent of the Deuxieme Bureau in Saigon, a British agent in Singapore, and during the Japanese Occupation an agent of the dreaded *Kempetai*.

We know nothing about his motivation or about his early history in Vietnam. Nor do we know how useful he was to the Deuxieme Bureau, but only that the French arrested him, presumably for the purpose of giving him cover, before introducing him to the British.

However it seems reasonable to accept Chin's theory that Loi had helped the French to disrupt the Saigon Town Committee, developing the technique, which he used later with such devastating effect against the Central Committee in Malaya.

When Loi, in December 1943, visited Blantan the camp of the Force 136 team in Perak, Chin remarks on the awe in which Loi was held by the MCP membership, but he describes him as a sick emaciated man, who took four hours to complete a hill walk which normally took two hours, and had to pause for breath every half hour.

ANNEXES — TWO SECRETARIES GENERAL: LOI TAK AND CHIN PENG

Loi was a Vietnamese Chinese, whose Mandarin and written Chinese were inadequate, but the oddity of a Vietnamese taking command of a Chinese dominated Party does not seem to have caused adverse reactions. Chin says, "He did not look like a Chinese but almost like an Eurasian. He was small and dark."

No one in the Malayan Party knew Loi's real name as he used many aliases. The trail was further confused by the idiosyncrasies of the Chinese dialects. His Party alias, Wright, came out as Loi Tak, in Cantonese and Lai Te in Mandarin.

When the MCP first met Loi, they accepted at face value his claims to have studied in Moscow and worked with Ho Chi Minh in Indochina in the 1920s, and with the Comintern in Shanghai. However, the MCP investigation of Loi, after he absconded 1947, found no evidence to back his claims to have an international communist pedigree.

Chin does not explain the gullibility of his senior MCP comrades who seem to have taken the bait, hook, line and sinker, until, after ten years as a British agent, he was unmasked.

But there must have been more to this successful deception than Loi's glib tongue. We can reasonably speculate that Loi was given help by his British case officer, in building up a plausible cover story. Clearly his erstwhile comrades in Saigon would not be of any help to him as referees; a plausible cover story must have been created, drawing a picture which, would stand up to scrutiny, if the MCP tried to crosscheck.

The lack of sophistication of the MCP leadership, and their lack of international experience must have made it easier to create a plausible cover story. This seems to be the most likely explanation of why the bogus internationalist was accepted so readily by the MCP, and able to move within three years from his arrival in Singapore, to membership of the Party, and then three years later to the post of Secretary General.

On arrival in Singapore in 1932 Loi took a job on the waterfront. It is difficult to reconcile Chin's description of the sickly intellectual, with the job of a Singapore stevedore. But whatever the job, it enabled him to join the Trade Union movement and prove his credentials as an activist. In 1934 a Police raid [presumably engineered by Loi and his case officer] led to the decapitation of the

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Committee, thus opening the path for Loi to "manipulate his way amongst the remaining members of the Committee", as Chin puts it. By 1938 he was the leader of the Party.

Everything that Loi, Secretary General of the MCP, did was done, except for three war years when he was working with the Japanese, in consultation with British Intelligence. He not only had total access but was also the virtually unchallenged dictator of Party Policy.

Chin records that soon after the Japanese took over, Huang Chen, Propaganda Chief of the MCP, was arrested and executed by the *Kempetai* but "Through stunning good fortune ... Loi had escaped detection". This might more realistically have been described as the first fruits of Loi's offer of services to the *Kempetai*. In September 1942 an important MCP meeting was convened at Batu Caves; as usual Loi was absent when the Japanese Security Forces swooped. Not long afterwards another meeting was scheduled in Kampar, and once again Loi was absent when the *Kempetai* struck. The MCP faithful were relieved to hear that the Secretary General's car had broken down thus saving him from the attentions of the *Kempetai*. But in fact the MCP did not know that the *Kempetai* had arrested Loi five weeks after the Fall of Singapore and he had offered to work clandestinely for them.

We do not know whether Loi's interaction with the *Kempetai* was a cynical exercise in self-preservation or part of a deep strategic plan of his own based on the assumption that the Allies would return, or the idea of his British case officer.

In October 1944 Loi told the remains of the MCP leadership that the Allies were about to launch an offensive, which would soon bring the British back into power, and that the MCP should be ready to oppose them, but in late August 1945 Loi cancelled the previous heady call to revolution, ordered a peaceful struggle and forbade collaboration with the Japanese army against the returning Britons.

The War Crimes Trials in Singapore produced the following comment about Loi by his Japanese case officer. "His first motive was to save his own skin, even at the expense of his own comrades."

The Life and Death of a Secret Agent

1910 (approx)	Born Vietnam.
1930s	Member Saigon Town Committee of Communist Party of Indochina while working as a secret agent for French intelligence.
1933	Recruited by British Intelligence who move him to Singapore. Developed a cover story as a Communist with international experience, and credentials. Worked in Singapore Docks and came to MCP notice as an effective agitator.
1936	Became a Party member and joined the Singapore Town Committee.
1937	Providing the police with intelligence on the activities of the MCP, identities of members and the times and places of important meeting. Successful police operations based on Loi's excellent intelligence, lead to the arrest and banishment of many of the leaders of the MCP.
1939	Loi becomes Secretary General of the Party,
1941	Acts as go between to bring together the British and the Communists in a temporary alliance to fight the invading Japanese.
1942	Recruited by the Japanese <i>Kempetai</i> and works throughout the occupation as a Japanese agent. The <i>Kempetai</i> use Loi's intelligence to good effect, capturing and killing or turning many Communists.
1945	Despite the curious coincidence that he was never present when British, and later Japanese, swooped upon Communist meetings to arrest his comrades, Loi continues to retain the confidence of the Party, although his amazing change of direction was greatly resented.
1946	Chin Peng and Yeung Kuo become suspicious of Loi's bona fides and decide to mount a challenge at the next opportunity questioning his competence in international communism, his feudal leadership style and his failure to account for Party Funds.

1947

In January the two conspirators ambush Loi by slipping their three challenges onto the agenda of the forthcoming Central Committee meeting when Loi takes refuge in tears. Loi fails to attend the Committee the next day and disappears, taking with him what is left of the Party Funds.

The Committee decides that Loi is a traitor and orders Chin, the new Secretary General, to capture him.

Thai comrades, who strangle him by mistake while capturing him, find Loi in Thailand.

CHIN PENG

CHIN'S *My Side of History* (2003) is, a disappointing book. Firstly because it was written by a three-person committee, which makes no distinctions between Chin's words and thoughts and the findings of his two colleagues, and secondly because although copiously adorned with references to the British public records, it makes not even a pretence of reconstituting verbatim accounts of what he and his comrades were saying or writing at the time, and contains less communist archival material than *Operation Sharp End*.

However the book does provide fresh material about Chin and his companions, of their perceptions and of their changing plans as they stumbled through the jungle.

Chin and his comrades suffered from the 'frog at the bottom of the well' syndrome. They were convinced not only that they could easily drive the British out but also easily persuade the Malays to hand the country over to them. Chin's book throws no light on the logical fallacies that led the MCP to these bizarre conclusions.

The book provides no evidence that the MCP understood much about communism. On the face of it, Chin's predecessor, Loi Tak and his case officers, knew more about communism than the rest of the MCP.

The picture that Chin paints of himself as a young man is a familiar picture of Malayan Chinese teenagers of that time. He wished to do something for the Motherland that he had never seen, but soon realised that the MCP was a more effective organisation than the KMT. Chin claims that he still believes in communism.

The Marx brothers might have been amused by the naivete of his views Marx and Lenin and Deng Xiao Peng would not.

It was, of course, to be expected that his book would be devoid of remorse or apology for the terror, misery, murder and torture for which he and his Party were responsible; he takes refuge in the excuse that they were "morally justified" since they were fighting colonialism.

Although there is mention of plans and strategies in his book these seem to have amounted to little more than broad policy decisions on such subjects as centralisation versus decentralisation, Platoon versus Company attack, or the pros and cons of trying to establish liberated areas. There never was a detailed overall plan; but even if there had been one Chin had no means of controlling his army from a central H Q. It was a military force without radio communications, dependent on slow couriers, so C-in-C Chin had to wait for weeks before receiving reports from his subordinates.

Chin and his comrades do not seem to have recognised that experience with carefully prepared ambushes was a poor basis upon which to develop the theory and practice of Company attack against defended positions. The CTs had enough weapons and ammunition to cause trouble but they lacked the experience needed to run a countrywide military campaign.

The MCP suffered from other weaknesses; they had no formal organisation either for counter intelligence or for intelligence gathering. Clearly the history of the KGB, the powerful shield of the Party after the Russian Revolution, had not been part of Chin's self-study. The only mentions of counter intelligence in the book are in the context of the MCP's failure to unmask Loi Tak and other comrades who spied for the enemy. They were skilled executioners not detectives, and the Thai's botched job of capturing Loi, when they killed him by mistake, illustrates the amateurishness of the Thai Party too.

Nor did Chin's reading list apparently include the Chinese military classic *The Art of War* in which Sun Zi (4th Century BC) poured scorn on any general who did not spend time and money on intelligence. Sun Zi advocated, "know your enemy" but the MCP appears to have been content to operate by guesswork. A case in point is the failure to consider the dangers of attack from the air. It should have been obvious that to destroy the leafy jungle canopy

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before building a CT camp was to make a gift to enemy air reconnaissance. The MCP learnt from experience, not from study. Nor did they study logistics; their complacent theory that a CT unit in a jungle camp could feed itself over a long period was proved dramatically wrong once food control was introduced.

The army which Chin describes was a collection of platoons and companies scattered haphazardly throughout the Peninsula, capable of small local hit-and-run actions but without the training or structure to progress successfully to set piece battles.

Chin notes that his *bete noir* General Templer improved the government's intelligence machine but it did not occur to him that the MCP should take a leaf out of Templer's book. They flew blind throughout the Emergency, without any concept of intelligence work.

Sun Zi also advocated, "know thyself, but the Party's security measures, which compartmentalised knowledge within their organisation, produced a situation where MCP State Committees knew far less about their own troops than the Malayan Government.

This lack of any intelligence organisation contributed to the wrong-headed assessments the MCP made about their strategic prospects. They stereotyped the British as a bunch of bullying colonials who would never voluntarily relinquish their position in Malaya, and thus jumped easily to the conclusion that by flying the anti-colonial flag they could win over the population. But Chin fails to provide any description of the analytical processes which led him to conclude that the Malays, for the most part traditionalist, royalist, Muslims would welcome rule by a band of immigrant atheist Chinese. He seems also to have been unable to accept the fact that Britain was planning to give up its Empire.

A strand of naivete runs through Chin's book. It may stem partially perhaps from the fact that Chin gave up any formal education at an early age and was largely self-taught. Whatever his reading consisted of it seems to have done little to help him understand that the world was more complex than the one described by ardent nationalist Chinese who found it easier to blame the West for all their ills, than to acknowledge the corruption and selfishness of the Chinese leaders who had ruled the Republic of China.

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If Chin's model was the guerrilla heroes of the Chinese classic *The Men of the Marshes*, he failed to note that unlike Chin, they had not attempted to move from the marshes and take over the government of China. His lack of understanding of other countries and cultures is exemplified by his decision in 1959 to resettle CTs in Sumatra; when he was surprised and indignant to find that the Muslim rebels of Ache treated the refugees as potential subversives.

Chin apparently saw no contradiction between the praise he gave to individual British comrades in Force 136 and the general obloquy, which he heaped on the British in Malaya. A more sophisticated man might have recognised that not all Britons were the imperialist colonial beasts so beloved of communist propagandists.

Chin's memoirs portray him as a man of little learning and shallow views, who finally had little to show for the hardships he inflicted on Malayan society and on his men. He admits that after 1952 when the Briggs Plan was beginning to bite, the CTs never recovered the initiative. Nevertheless he plodded on saved by the sanctuary granted to the rump of his forces by Thailand. Although he found it difficult to believe that the British were prepared to leave Malaya, he acknowledges now that their decision to do so destroyed the central plank in the MCP's platform.

CONCLUSION

JOHN DAVIS OF Force 136 wrote the following description of Chin, "Hokkien. Age approximately 25 (he was actually only 20), English mediocre. Probably middle class. Family unknown. Courageous. Commands mutual respect without fuss or formality. Quiet character with unusual ability, frank, reliable and likeable. Due to youth and inexperience of the world he is, of course, no conversationalist and not a great character."

Chin himself writes, "Admittedly we were all very raw and inexperienced; my military commander proved to be a daring, determined man. During the Japanese advance he had personally knifed to death a collaborator, a Chinese Medical Practitioner, in broad daylight." This seems a curious definition of 'daring'.

Chin's military training was less than that of a fully trained private soldier. The largest formation he had ever commanded was a so-called Mobile Squad of five men, whose task was not to engage in

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battle but to murder collaborators. The MCP's training was in the arts of assassination, sabotage and ambush, not in the arts of war.

It seems odd that Chin and his comrades although equipped only with such limited experience, believed that they could mount a successful military campaign against numerically much superior professional forces. It is as if Robin Hood, after some successful ambushes of the Sheriff of Nottingham's men, decided that he was ready to emerge from Sherwood Forest to take on the Norman Conquerors throughout England.

Chin was, no doubt, a determined, zealous, hardworking and reliable comrade, but he does not emerge as a charismatic leader. His appointment to the top job in the Communist Party probably owed more to the fact that the leadership had been wiped out by the skilled work of the police aided by Loi Tak than to any special quality.

He achieved little except survival. His obstinate refusal to accept amnesty terms at Baling and afterwards smacks more of face saving than of statesmanship.

For those of us who were on the other side of the fence it seems deplorable that Chin shows not one iota of regret for all the misery he caused to Malaysians and, indeed, amongst his own troops. He is entitled to his naive belief that communism is the answer, despite all evidence to the contrary, and the pronouncements of notable Chinese Communists such as Deng Xiao Peng. He is not entitled to equate the tortures, intimidation, cruelties and murders sanctioned by the MCP with the efforts of the Malayan Government to restore law and order.

Chin's book is a modest one: but then the MCP had a lot to be modest about.

COMMENT

CHIN PENG CHARACTERISES the Loi Tak affair as a great triumph for British Intelligence. It was a double triumph in the sense that Loi was not only able to keep his spymaster informed, but also able for eight years to manipulate MCP Policy to accommodate the interests of the governments of Malaya and Singapore. Although clearly this was a highly successful operation, Loi Tak's professionalism is open to doubt. He appears to have been compromised in his Saigon

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operations and his practice of absenting himself from any MCP meeting, which British or Japanese Intelligence were going to raid, should have raised the suspicions of less naive colleagues; likewise, his embezzlement of Party subscriptions could easily have led to trouble long before Chin and Yeung started to challenge him. And his love life too was not in keeping with the code of conduct for a puritanical communist.

Loi Tak was lucky. He might have lasted longer if he had been more ascetic, but it is unlikely that he could have maintained his credibility for much longer if forced by his case officer to continue to oppose armed struggle.

FROM ACHILLES HEEL TO GOLDEN SKEIN

INTRODUCTION

IN 1948 GENERAL Harding complained that intelligence was the government's Achilles Heel. In the 4th Century BC the Chinese Strategist Sun Zi considered that intelligence was crucial for any successful general, and described an effective intelligence machine as being like a Golden Skein. It took three years to create a Golden Skein in Malaysia. But by the end of the Emergency the Malayan Intelligence system enabled the Security Forces to dominate the CTs.

Before the Emergency Malayan Intelligence was something of a Cinderella, inadequately resourced even to provide what the Director Malayan Security Service (MSS) quaintly called 'Battle Intelligence', in other words, tactical intelligence to support operations.

When intelligence was criticised for failing to give an unambiguous warning of the strength and determination of the MCP to seize power in Malaya, the Director of MSS riposted that the fault lay with his customers who had ignored his reporting.

The successful development of an increasingly sophisticated intelligence system is amply demonstrated by stories in this book, but the stories tell us nothing of the pre-Emergency situation, which led to General Harding's complaint.

I asked Gus Fletcher to comment on 'batde intelligence'. He wrote:

"As a humble foot soldier in August 1948 I had no knowledge of the intelligence machine and when I left after three years in Pahang, I was not conscious that we had received much intelligence hard or otherwise about the enemy we were pursuing. This was painfully true when, newly arrived from Palestine I was leading small squads of 'new' SCs in the jungles around Triang. This was indeed a case of the blind leading the blind.

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We occasionally bumped into Charley Tare in the first years of the Emergency, not because of good operational intelligence but because the CT were fairly thick on the ground. Indeed I had some misgivings about the wisdom of seeking to engage an enemy that often had eight times more men than I had. My admiration for the SCs was considerable, but the CTs were experienced jungle fighters. Not that I was frightened you understand, just worried.

When in 1950 I was OC of a jungle squad in the Frasers Hill area we were still operating blind as far as hard tactical intelligence was concerned. But we had become skilled in jungle work craft, helped by Aborigine trackers and SEPs, and we found and destroyed many CT camps.

In my District the office concerned with intelligence was the CID Inspector, a worthy Sikh whose knowledge of the local criminal scene of larceny of coconuts, bicycle theft, malicious wounding of catde and so on, was exemplary. But not surprisingly he had little intelligence to offer on the CTs. Occasionally we got a welcome nugget from officials involved in resettlement work, but there was no organised intelligence picture of the enemy.

The situation changed dramatically with the arrival of a new OCPD, the unorthodox Bill Stafford, bugbear of all concerned with the rulebook. Contrary to regulations he had brought three Chinese agents from his previous post. As soon as Bill got to work we were able, on the basis of the hard intelligence produced by Bill's private intelligence team, to wreak havoc amongst the local CTs. Within eight months we eliminated about fifteen CTs.

Bill's performance in Pahang demonstrated the startling difference that could be made by good tactical intelligence. Without it a battalion might comb the jungle for weeks or even years, without making contact with the enemy. But once we knew the CT supply chain the CTs became almost sitting ducks whenever they left their jungle sanctuary to collect supplies.

The intelligence situation began to improve dramatically as Special Branch (SB) expanded and agent-running skills developed. The number of potential case officers was vasy increased by the work of the (Chinese Language) Government Language School, which was turning out non-Chinese officers able to handle Chinese agents directly without interpreters. The increasing flow of SEPs and

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CEPs was also grist to the intelligence mill. Success bred success and there was a snowball effect as case officers and agents gained confidence and experience in penetrating the communist organisations and turning the rank and file against their communist bosses.

We began to have more knowledge about the CTs than the communists themselves had. The couriers, their routes, their contacts with the support organisations, were charted in detail. And all this knowledge was immediately available for operational purposes, whether to mount an attack or to secure a defection. The results were spectacular, and reflected in ever increasing surrender, capture and kill rates."

The MSS was a post-war creation headed by Colonel Dalley, a Singapore Police Officer, who had been responsible after the Japanese invasion for the recruitment of a force of Chinese volunteers, to join the fight. Dalforce could not afford to be choosy about the political creed of its recruits and Dalley's men, like the anti-Japanese volunteers in Force 136 in the Peninsula, were communists. But although Dalley had inside knowledge and experience of the Chinese communists, he saw Malay nationalism as the immediate threat. Across the Malacca Straits in Dutch Netherlands East Indies (modern Indonesia), civil war was raging and it was nationalism, not communism, which was feeding the conflagration. The fact that the Malay Communist Party was for all intents and purposes, a Chinese Party probably encouraged him to downplay the MCP threat. But perhaps the single most important cause of the intelligence failure was that until early 1947 the MSS had a jewel in its crown in the shape of their agent Loi Tak who had been the Secretary General of the Malayan Communist Party since 1936. MSS might be forgiven for assuming that this agent with impeccable access would be able to give them accurate and timely warning of any Party decision to move from rhetoric to insurrection. But Loi Tak absconded in early 1947, MCP policy changed dramatically, and the MSS did not report the change.

Fortunately Dalley kept some papers, in violation, no doubt, of his own rules, and handed them to the Bodleian Library. They include a complete set of the MSS Intelligence Journals for the period 1946 to 1948 (July).

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The MSS Journals are basically 'scissors and paste' publications describing events, organisations and personalities, with little attempt at analysis, and none at strategic threat assessment. The Journals were padded out with overt research material on organisations and personalities. Occasionally some gem would be inserted amongst the chaff but it was seldom underlined, still less interpreted for the customers, and the Mandarins and Generals alike were apparently content to accept the document in this patchy form.

The evidence suggests that before June 1948 neither the Commissioner of Police Langworthy nor Colonel Dalley predicted an imminent insurrection. At the beginning of June 1948 the Commissioner asserted that he had sufficient forces under command to deal with foreseeable threats, and on June 14th Colonel Dalley reported that there was no immediate threat to internal security, although he hedged his bet with a rider to the effect that "the danger will increase as the power of the communists increases"; the sort of glimpse of the blindingly obvious which gives intelligence a bad name.

I had personal dealings with Dalley from 1946-1947, usually in the context of the intemperate demands by the remnants of Dalforce, the unit of Chinese whom Dalley had enlisted to fight the Japanese, which by 1947 was, demanding back pay for the whole occupation period, Dalforce had taken to mass picketing of the Chinese Secretariat where I worked, but Dalley did not link this belligerence to the broader issues raised by the growing success of Mao Tsetung's communist army in China, or to the gathering storm.

Three documents that bear on the intelligence topic are available in the Bodleian Library in Oxford, They are described later.

One is Dalley's plaintive memorandum about the problems of the MSS written at the beginning of the Emergency,

One is a record of a meeting called in 1947 by the Commissioner General, Malcolm Macdonald, where the assembled civil and military chiefs discussed 'the problem' at some length without defining it or agreeing to any action.

The most important perhaps is the complete set of the MSS fortnightly Political Intelligence Journal.

All these documents give the impression that there were no senior officers with intelligence experience in Malaya at this time.

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Neither the CG nor his senior military and civilian colleagues identified the lack of a clear threat assessment. Moreover, the MSS Charter did not include threat assessment. Dalley's concern was with coordination and action, not with assessment, and the Political Intelligence Journal reflected Dalley's priorities. There were no threat assessments.

A check through the archives in the PRO at Kew provides no evidence that either that JIC (Joint Intelligence Committee) or the JIC (Far East) had identified this weakness still less how to cure it. The JIC does not seem to have been much concerned with Malaya and vetoed the suggestion that Dalley should become a member of JIC (FE).

It is easy to sympathise with Dalley's frustrations over the MSS's lack of authority. It is less easy to sympathise with his contention that the problem was with the customers who had failed to heed and act upon the MSS warnings. Dalley's warnings were of a Delphic Oracle variety, The MSS never spelt out that there was an imminent danger of armed communist uprising. But his senior customers from Commissioner General downwards, must also share the blame, since they never insisted on a clear threat assessment.

Central questions about intelligence failure remain unanswered. Did the intelligence community fail to collect sufficient intelligence; did analysts not read the signs correctly, or did the end users, the policy makers, suffer from a common disease, cognitive dissonance, a phrase which loosely equates with, "do not confuse me with the facts my mind is made up already." During post mortems on the intelligence community's pre- Emergency performance, four main schools of thought have emerged. One, whose membership included an anti-High Commissioner clique, maintains that there was sufficient intelligence but that the government ignored it. Another claims that even if there was adequate intelligence its presentation was too generalised and hedged about with qualifications. A third that the MSS was too concerned with nationalism. A fourth view is that the MSS had become complacent and over dependent on one single source, Loi Tak.

It should, however, be noted that the intelligence community could not have predicted the exact date for insurrection since the

ANNEXES --- FROM ACHILLES HEEL TO GOLDER SKIEN

MCP had not yet decided a date for D-Day when government declared a State of Emergency.

Chin Peng reminds us in his book of the complexity of the situation with which Malayan intelligence was faced:

- (a) At the time that Loi absconded in January 1947, there was no MCP Policy to move to armed struggle.
- (b) In 1947 Chin Peng himself had assumed that armed struggle was at least eight years away.
- (c) On 1 February 1948 the MCP decided to prepare for armed struggle but scheduled a meeting for August to finalise the plans and no date was fixed for the insurrection.
- (d) The MCP expected that the British would take drastic action against the Party in September.

Thus it would seem that the best the MSS could have done in early 1948 was to report that the MCP were making preparations for armed struggle.

When the war in Asia ended abruptly in August 1945, the MCP like everyone else was taken by surprise. Loi Tak persuaded them a) not to execute the British officers of Force 136 who, having served throughout the war in the jungle as liaison officers, knew rather more than was convenient about the MCP modus operandi and personalities, b) not to join forces with the Japanese forces against the British but to opt instead for United Front action, exerting influence through such organs as the trade unions. But after the Japanese surrender incidents of murder and so-called banditry had been widespread and frequent. For example, in Klian Intan, Johore, there had been two incidents in 1947. In February a customs officer and a civilian were killed and the township razed by a 40-strong raiding party; in September police and 6 civilians were murdered. In January 1948 the police arrested a party in Johore, which was in possession of two Lewis machineguns and five hundred rounds of ammunition.

From April 1948 onwards there were low level reports of plans to form killer squads to target senior officials and thus to cause chaos throughout the country, but since these tended to be from KMT sources (notoriously prone to fabrication and exaggeration), the

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MSS contented itself with Delphic pronouncements; they did not suggest an imminent insurrection.

By 1952 the intelligence machine had been transformed and intelligence was no longer an Achilles Heel but a hugely important part of the excellent close cooperation between police, military and civil authorities. SB, the successor to MSS, grew rapidly in strength and Professor Purcell, arch opponent of the government policies described Malaya as a Police State because of the powerful position of SB.

But the birth pangs of the Branch were not easy. There were blazing rows between Commissioner of Police Gray, Director of Intelligence, Jenkins and Director of Operations Briggs. By the time the system had settled into its final form, all three of these warring chiefs had left. Templer endorsed the solution; a strong SB within the police.

And so the Golden Skein had replaced the Achilles Heel. The individual CTs, their personalities, locations, habits, families and links were studied in detail and dossiers built up until SB's knowledge of the organisation became encyclopaedic. Inevitably it took time to recruit and train extra staff of the right calibre, to develop sources and to build a detailed picture of the enemy, but in the end a magnificent machine was developed which was the envy of other governments engaged in attempts to counter terrorism.

CONCLUSION

THERE WERE NO 'giants' amongst the pre-Emergency chiefs, whether civil, military, police or intelligence. The Governor General was a consummate politician with an amazing flair for human relations, but he was not an administrator or a man of action. Gent, DSO, MC, Double First and Rugger Blue, could not empathise with the colonial diehards, seemed over conscious of constitutional niceties and rejected estimates of 5,000 men in the jungle and 250,000 *Min Yuan* as alarmist. He preferred Langworthy's more comforting assessments and assertion that there was no need for expansion of the Police Force,

Malcolm Macdonald and his senior colleagues were aware that there was trouble of some sort brewing but they were unable to

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bring the threat into focus. The concept of 'Threat Assessment' seems to have been unknown to both customers and producers.

So the Mandarins were ill served by their embryonic intelligence community in terms of strategic assessment, while the intelligence community was ill served by the lack of expertise of its masters.

Fortunately the MCP had no intelligence organisation at all.

GOVERNOR GENERAL'S CONFERENCE

– 26th June 1947

GOVERNOR GENERAL MALCOLM Macdonald in the chair, the Governor of Malaya and Officer Administering the Government Singapore, their Secretaries for Chinese Affairs (SCA), the Service Chiefs, the Director MSS, the Trade Union Adviser and representatives of the Foreign Office and Security.

Precis of the Meeting

MACDONALD SAID THAT he had called the meeting "under somewhat hush hush circumstances, which may have been rather mystifying, in order to discuss communism in Malaya and Singapore. He considered that, "Communism was Enemy No.1 in these territories. It was already a serious enemy and capable of becoming a formidable one. Without falling into the error of exaggeration or excitement it had to be realised that communism would have to be dealt with in a pretty big and effective way in Malaya and Singapore." He continued by outlining the strengths of the communists, describing their tentacles throughout society and their fifth column work. He hoped that his statement was not exaggerated: it was his own personal view, and if it had any truth in it then "it was very necessary to have a very strong and coherent policy to counteract the activities of the communists."

Gent said that he did not think that Macdonald's statement was exaggerated. He thought that government needed the opinion of experts to identify weaknesses and to show them how they could be countered.

Dalley reported on the state of the **MCP** and its links with international communism. Macdonald presumed that "The communists first aim was to get rid of the government." Dalley agreed.

Throughout the meeting the discussion was only about subversion, never about the prospect of an armed uprising.

During subsequent discussion Dalley agreed with Macdonald that the MCP was Chinese controlled and its strength lay in the Chinese population of the two territories.

The SCA Malaya remarked that although the KMT were still strong in Malaya they were losing the war in China, and if the communists won the KMT power would be correspondingly reduced in Malaya.

The Acting Governor Singapore endorsed the assessments made by previous speakers. The situation was serious.

The meeting discussed the possibility of world war and communist action in support of Russia.

Gent said that he thought that the conference should stick to the question of the MCP activities to break down law and order in Malaya and Singapore with the intention of taking over the government.

Macdonald agreed but said that they must be prepared for all eventualities.

C-in-C Far East asked why the subversive Trade Unions and the Communist Party were not outlawed? Where was the British answer to countering international communism? And said that in his opinion the KMT were a worse menace than the MCP.

Macdonald replied that the British democratic tradition tolerated communists as well as democrats and, therefore, Westminster would not be prepared to authorise the proscription of the MCP unless it could be proved categorically that it was engaged in a conspiracy.

Gent pointed out that the MCP had been proscribed before the war and asked why was it impossible to go back to the pre-war policy. The communists were training hundreds while we were training only a handful in Britain to counter subversion.

Macdonald wondered whether the KMT could not be used to help counter communism in the Chinese community. The SCA

² The view that the KMT should not be called in aid against the communists and C-in-C's view that the KMT was a worse menace than the communists, was not challenged. The KMT had been the traditional enemy before the war and communist China was not yet seen as a threat, although it was clear to any unbiased observer that Mao Tsetung was winning.

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Malayan Union vigorously opposed this idea and was supported by Dalley, who described the corrupt and vicious nature of the K M T.

The meeting spent a considerable time on discussion about the importance of a healthy development of democratic institutions.

The Trade Union Adviser (Brazier) said that he wished that the Malays would act vigorously like a proper party.

Macdonald did not agree with this criticism; he thought that Dato' Onn had made a good start and that UMNO would develop effectively.

Macdonald suggested that support should be sought amongst the leading Chinese businessmen but Brazier warned against reliance on support from the Towkay class. In his view the middle class clerks of all races were more likely to provide a solid base for progress.³

Macdonald initiated a discussion on the requirements of MSS. Dalley said that he needed all the help he could get from agencies outside Malaya since much of the impetus for subversion and training came from outside.⁴

Macdonald raised the question of shortages of trained intelligence staff since the two governments could not spare enough men to satisfy the needs of the MSS, he suggested that he and the two governments should work together on the problem of recruiting staff from outside Malaya.

Gent did not support this idea. He talked of the need to resolve constitutional matters before embarking on any programme of recruitment from outside the Malayan Police.

Macdonald suggested that Dalley should consult with the Whitehall security and intelligence representatives and if manpower could be found, no doubt finance could also be found. This suggestion also failed to find favour with Gent. The matter, in his view, should first be considered between the two Commissioners of Police and the Director of MSS, to agree on a required establishment.⁵

³ Brazier's view was, of course, coloured by his distrust of capitalist bosses.

⁴ There was no solid basis for this assertion: fortunately for government the MCP were not clients of any foreign party.

⁵ Gent clearly did not think that creating an effective intelligence machine was of more importance than maintaining the constitutional niceties.

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The meeting ended with Macdonald remarking that there were many other aspects of the 'question' and a decision to meet again soon.

COMMENT

THE RECORD CONVEYS little sense of urgency or of the crying need to improve the intelligence machine, help MSS to get staff or, indeed of any understanding of the fundamental flaws in the intelligence machine.

**DIRECTOR MSS MEMORIALISES THE
COMMISSIONER GENERAL'S OFFICE
—13th July 1948**

Sir Ralph Hone, KBE, MC, TD, KC
Commissioner-General's Office
Singapore

MS. 86

PRECIS

I ATTACH A memorandum that I dictated on the 1st July, in order that you will have some knowledge of the present organisation, the handicaps with which we are faced, and the futility of having an organisation for the collection of political intelligence, if that intelligence is not made use of.

1. Towards the end of the 1914/1918 War a Political Intelligence Bureau was set up in Singapore. This Bureau had no connections with the Police and dealt only with Political Intelligence. In May 1920 the Federated Malay States Police set up an Intelligence Bureau. At the beginning although the importance of Political Intelligence was stressed, Criminal Intelligence appeared to take precedence. A well-established and well-staffed Straits Settlements Police Special Branch was set up in Singapore but it was not until 1940 that the Police Intelligence Bureau (FMS) became fully staffed and began to function as a Political Intelligence Bureau.
2. There was no formal coordination between the Intelligence Bureau in the FMS and SB in the Straits Settlements
3. In 1946 the MSS was set up. The Charter begins:
 - (a) "A Pan-Malayan Headquarters at present stationed in Singapore will obtain and collate all Security Intelligence emanating from MSS branches throughout the Peninsula

and collect and collate information on subversive organisations and personalities in Malaya and Singapore.'

- (b) Advise the two Governments as to the extent to which Internal Security is threatened by the activities of such organisations.
 - (c) Keep the two Governments informed of the trends of public opinion, which affect, or are likely to affect, the Security of Malaya.
 - (d) Maintain a Central Registry of Aliens.
 - (e) Maintain a close liaison with other Security Intelligence Organisations, and with the Defence Security Officer."
4. "The Defence Security Officers (Whitehall Representatives) would be in close liaison with MSS and be responsible for keeping SIFE and the Services informed of developments."
5. "It is emphasised that MSS should have no Executive powers. Actual raids or arrests should be carried out by the Regular Police acting on the advice of MSS, who would *thus ensure* coordinated action throughout." (Italics added: Ed.)
6. "MSS would be staffed by:
- (a) Gazetted officers seconded from the Malayan Union Police and Singapore Police.
 - (b) Inspectors and Detectives seconded from the Malayan Union Police and Singapore Police.
 - (c) Office staff, including translators, confidential stenographers, clerks, photographers and telephone operators would be appointed permanently to MSS.

The MSS should have their own staff in category (c) at appropriate rates of remuneration, having regard to the security class of work they have to handle."

7. (a) The Regular Police should act on the advice of MSS, but the MSS has no Executive powers;
- (b) The MSS should coordinate action throughout the country;

¹ It will be noted that the Charter does not mention assessment, but only collecting and collating intelligence. Dalley apparently was content with this restricted responsibility and did not recognise the need for an analytical and assessment staff to process the intelligence.

² Defence Security officers were from Whitehall (**MIS**): Security Intelligence Far East (SIFE) was an outpost of Whitehall.

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- (c) The MSS would obtain and collate all Security Intelligence throughout Malaya;
 - (d) The Defence Security Officers are responsible for keeping S.J.F.E. and the Services informed of developments.
8. Early in 1947 it became apparent that the strength of the MSS was insufficient to carry out all these duties, the two Commissioners of Police were asked to supply suitable staff from their strength to bring MSS up to establishment. This request was never fully acceded to and MSS is still not up to establishment. It must be realised here (and will be realised by those who have had any experience in the collection of Intelligence), that great care has to be taken in the selection of officers and men in the employment of the MSS. Such men exist in Malaya, particularly in the Police, but it has so far been impossible to obtain the services of those officers and men. The result is, that the MSS has had to attempt to carry out the duties of MSS in spite of being desperately short of staff.³
9. It will be noticed that it was recognised in the Charter that office staff should be paid appropriate rates of remuneration, having regard to the security class of the work they have to handle. Repeated requests have been made for suitable rates of pay, but even today a translator in the MSS — who has available to him information of a highly secret nature — is paid less than a translator in the Chinese Secretariat where, at most, they handle confidential documents. The result has been an acute shortage of office staff and translators and there are not enough hours in the day for these few loyal and devoted men and women to complete their work.
10. In spite of all this however, most of the functions of MSS have been fully carried out and this is illustrated by the fact that during the last year the events which are occurring in Malaya today were forecasted (sic) on several occasions.⁴

³ It does not seem to have occurred to the drafters of the MSS Constitution, or to Dalley himself, that it was naïve to expect to find enough high calibre staff through a system of secondment. The Commissioner of Police's priority was policing not intelligence work, and ambitious officers were unlikely to see a posting to MSS as a good career move.

⁴ The MSS Journal does not support this claim.

11. The Political Intelligence Journal has been produced twice a month. Much detailed information has been passed on to various authorities in Malaya, including the Police, most of which recommended action. It is unfortunate that in many cases no action was taken and that in a large measure has led to the present situation of Malaya. It is here that the greatest weakness lies. The fact that MSS has acquired a considerable amount of information regarding subversive organisations, personalities and their activities cannot be challenged. That this information has been passed over to the authorities concerned, including the Police cannot be denied. But much of this information has been wasted by no action or no proper action being taken in so many cases.
12. The MSS Charter states that MSS should coordinate action throughout the country, but there has been and there still is, no machinery whereby MSS can coordinate that action. All that MSS can do is to recommend action.
13. The present organisation of MSS has evolved as the result of experience. Except for acute shortage of staff, the machinery for the collection, collating, correlating and the dissemination of information works satisfactorily. The strength of the more important members of MSS as on 1/5/46 and the approved establishment was:

Actual Strength	Approved Establishment
1 Director	1 Director
1 Dy. Director	1 Dy. Director
5 Asst. Directors	5 Asst. Directors
11 Local Security Officers	15 Local Security Officers
42 Asst. Local Security Officers	56 Asst. Local Security Officers
67 Enquiry Staff	81 Enquiry Staff
16 Translators	21 Translators.

This staff has to cover all subjects throughout the whole of Malaya.

14. Mention should be made of potential sources. It would be expected that the Police would be a prolific source of information but mainly because they have been so absorbed in the investigation of criminal activities the amount of information received

from the Police has been negligible. The main sources of information are (1) underground and secret agents, (2) surveillance in all its forms. The results are pooled in the Central Registry at HQ, and collated in the Central Registry. Unfortunately, owing to lack of an adequate and well-trained staff, there is grave risk of delay and oversights, but owing to the devoted services of the few who serve under conditions that provide for continuity of service, no great harm has been done. They cannot however continue to work at the same pressure as they have done during the last two years without some relief.

15. Information is disseminated in many ways. When a Local Security Officer receives information that requires immediate action within his area, that information is passed on immediately to the authority concerned — usually the Police — with such recommendations as he wishes to make. The Local Security Officer has however, no power to ensure that action is taken on that information. A copy of that information is sent to MSS HQ where it is collated through the Central Registry and through the branches. The Assistant Director responsible for that particular subject collates information received, and if as a result of that collating action is indicated by any department of Government, that department of Government is informed immediately by the Assistant Director or by the Director himself. In addition to this, the Director, with overall picture of the whole, writes separate memoranda to both Governments and also to departments of Government, giving them information which is of interest and use to them, and in most cases recommending action. At no stage is it possible for the Director or any of his officers to ensure that action is being taken. Another form of dissemination of information is through the Political Intelligence Journal, which is produced twice a month, and through Supplements to the PIJ.
16. Experience has shown that the MSS organisation is workable and that if properly staffed, a complete coverage of all political activities throughout Malaya could be given. The system of disseminating information is also workable, but there continues to be wastage of information, i.e. there is no overall authority that ensures that that action is taken. The item in the MSS Charter

that charges the MSS with the coordination of action throughout the country is unworkable. In 1945 and again in 1946, once more in 1947 and again recently, I have put forward suggestions to cure the defect: an IGP is required for the whole of Malaya, whose primary duty would be Security Intelligence, i.e. the duty now performed by the Director of the MSS. He would inevitably become involved in certain Police duties and in certain responsibilities but this should not handicap him unduly because, providing the Security Service is fully, adequately and suitably staffed, he would still be able to maintain a high standard of service from the Security Service while at the same time be in a position to coordinate well-directed and effective action along the lines of the Intelligence available throughout the whole country. In addition to this he could ensure that the Police Services in the country are prepared for any eventuality that might be indicated by the security intelligence that is available to him.

17. At this present time of Emergency the organisation needs little or no adjustment. The collecting and collation and dissemination of information must go on, even more intensified than it is now, but at the same time, the passing on of what may be described as 'battle' intelligence at a lower level, must be ensured. We have an organisation that can and does continue to collect information and disseminate it to all levels without delay, but here again there is no means whereby proper action along the lines of that information can be ensured.

Perhaps one of the most outstanding examples of this was that in spite of the recommendations made by the Director, MSS some weeks ago that coordinated searches should be made of the premises, both open and secret, of subversive organisations and the arrest of leading personalities should be properly coordinated and that no warning should be given, haphazard action by the Police and others throughout the country gave these subversive elements ample warning of what to expect, with the result that not only did we fail to obtain much documentary and other evidence from the searches, but we failed to find the leaders of our enemy, as we could have done if properly

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coordinated action had been taken at the right time and no warnings given.

18. It is in my opinion of the utmost importance that immediate action should be taken along the lines I have already suggested. The most important factor now is the coordination of action along the lines of information available.
19. If another example to stress this point is necessary, it is the case of Jerantut where the village was held up and the Police Station attacked. As a result of intelligence available to vis - intelligence though not absolutely specific, sufficiently strong on which to base a recommendation for action - it was recommended in writing that a strong guard should be placed at Jerantut, particularly on the Ferry. There are, I submit, sufficient examples given to show that we run a grave risk by not fully integrating MSS and Police (and even bringing Immigration under some form of control or coordination) in order to ensure that all sources of intelligence are made full use of and effective and well-directed action taken.⁵

*J.D. Dalley, Lt.Col
Director, Malayan Security Service*

⁵ The MSS's lack of authority to coordinate action was, on the face of it, less important than the lack of intelligence.

THE MSS POLITICAL INTELLIGENCE JOURNAL

THE FIRST OF this fortnightly series appeared on April 30th 1946. The last issue is dated 30th August 1948. The series therefore covers the months immediately before the Emergency, and the first six-weeks.

Colonel Dalley had been complaining regularly about lack of staff. The uneven quality of the journal reflects this shortage.

The Journal was about nuts and bolts of organisations, and Sitreps; it was extraordinarily detailed in places and included from time to time, a sort of Who's Who list of the great and the bad. The format was diffuse and unsuited for busy senior customers, and so unlikely to have much impact on policy. Each senior end user was, in effect, left to make his own assessments.

The Journal never produced anything remotely resembling a threat assessment. Apparently, neither he nor his customers worried about this lacuna. It could have been remedied by a small team of skilled assessors or inter departmental committee to bring together intelligence from all sources into a general assessment. It took the declaration of the Emergency to focus attention on weaknesses in the intelligence process.

Until mid-1948 most of the material in the Journal was concerned with nationalism: Indonesian, Malay, Indian and Chinese.

On the Chinese front, until 1948 it was the nationalists, not communists, which was the focus of MSS coverage. The KMT had long been the bugbear of the governments of Malaya and Singapore: a malign influence encouraging Malayan Chinese to give their loyalty not to Malaya but to mother China, and a group seriously tarnished by corruption and close relations with Triads (Secret Society) and other criminal activities, using violence and intimidation. So it was

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the threat of the K M T not the communists, which concerned senior Malayan officials.'

Although the overt satellites of the Malayan Communist Party were regularly covered in some detail in the MSS Journal, the MCP itself never rated more than a few lines until the Emergency was declared.

This imbalance may, of course, have reflected a paucity of sources capable of covering the secretive MCP: the overt satellites, Trade Unions, China Democratic League, Chinese teachers, stevedores and others in the United Front were a much softer target, and such matters as developments in China and the structure of the Chinese Press were easier still.

Whatever the reasons, the Journal gave little space to the MCP, which was preparing to launch a wave of terror. Although the assiduous and astute reader might have concluded that there was such a danger, the MSS did not spell it out.

The Journal gave considerable coverage to the fierce Malay reaction against the British attempt to bring the Malay States and Penang and Malacca together into a Union. It also reported at length on Indonesia subversive links, on the growth of Malay extremism, and the philosophy of the extremists in Indonesian-linked organisations such as the Angkatan Pemuda (API) who considered that independence must be won through struggle and bloodshed.

1947: Malay and Indonesian subversion and the K M T, the Indian nationalists, subversion of the Trade Unions and of the Chinese schools, got the lion's share of coverage.

In March there was a special six-page supplement on Chinese matters, but it was on the K M T not the MCP.

In November the MCP rated less than one-page in a twenty-seven-page issue,

In December: only two pages in a seventy-nine-page issue discussed the MCP.

1948: January 15. A translation of a secret MCP document was provided but without analysis or comment on its significance.

Throughout its short life, until after the Emergency had started, the MSS continued to give more space to the K M T than to the MCP. The K M T phobia was shared by most pre-war officials.

March 15. There was a low-level report on an instruction from the Central Committee to Singapore: again without comment.

April 15. The MCP still got less attention than the KMT.

May 15. Priorities were beginning to change. In a four-page summary the MCP rated half-a-page. The Journal reported, "There is no cessation of communist and their satellites' activities." There were indications that communism was gaining ground, even amongst the Malayan peasantry, and evidence that the MCP were anticipating government action against them. Most of the leaders had gone underground,¹ "Those left above ground to run the satellite organisation were now mostly locally born or had British papers."

July 31. The Journal, for the first time, gave the MCP pride of place with a twenty-one-page supplement. It reminded its readers that in February 1946 the BMA had arrested and banished communist leaders after a strike, and an extract from an MSS memo of that period which said, "Most Chinese people agreed with the MSS that the communist tree must be cut down, but the Supreme Allied Commander was reluctant to authorise banishment."

Much of the supplement was devoted to an MCP document describing the ramifications of the Loi Tak case. The MCP had lost track of him and had not expelled him from the Party until December when they issued a detailed denunciation of their former hero, to a favoured few.

MSS went on to say that, since Loi Tak had dominated the Party morale had been severely damaged by the Loi case. The Party made a frantic plea to their members to trust their leaders and each other now that the case had been investigated and the culprit punished.²

MSS reported that it was thought that the decision to plan for armed insurrection had been taken in March 1948, but there was no documentary evidence to show the date or wording of the decision.

¹ Although the PU reported on the MCP action to go underground in anticipation of government moving against them, it did not relate these activities to preparation for armed struggle, still less predict when the struggle might commence.

² The point of leaving locally born or people with British paper 'above ground', was that such people could not be banished to China.

³ The MCP document is more polemical than factual, but demonstrates how worried the Party were by Loi's disappearance.

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The supplement concluded recalling B M A arrests and banishments that, "Measures should not be hampered by fear of world opinion" and "All subversive organisations must be banned."

The material in the supplement was based on captured documents and the results of interrogation of prisoners that had become available at the end of May and in June. It was the first significant hard intelligence about MCP activities to have appeared in the Journal since Loi Tak's departure to Thailand in March 1947."

Cynics might be forgiven for wondering whether Loi's disappearance in early 1947 was as embarrassing to British Intelligence as it was to the MCP. The MSS lost a source with unbeatable access and a superb agent of influence.

A STATISTICAL PICTURE OF THE EMERGENCY

B.T.W. Stewart

DURING THE VIETNAM WAR, Robert McNamara, US Secretary of Defense, was famously addicted to what the cynics called 'the numbers game'; ammunition expended, number of bombs dropped, balance of forces and known and presumed casualties were all part of the intelligence assessment process; part of a vain attempt to turn assessment from the art of intelligent guesswork into a science.

In Malaya we did not go along that route and, as Mr McNamara eventually discovered, the numbers game was a far from satisfactory basis for intelligence assessment. Nevertheless, even if you have some sympathy with the wag's definition that there are lies, damned lies and statistics, they can provide some useful snapshots of various aspects of the war.

It is in this sense that this section has been prepared.

The Balance of Forces

THE CHINESE HAVE a proverb about using a cannon to shoot a sparrow. To the untutored eye it may well seem that the numerical superiority of the government forces should have enabled the government cannon to destroy the jungle sparrow with ease.

In 1948 the government had at its disposal 10 infantry battalions, an artillery regiment and a police force of over 8,000 men. By 1950 there were 17 infantry battalions at the government's disposal, the police, regulars, specials and auxiliaries had expanded to well over 100,000; in addition there were Home Guards and Kampong Guards. The CTs never had more than 6,000 armed men and women in the jungle.

But, of course, such comparisons are meaningless. On the government side the battalions of the British Army were woefully under strength, many of the soldiers and officers were national service men, not long out of school, barely trained and without battle

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experience or jungle warfare training, and none were acclimatised. The Gurkha and Malay Regiment were hardly better placed; they too consisted largely of recent recruits.

The police, because of the swift expansion, also had many raw recruits. Moreover, the SCs were perforce spread thin throughout the country and experienced instructors were scarce.

By contrast their opponents, the CTs, had many experienced fighters trained during World War II in guerrilla and jungle warfare by British Officers in Force 136. Moreover, unlike most of the British and Commonwealth troops, they were fighting on home ground.

But the CTs greatest advantage was that they could choose time, place and target for their attacks. And since, unlike the SF, they had no duty to stay around after contact had been made, they could adopt the highly effective tactical doctrine taught by Mao Tsetung, "When the enemy advances we retreat. When he retreats we attack." They could apply overwhelming force at a well-sited ambush point and then melt away before the SF could mount an effective counter-attack. Hit and run was their method, so the SF seldom had an opportunity to retaliate. And, since they did not yet have effective intelligence coverage of the CTO, they had little chance of predicting the time and place of CT ambushes. In short, at the beginning, despite the numerical superiority of the government forces, the CTs enjoyed a considerable advantage. Naturally, British generals also sought to join battle only when they outnumbered the enemy, but it was easier for the guerrillas, free to choose time and place, to guarantee superiority of forces than it was for the government forces trying to cover the whole peninsula.

In any case, numbers alone could never provide a final answer against seasoned guerrillas so long as they could intimidate or otherwise persuade the rural Chinese population to give them support. Nor was total command of the air, and plentiful artillery support of much use in jungle warfare, fighting what General Harding called, 'will o' the wisps'. Occasional optimistic plans to roll the CTs up as if beating game had little success; it was too easy for the 'birds' to slip through the cordon.

As General Westmorland discovered painfully in Vietnam, even 500,000 troops and virtually unlimited supplies of bombs and shells

were of little avail in a war against guerrillas operating on their home ground.

A comparison with the size of the British Armed Forces deployed in Palestine in the 1930s is also illuminating. As Professor Short has pointed out, in Palestine, a country smaller than Malaya, consisting of open, not jungle, country, with scope for effective air strikes, the British Army had two cavalry regiments, and 14 infantry battalions; all consisting of regular trained soldiers, many with battle experience. The Malayan Security Forces were less well placed than the Palestinian Government to deal with a guerrilla war.

In any case, however large the SF and however successful their training for their new counter-insurgency role, they lacked an effective intelligence machine and, without intelligence, they were condemned to spend huge amounts of time slogging through the jungle looking for needles in haystacks.

In these circumstances it was remarkable that the police and all the other parts of the SF stemmed the tide of terrorism while overcoming the problems of expansion and training. An important ingredient in their achievement was the courage and ingenuity of the subalterns in the police, many dropped in at the deep end to learn to swim as best they could, many within days of joining up in Britain posted to the remotest parts of the country, and picking up enough of the Malay language in short order to enable them to train and lead their 'troops'.

Security Forces and Civilian Casualties

DURING THIS EMERGENCY the SF lost 1,865 killed, 2,560 wounded; civilian casualties had been even heavier, 4,000 murdered or wounded and 800 missing.

In the SF it was the police who bore the brunt of the casualties; 1,346 were killed in action and 1,601 wounded. The toll of police 'subalterns' killed in action was:

ASP and Cadet ASP	27
Police/Lieutenants and British Sergeants	59
Inspectors	16

As the stories remind us and some of the photographs show us, the Police Force reflected the rich cultural mix of Malaya. Malays, of course, were the majority but there were gallant men from every *bangsa*.

The casualty figures continued to mount until 1951. After that the SF were clearly winning although, as General Templer emphasised at the end of his remarkable tour as High Commissioner, final victory was still a long way off. The figures for killed and wounded were as follows:

Table 1: Figures for SF killed and wounded

YEAR	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958
POLICE											
Regular	45	104	148	116	65	10	6	8	5	2	1
SCs	37	51	134	192	106	19	19	21	12	0	2
APCs	7	9	32	72	36	29	28	18	8	3	1
MILITARY	60	65	79	124	56	34	34	32	22	6	7

CT Casualties

FIGURES FOR TERRORIST strength in this Emergency are, for obvious reasons, impossible to establish with complete accuracy, but the broad picture is that between 1948 and 1958 about 12,000 CTs passed through the ranks of the MRLA. Over 6,000 of them were killed, 3,000 surrendered and 1,286 were captured. The rest were 'missing'; they probably died of wounds or sickness in the jungle, but there is no record of the year in which they became casualties.

Table 2: Figures for CT casualties

YEAR	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958
KIA	374	619	648	1078	1155	959	723	420	307	240	153
CEP	263	337	147	121	123	73	51	54	52	32	22
SEP	56	251	147	201	257	372	211	249	134	209	502

ANNEXES – A STATISTICAL PICTURE OF THE EMERGENCY

Whatever else these figures tell us they certainly suggest that not every CT was a fanatical Communist ready to sacrifice his life for the cause.

THERE ARE SEVERAL TALES in this book illustrating how SEPs or CEPs who decided to cast their lot in with the SF, showed remarkable enthusiasm in assisting in the tracking down, capturing, or elimination of their erstwhile comrades. With the benefit of hindsight, it is clear that the overwhelming majority, once they had decided to defect or, in the case of a CEP, to collaborate, turned their coats wholeheartedly. In some cases they wanted revenge, but there was also a feeling that, having turned coat, they would be safer if they eliminated their former colleagues. But, of course, this was not something that could be taken for granted. The police families who found SEPs billeted upon them were by no means sure about their loyalties', and police officers taking such men out on their first jungle patrol could certainly not be sure about the ex-CT in their midst. There was at least one case of a CEP deciding to make his escape during a jungle patrol, but I know of no case where the CTO planted a double agent on us through the SEP route.

The motivation to surrender included the following factors:

- a) Hunger, discomfort, ill health as government controls decreased their supplies and their camps were harried by SF operations;
- b) A growing disillusion with the fine words of their leaders since there was no evidence that the CTs were winning;
- c) A wish to earn rewards for information.
- d) A wish to have the comforts enjoyed by their former comrades, now SEPs.

As the SEP campaign evolved we focussed more and more on individuals and individual units, calling upon them by name, warning them of the danger they faced if they did not follow the example of former comrades who were now safely and comfortably housed with the SF and in touch with their families. Loudspeakers, 'voice' aircraft, or leaflets broadcast the messages.

By the end of 1952 government was with increasing success proving that surrender was an option worth considering and that,

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contrary to CT propaganda, SEPs would not be tortured and then executed after interrogation. The MCP, having already executed some 23 of their own members on suspicion of treachery, were hard pressed to find facts to support their claim that the SF were more cruel than the CTs.

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE MALAYAN COMMUNIST PARTY: 1930 to 1989

B.T.W. Stewart

THE MCP WAS BORN in 1930 using the Party in China as its model. Throughout its active life it remained Malayan in name only. The vast majority of its members were Malayan Chinese, and the few Malay and Indian members were never fully trusted. In 1936 the Party was strengthened by the arrival of seven Communist cadres (officials) from Amoy in South China, but it continued to be a Party overwhelmingly drawn from Hua Qiao; Recent immigrants with little interest in Malayan culture.

The Politburo, a sort of cabinet at the apex of the Party structure, consisted of the Secretary General, Deputy Secretary General and four other Central Committee members. Below them came the Central Committee, then the State Committees and, finally, the Branch Committees and their subordinates. Communications ran vertically: lateral communications were severely discouraged and the 'need to know principle' was rigorously applied. So only the Politburo had any informed picture of the overall situation. The rest of the membership was kept in the dark, like mushrooms, but occasionally the door was opened and scraps were thrown in from the top table.

This compartmentalisation served the needs of security well, and strengthened the authority of the Politburo. But, as we have seen in some of the stories in this book, the state of ignorance amongst the lower echelons could be of considerable help to Special Branch when they sent SEPs back into the jungle to contact CTs who had no up-to-date knowledge of the general situation.

The military arm of the MCP was firmly controlled by the Party in accordance with Chairman Mao Tsetung's well-known dictum that, "Power comes out of the barrel of the gun." The MCP used the traditional Communist method of controlling the gun: even at section level there was a political commissar as well as a section commander.

Until the Japanese Occupation the MCP busied itself with a variety of so-called United Front activities, fomenting industrial unrest and exploiting Chinese chauvinism to disrupt society. There were assassinations but no attempt at 'armed struggle'. At this time the MCP was a proscribed organisation but, much to the annoyance of the Malayan and Singapore Governments, London insisted, after the war, that the MCP must be allowed to operate legally, thus making the MCP's task much easier.

In the mid-1930s Loi Tak, a Vietnamese, became Secretary General. Loi had previously worked in Indochina both as a Communist and as an agent of the French Secret Service, but had fled when he and his French case officer decided that his cover was wearing thin. The French handed him on to the British who assisted him to establish himself and advance rapidly to the top of the tree, by arresting and deporting his strongest rivals, usually on the basis of intelligence that had been provided by Loi himself.

During the Japanese Occupation Loi became an agent of the Japanese *Kempetai* but also maintained contact with British Intelligence and, after the war he was, once more, their star source on the MCP.

Throughout his Singapore career he had succeeded in persuading all but tiny handfuls of his comrades to believe that he was a devoted and courageous Communist, and all accepted his false claims that he was Moscow-trained and well connected in the International Communist movement. But the whole time he had been helping his British and Japanese case officers to mount anti-Communist operations. It says little for the skill of the Party's security apparatus that apparently, no one ever noted that Loi Tak was always absent for the committee meetings when the police surprised his comrades *in flagrante delicto*.

In early 1947 Loi decided once again that his cover was wearing dangerously thin, and departed taking with him the Party funds. **He** was tracked down in Thailand and assassinated by order of Chin Peng the new Secretary General.

The Party which Chin Peng inherited was filled with despondency as the rumours began to circulate about Loi's treachery. A secret enquiry into the Loi affair established that **he** had **been** betraying the Party for over ten years. Morale plummeted and

rumours continued to flow about other vipers in the Party's bosom. The Party's appeal to forget the past, trust 'the centre', and look to the future, made little impact; the lower echelons were sunk in gloom.

Chin's position was made more difficult because he had been Loi Tak's protege and right-hand man. Before his defection, Loi had been criticised by his enemies as an over cautious 'rightist', but now he had been unmasked as a serial traitor. Chin's need to find some dramatic gesture to distance himself from the policies of his former patron as well as to restore flagging morale, may have been a significant ingredient in his decision to move from the war of words to armed struggle.

Before the Japanese War the MCP, like its neighbouring Communist parties in Indonesia, Thailand and Indochina, had been subordinated to the Shanghai-based (South Seas) Nanyang Communist Party. After the war the Nanyang Party was dissolved and the MCP was subordinated to the Far Eastern Bureau of the Moscow-based Communist International, in order to provide a smoke screen designed to conceal the basically ethnic Chinese nature of these Communist parties. But this obfuscation did not alter the reality of the situation. It was Hua Qiao (Overseas Chinese) not indigenous South East Asians who led the parties and provided the bulk of their rank and file. The MCP was no exception, it was not long-term residents of Malaya, whether of Malay, Chinese or Indian extraction, but recently arrived Hua Qiao who waved the banner of Marxist Leninism.

When in 1949 the MCP belatedly recognised that a higher priority should be given to garnering Malay support, they decided that the raising of a Malay Regiment would persuade the Malays that the MCP was a genuinely indigenous Malayan Party. The ploy was not notably successful: the need to present Communist parties of the region as national parties, had already been emphasised in the mid-1930s by the Vietnamese Communist leader Ho Chi Minh. But this was easier said than done, and all the South East Asian Communist parties remained highly vulnerable because they were seen as basically Hua Qiao. Indeed, in Indonesia in the 1960s, the common perception that the Party Communist Indonesia (PKI) was

mainly Chinese facilitated the suppression of the PKJ and set in motion an anti-Chinese pogrom.

So in May 1949, Chin Peng directed the senior Malays in the MCP to raise a Malay Regiment to be named the 10th.

The MCP's optimistic attempt to cure their problem by creating the 10th Malay Regiment did not start well. At the first meeting convened to discuss this subject, the Malay leaders requested that the new regiment should be allowed to wear songkoks, have sole authority over all Malay fighting units and the sole right to liaison with them and with the Malay masses, Chin Peng roundly rejected all four requests.

Nevertheless, despite these infelicities, by late-1949 about 400 Malays had been recruited for the new regiment. Within a year, however, half the strength had surrendered and the 10th Regiment never had much impact on the campaign. In 1951, at a meeting with Chin Peng, the Malay leaders complained that the implementation of the Briggs Plan, curfew, food control, resettlement and harassment by the SF made operations extremely difficult: but their protestations were ignored: the MCP's disobliging response was that the 10th Regiment must find a way to scrounge its rations from the Malay 'masses'.

It is, perhaps, hardly surprising that the 10th Regiment was ineffective as a military unit, since the commanders and the rank and file had minimal military experience and their Chinese comrades gave them little help to remedy their military short-comings, moreover, they only supplied 200 weapons for the 400 men on the regimental strength. The 10th Regiment was expected to make up this shortage by capturing weapons from the enemy, while being issued with substandard weapons, unreliable ammunition and poor and insufficient rations.

Neither the Chinese leadership nor the rank and file of the MCP ever showed much flair for 'hearts and minds' work, even amongst their fellow Chinese, but they were even less adept in dealing with their Malay members. Many of the MCP's Top Secret reports and directives were not shared with their Malay comrades. They were not, for example, shown the report that recorded the detail of Loi Tak's treachery. There were other manifestations of lack of trust: for example, although Chinese CTs were allowed to visit Malay camps,

the Malays were forbidden to visit Chinese camps. The Indian CTs also complained frequently that they were treated as second-class members of the CTO. It was only with the *Orang Asli* that the MCP seemed to understand the vital need to win 'hearts and minds'.

This distrust of non-Chinese was not, of course, unprecedented. The Han Chinese have traditionally found it difficult to accord full respect to 'outer barbarians' of other races, as many foreign students have found to their discomfort when attending educational institutes in China.

A Malay Propaganda Section was established with its own printing press. But it was little more than an Army Education Section attempting to teach the Malay CTs about Communism. It stayed well away from such difficult topics as the contradictions between atheist Communism and Islamic Malay society, and their propaganda had little effect.

Meanwhile, as the MCP was giving such shabby treatment to their Malay Regiment, the Malayan Government, inspired by General Templer, was giving Rolls Royce treatment to their new creation, the Federation Regiment. Potential officers were trained as Officer Cadets in the UK and the regiment got the best modern equipment.

In 1989, when the MCP finally laid down its arms forty years after the start of the Emergency, the world had changed dramatically. China had moved away from crass, crude Communism and its attendant campaigns and cruelties, to pragmatism under the leadership of Deng Xiao Peng. Politics and Marxist ideology were no longer the order of the day, and China was interested in exporting goods for sale not in exporting revolution. There was no longer a Chou En Lai proclaiming loudly on the world stage, that the "Revolutionary situation was excellent."

Although officially the 'First' Emergency came to an end in 1960 when every District in Malaya had been declared 'White', it was not until 1989 that the MCP renounced their absurd ambitions to turn Malaya into a Communist state. When the small rump of the MCP and its military components retired to lick its wounds in South Thailand, it continued to maintain contact with Thai, Indonesian, Vietnamese and Burmese comrades. The MCP also pursued an active liaison with their Chinese comrades who provided, amongst

other forms of support, subsidies, political training in the Party School in Chungking, and signals and military training. Meanwhile the Vietcong provided training in such practical subjects as the construction of tunnels, manufacture of booby traps, and sabotage. And the MCP was infiltrating men into Malaysia to recruit 'Assault Units' for future armed struggle, to set up underground cells, and to recommence United Front activities to foment unrest. The war was by no means over as far as the MCP were concerned.

In 1972 the MCP adopted a new constitution following the changes adopted in China, but the changes, had little practical significance in the context of the MCP's activities in Malaya: they merely reflected the Party's slavish reliance on the advice and direction of 'Big Brother' in China.

The MCP did not escape the consequences of the dreadful Chinese campaigns, such as the Cultural Revolution. The MCP inaugurated horrific trials and many hundreds of Party members, new and old, were convicted by Kangaroo Courts and executed as spies and traitors. Veterans as well as newly joined recruits fell foul of this witch-hunt. Chin Peng and the Central Committee called these affairs 'rectification' but to most of the membership they were highly disturbing manifestations of an unpredictable system.

We shall probably never know the exact extent of China's support for the MCP. There was certainly moral support, and there were visitors from China, civil and military, observers or, perhaps, even advisers; places were provided for the MCP in China's Party schools and there may even have been some military training. But China did not provide significant military support or send soldiers to fight on the ground.

In 1989 Chin Peng, now looking like a benign grandfather and, apparently, entirely lacking in any sense of guilt for the atrocities he and his Party had committed, became a retired revolutionary.

CHRONOLOGY

Milestones in Malayan History

- 1400** (circa) Malacca established as the capital of Majapahit.
- 1511** Portuguese capture Malacca.
- 1641** Dutch capture Malacca.
- 1786** Britain acquires Penang from the Sultan of Kedah, by treaty.
- 1795** Britain occupies Malacca temporarily during the Napoleonic War.
- 1819** Raffles acquires Singapore as a Trading Post from the Sultan of Johore by treaty.
- 1824** Britain acquires Malacca from the Dutch by treaty.
- 1858** Founding of KL town. Yap Ah Loi is given title of Kapitan China and takes responsibility for enforcing order amongst the unruly Hua Qiao (Chinese immigrants).
- 1867** British Colonial Office takes over responsibility for the Straits Settlements (Singapore, Penang and Malacca) from the East India Company.
- 1874** Treaty of Pangkor. The first British Resident, Birch, is stationed in Perak. He was the first of a long line of British Advisers in the Malay States called, according to changing constitutional niceties, Advisers or Residents. As in the Princely States of the Indian Empire, the relationship between British Adviser (see note 1 below) and the local Ruler was a sophisticated one, determined as much by personality and personal chemistry as by the letter of the treaties.

The Treaty of Pangkor was, above all, concerned with restoring peace in Perak by curbing the unruly habits of the Chinese and their secret societies who, like the Chinese tin miners of Selangor, were engaged in gang warfare.
- 1875** Assassination of Birch, the British Resident.
- 1895** Formation of the Federated Malay States Perak, Pahang, Selangor, and Negri Sembilan, under British protection.

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- 1910** Formation of the loose association of the Unfederated Malay States; Johore, Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan, Trengganu, and Johore thus linking all the States on the Peninsula under British protection.
- 1922** Congress of the Toilers of the East meets in Russia (Petrograd); the beginning of active communist involvement in Asia.
- 1926** A Nanyang General Labour Union is formed. Nanyang (Southern Ocean) was the term used in Chinese to describe the region now called South East Asia. For many centuries the Nanyang had provided a refuge for Hua Qiao (Overseas Chinese). A Communist Secretariat in Shanghai ran this Labour Union and all its members were Hua Qiao. Historically in Malaya the only serious problem posed by the Chinese community had been the criminal activities of their Triad Societies. However, after the creation of the Chinese Republic (1911), Kuomintang (Nationalist) Chinese politics had begun to seep into Malaya and now Chinese Communism started to play a subversive role.
- 1930** Founding of Malayan Communist Party (MCP).
- 1936** The MCP fomented industrial unrest in Batu Arang Coal Mine: the first major industrial strike in Malaya.
- 1941** Japanese invasion. (December).
The Communist led Chinese Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA) offers to collaborate with the British against the Japanese and Colonel Dalley organises Dalforce.
- 1942** Japanese occupation of Malaya and Singapore, and brutal massacres of Hua Qiao.
- 1942** The British and the MPAJA Chinese agree, as part of Force 136, to continue resistance to the Japanese and harass the Japanese Forces from the jungle.
- With the fall of Burma, it becomes difficult to re-supply Force 136. The relations between the British liaison officers and the MPAJA become increasingly strained.

CHRONOLOGY

- 1945** Air supply to Force 136 becomes possible as the Japanese are driven out of Burma. But by now the British officers are prisoners, rather than colleagues, trainers, or leaders of the guerrilla movement.
- August Japanese surrender.
- September The British Military Administration (BMA) takes over, but the sudden Japanese surrender, after the dropping of the atom bombs, causes serious problems. The BMA has insufficient staff to take over the administration of the whole country, and too few people with experience and knowledge of Malaya. The MPAJA exploits this weakness, taking control in many areas and wreaking vengeance on alleged collaborators, while the BMA struggles to restore law and order.
- 1946** Civil Government supersedes the BMA.
 Malay National Party is heavily infiltrated by Indonesian Nationalists.
 Much violent crime, mostly Communist inspired, continues to plague the country, while the Malays protest with increasing vehemence against the new Malayan Union Constitution.
- 1948** The Malayan Union is superseded by the Federation of Malaya.
- May 31st Federation of Trade Unions banned leading Communist agitators; a newspaper editor and a TU leader are arrested.
- June 18th State of Emergency declared.
- July 4th High Commissioner Sir E. Gent killed in an air crash.
- August Nicol Gray, the new Commissioner of Police, takes post.
- October Sir H. Gurney, the new High Commissioner, takes post.
- 1949**
- August First amnesty offer to the CTs.
- October The Chinese Communist Party, led by Mao, establishes the People's Republic of China.
- 1951**
- October Sir H. Gurney murdered in a CT ambush.
 Lyttelton becomes Colonial Secretary.

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The Director of Intelligence, the Commissioner of Police and the Director of Operations, all retire.

1952

February General Templer takes over as High Commissioner and Director of Operations.

Sir A. Young, City of London Police, becomes Commissioner of Police.

1953

September Declaration of the first 'White Area' (in Central District, Malacca) and the beginning of dismantling Emergency Regulations in the country.

1955

Bandung Conference of 'non-aligned' nations is dominated by the Chinese Communist Party.

December Baling Talks. Tengku Abdul Rahman, Chief Minister, offers an amnesty but Chin Peng rejects it.

1957

August Merdeka; Malaya becomes independent.

September Fresh amnesty offer.

1958

August 31st 1958 chosen as target date for end of the Emergency.

Note: According to the Treaty of Pangkor, the advice of the British adviser was to be sought and acted upon except in the matter of Malay customs and religion. (See the bottom of page 349.)

THE POLICE STRUCTURE

The Hierarchy

Gazetted Officers

CP	Commissioner of Police
DCP	Deputy Commissioner of Police
SAC	Senior Assistant Commissioner of Police
ACP	Assistant Commissioner of Police
SUP	Superintendent of Police
ASP	Assistant Superintendent of Police
CADET ASP	Cadet Assistant Superintendent of Police

Non-Gazetted Officers

CI	Chief Inspector
SI	Senior Inspector
Insp	Inspector
Sub Insp	Sub-Inspector
E/Sgt	European Sergeant
P/Lt	Police Lieutenant

Rank and File

SM	Sergeant Major
Stn Sgt	Station Sergeant
Sgt	Sergeant
Cpl	Corporal
PC	Police Constable
SC	Special Constable
SgtSC	Sergeant Special Constable
Cpl SC	Corporal Special Constable
APC	Auxiliary Police Constable

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THE EXPATRIATE GAZETTED Officers were, like their MCS colleagues, recruited by the Colonial Office in London but paid by the Malayan Government. They started as Cadet ASPs on three years' probation. The Gazetted Officers (Asian) were recruited in Malaya from the Inspectorate.

The European Police Sergeants, later called P/Lts, were also recruited by London; the majority came from the Palestine Police Force when it was disbanded at the end of the Mandate.

The principal police appointments were:

CPO	Chief PO of a State or Settlement
HSB	Head of Special Branch (State level)
OC	Officer in Charge
OCCI	Officer in Charge of Criminal Investigation (State level)
OSPC	Officer Superintending Police Circle
CSBO	Circle Special Branch Officer
OCPD	Officer Commanding a Police District
DSBO	District Special Branch Officer.

Apart from the normal police organisations, there were Emergency formations:

FJC	Federal Jungle Company
PFF	Police Field Force (this superseded the FJCs)

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Although inevitably most of these books are now out of print, they can frequently be found in the reserve stacks of Public libraries and in major libraries such as the Bodleian in Oxford. The list above is, of course, only part of the total literature, official, historical, autobiographical, intelligence or military, or general.

Those who wish to delve into official and other unpublished papers will find a useful catalogue in Kumar Ramakrishna's book.

MALAY IDIOMS

THIS SECTION IS a nostalgic self-indulgence. It reflects a long-standing interest in proverbs. The first book I wrote was about Chinese Proverbs but, sadly, I never completed my project on Malay Proverbs. I hope this selection may give some pleasure to readers who once, like me, studied Malay and even, perhaps, to those who did not have the good fortune to work in the 'Golden Chersonese'.

The Malay language is rich in idiom and imagery but, as in the rest of the modern world, many of the old idioms, and even words, are disappearing. They deserve to be preserved.

For those who want to have a Malay Proverb book on their shelves, I recommend the book compiled by the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, which was recently reprinted (Kuala Lumpur 2001).

In the selection that follows the English translation is free, not literal. Comments, if any, are placed in brackets, after the translations.

Adakah buaya menolak bangkai?

Is there a crocodile that will reject a carcase?

(Will temptation be resisted, or a good offer rejected?).

Air yang tenang jangan sangka tiada buaya.

The water is calm, but do not assume that there are no crocodiles.

(Do not be complacent).

Along alang berdakwat, baik hitam sekali,

If it is to be inked, make it thoroughly black.

(In for a penny, in for a pound).

Angguk bukan: gelengya.

A nod means 'No'! A shake of the head means 'Yes'!
(Topsy Turvy but there are parts of Asia where wagging the head does, indeed, signify a negative and vice versa).

Anjing menyalak, bukit mahukah runtuh?

The dog barks at the mountain: does the mountain collapse?
{The dogs bark but the caravan moves on: futile gestures}.

Antan dicungilkan duri.

Using a pestle to prise out a thorn.
(Inappropriate tools).

Apa gaduhkan? Pengayuh sama di tangan: perahu sama di

Why quarrel? We have the same paddle in our hands and the same boat in the water.
(Hang together or hang separately).

Bagai buntal tiup.

Like a puffed up blowfish.
(Inflated with self-importance).

Bagai denai gajah lalu.

Like a track made by an elephant.
(Bull in a china shop).

Berani malu: takut malu.

More afraid of death than of disgrace.

Berani mati, takut mati.

Not afraid to die: frightened of disgrace.
(Death before dishonour).

Biar tulang putih: jangan mataputih?

Rather white bones than white eyes.
(As a metaphor 'white eyes' means cowardly).

Burung terbang dipipis ladang.

Pounding the pepper while the bird is still flying.
(Counting chickens before the eggs are hatched).

Diberi betis hendak paha.

Given a calf he demands a thigh.
(Give him an inch and he'll take an ell).

Gajah dibeli, kuasa tidak terbeli.

Buying an elephant but not a goad.
(Spoiling a ship for a ha'porth of tar).

Gajah rompong belalai.

Elephant without a trunk
(A lame duck).

Gajah sa-ekor, gembala dua.

One elephant, two mahouts (handlers).
(The problems of divided command).

***Gajah sama gajah berjuang,
Pelandok mati di-tengah-tengah.***

When elephants fight, the mouse deer dies between them,
(When great men clash the small fry should stand clear).

Gajah seekor bertenggek di atas hidungnya tiada disedar.

Unconscious of the elephant perched on the end of one's nose.
(Swallowing a camel but straining at a gnat).

***Gajah mati, tinggal tulang-nya;
Harimau mati, tinggal belang-nya;
Manusia mati, tinggal nama-nya.***

An elephant dies and leaves its bones; a tiger dies and leaves its stripes; when people die they leave their reputation.

Gulai sedap, nasi mentah.

Curry tasty: rice badly cooked.
(Nothing is ever absolutely perfect).

Hilir bergalah ketawa buaya.

Poling down stream will make even a crocodile laugh.

Hujan emas perak di negri, hujan keris lembing di negri sendiri, baik juga di negeri sendiri.

Though it rains gold and silver in another country, and daggers and spears in your own, your native land is still the best.

Kura-kura hendak memanjat pokok.

A tortoise trying to climb a tree.
(Futile pretension: impossible).

Lidah biawak.

The tongue of a monitor lizard.
(Speaking with forked tongue: untrustworthy).

Malu bertanya sesat jalan.

If you are too shy to ask the way, you will go astray.

Masuk kandang kambing mengembik; masuk kandang kerbau, menguak.

When you enter a goat pen bleat; when you enter a buffalo pen bellow.
(Do in Rome as the Romans do).

Mati kuang kerana bunyi.

The Pheasant dies because it makes a noise.
(Do not stick your neck out or show off: silence is golden).

Pagar makan padi.

The fence eats the padi (rice).
(Who will guard the guardians?).

Penyu itu bertelur beribu-ribu, seorang pun tiada tahu: ayam bertelur sebiji, pecah khabar sebuah negeri.

The turtle lays thousands of eggs and no one knows: the hen lays one egg and informs a nation.

***Pisang mas dikapal belayar,
Masak sedap di atas peti,
Hutang mas boleh di bayar,
Hutang budi di-bawa mati.***

Golden banana on a sailing ship, ripening deliciously on top of a box.
A debt of gold can be repaid, but a debt of kindness is carried to the grave.

(This is one of the best-known Malay Pantuns: a four-line verse form in which the first two lines are poetic images, and the last two lines carry a message).

Ringan tulang, berat perut.

Light bones, heavy stomach.

(Hard work provides for a full belly).

Saperti katak di-bawah tempurong.

Like a frog under a coconut shell.

(Limited vision and knowledge).

Saperti kerbau cucuk hidung.

Like a buffalo with a ring in its nose.

(A subservient fawning sycophant).

Sarang tebuan jangan di-jolok.

Do not poke a hornet's nest.

Segan berdayung perahu hanyut.

If you are reluctant to row, your boat will drift away.

(No gain without pain).

Siapa makan cabai ia-lah berasa pedas.

He who eats chillies will feel the spicy heat.

Tahan jerat sorong kepala.

Setting a trap then putting your head into it.

(Hoist with your own petard).

Tanam lalang tak akan tumbuh padi.

You cannot produce padi (rice) by planting lalang (coarse grass). \
(You cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear).

Ta' pandai menari, mengatakan tanah tinggi rendah.

Not a good dancer, so blame the uneven ground. |
(A bad workman blames his tools). !

***Terlangsong prahu boleh balek,
terlangsong cakap tak boleh balek.***

A boat adrift can be recovered: a word once spoken cannot be recalled.

Terlepas dari mulut buaya, masok kadalam mulut harimau.

Escaping from the mouth of a crocodile, only to enter the jaw of a tiger.
(Out of the frying pan into the fire).

***Tumah di-sebarang lautan nampak,
gajah di-pelupok mata tidak.***

You see a louse the other side of the ocean but not the elephant on your own eyelid.
(You can see the mote in another's eye but not the beam in your own eye).

Udang tidak sedarkan diri-nya bongkok.

The prawn is not aware of the hump on its back.
(O, wad some power the giftie gie us, to see oorselves as ithers see us).

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