



NATIONAL MALAYA AND BORNEO VETERANS ASSOCIATION

NATIONAL CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO THE AGM

15th October 2011 at The Royal Court Hotel Coventry

Colleagues,

I am delighted to welcome you all to the 2011 AGM and I hope your reunion weekend is a roaring success. May I single out in my welcome a former National Chairman who is with us today, David Neil from Tyneside Branch. I believe we may also have a two star Member present, AVM Alan Johnson. We are delighted you have joined us in Coventry Sir.

Those of you who were here at the AGM last year will recall that the meeting was rather long! I don't apologise for that, I wanted to address all the Association business that prevailed at the time I took the Chair in May of 2010 and there was much to report. However, you will be please to know that my Report this year is very much shorter and my aim is that the meeting will close much earlier too.

There is no need for you to make notes of what I say because a copy of this report will be available at our Reception desk at midday and on our website next week. Together with my NEC we will try to answer your questions when I have finished speaking

Let me start by introducing your present NEC though I am sure you probably know them all: National Vice Chairman, Editor-in-Chief and Postal Members North Coordinator Malcolm White; National Secretary Ted Williams; National Treasurer Dick Richardson; National Membership Secretary Ian Williams; Webmaster and Regalia Officer Annie Burden; Committee Member and Postal Members South Coordinator Brian Roche; International Liaison Officer and Postal members Overseas Ron Blain. I have already mentioned Stuart Wakefield as our Satellite Member in KL and Don Mott is our Cenotaph and Garden of Remembrance Coordinator. Finally, Mike Weller is our National Standard Bearer and will carry our

laying-up Standard tomorrow and Reverend Richie Osborne is our appointed Association Padre.

Since we met at the AGM last year there have been three meetings of your National Executive Committee and of course the annual Delegates meeting. Outputs from those meetings are posted on our website but to give you a feel of what your NEC and Branch Delegates have been doing I will briefly summarise the *key* issues of those meetings that are NOT emerging as Motions today:

At their meeting on 19th November 2010 your NEC:

1. Set in motion to action the proposal by Mike Weller arising out of last year's AGM that we should 'lay-up' our original National Standard and of course we are doing that very thing tomorrow morning at Coventry Cathedral.
2. Appointed Ted Williams as the Association Welfare Officer. I remind you that we look to Branches to be the first port of call for their Members welfare issues but liaison with Ted will always be useful.
3. Appointed Ray Taylor as our Association Recruiting Officer but Ray had to stand down from the NEC soon afterwards for health reasons and so the post stands empty at this moment.
4. Agreed to look further into the consolidation of membership data and this week we have circulated a flow chart to resolve that. The chart is on the website, Branches have a copy; and the transfer of data to a piece of software known as Access 2010 is work in progress.

At their meeting on 8th April 2011 your NEC:

5. Identified that more adverts are needed to provide better financial support to our Keris magazine and Newsletter. Members are asked please to promote opportunities and advise the National Vice Chairman.
6. Considered, calculated and determined that it is more expensive to have a panel of Members gather to audit the Association accounts and so the use of an accredited auditor will continue though use of a Members panel does remain an option should the need arise.
7. Identified the need for a simple capital account summary which takes on board also our property assets and devaluation process. The summary has been drafted and the Treasurer, Dick Richardson, will explain the worth of the fund in his Report following me. I remind you that we do not post accounts and budget information on our public website but any Member can have access to all account detail and question Dick or me at any time.
8. Agreed that the next issue of the Newsletter, due in December, will be edited by the National Chairman due to the absence on leave overseas of the Vice Chairman. Members are encouraged to make submissions, without delay, direct to me at Tex.Pemberton@googlemail.com.

9. Invited His Excellency the High Commissioner for Malaysia to the 2011 Reunion Dinner and he will be our Guest of Honour tonight.
10. Appointed CoffinMew, specialist legal advisers for the Armed Forces, as legal advisers to the Association, at no cost save for when advice is sought.
11. Submitted to the Secretary of state for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs a request to intervene in the question of the right to wear the PJM. Subsequently there has been a flurry of activity following my notice to members to lobby their MP, which has been done remarkably well. I have written also to the MOD Review Panel, the Minister for the Armed Forces and latterly to the Prime Minister receiving an acknowledgment from 10 Downing Street. Word on the street is that decisions are soon to be taken!

At their meeting on 9th April 2011 your Branch Delegates:

12. Approved the Budget for FY 2011/12 to start on 1st July 2011.
13. Proposed future Delegates meetings to be held alternatively North and South to encourage improved attendance opportunity but resolved the meeting in 2012 to be in Kegworth. Branches are encouraged to submit venue proposals that have been reconnoitred and costed.
14. Agreed the removal of all reference to the former Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds and Bradford Branches from our Association website which has been done.
15. Resolved that a travel contribution be made to one Branch per Delegates meeting where there is extremity travel mentioning Germany, Northern Ireland and GB mainland extremities. Applications should be made and approval sought prior to meetings.
16. Identified the need for a potted history of the Association but that work has yet to commence.
17. Approved a proposal for a NMBVA Christmas or Seasons greetings card which has now been produced and Annie has packs with her for sale.

At their meeting on 5th August 2011 your NEC:

18. Recorded that Each and every Branch had registered with the National Secretary a Standard for composite insurance and public liability purpose.
19. Approved a draft budget for FY 2012/13 that is laid before the AGM today for approval.
20. Recorded four nominations for new Officers for the NEC 2011/12 and eight Notices of Motion for this AGM. Debate and voting will take place later in this meeting.
21. Concluded that regrettably we are not yet ready to bring a Notice of Motion to the AGM for improvements to our National memorial at Alrewas. I will say more about this a little later at Agenda Item 10.

22. Co-opted Stuart Wakefield as our outpost NEC representative in KL vice George McKie who has returned to live in the UK. Stuart will try to help and advise Members on matters connected with Malaysia and can be contacted on stuartw@streamyx.com or telephone 0065-147-333-751.

We have continued to develop a sound relationship with the Not-forgotten Association which has been to the good and benefit of Members. On one invitation for example we were offered 16 places to the Buckingham Palace Garden Party this year. I received 26 bids from members and persuaded the organisers to accept all 26. I will be speaking briefly about the Not-Forgotten at Item 20 of the Agenda.

Armed Forces Day 2011 was a splendid event in Edinburgh and we are grateful to the stalwart members of Tyneside Branch who sponsored the event this year on behalf of the entire Association. Armed Forces day next year will be in Plymouth on 30th June 2012. We would like to identify a sponsor branch for this event please who would take on the establishment of our improving stand and have representatives available to speak to the hordes of visiting public and hopefully recruit some new members too!

My one major concern remains the lack of regular contact with those of our Members who do not have internet and email access. Postage and telephone calls, beyond what we do now, is far too expensive to contemplate. Dissemination to our 28 Branch Secretaries and Postal Coordinators is instantaneous by email and you each have your own system of dissemination down the chain to your members. But my concern is the infrequent communication to those members who are not on email and only hear from us in the main when we distribute the annual Keris and Newsletter. How do you tell them of short notice events and offers such as those from the Not-Forgotten Association? I do encourage everyone, yet again, to try to increase your knowledge of members on email so that your Branch records are as up to date as possible and those of our Postal Coordinators too.

Our membership numbers have their ups and downs, 91 new members since the last AGM and as I drafted this Report on Tuesday this week I was sad to note there were 46 Members on the roll of honour who have departed this earth in the past 12 months. We will remember them. Ian Williams our Industrious Membership Secretary reports our total membership at the end of September was 2339. With the introduction of a revised reporting process and the data base flowchart, designed by our Vice Chairman Malcolm White – which is out to Branches and on the website - we are now never more than a few days away from the most up to date record of membership.

Don Mott our Cenotaph Coordinator has tickets for those of you who want to march with us at the Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday 13th November. His email address is Donald.mott@blueyonder.co.uk and telephone 01689-846672.

Brian Roche has worked diligently throughout the year ensuring that Postal members are well serviced, within the budget and communication limitations that exist. Brian is also a very sobering influence at our NEC meetings helping us to keep our feet firmly planted.

Ron Blain has been in constant touch with our International MBVA colleagues and recently outlined to us all the arrangements for a trip to Malaysia in June 2012 at a cost of £1336.00. Another of our Members, Group Captain Mike Hawkins is inquiring on our behalf about alternative arrangements so that we will have the benefit of two proposals. We will keep you informed.

At this year's AGM we have four new Candidates to be considered for election and so it looks as if we will have a full National Executive Committee for the coming year and more pairs of hands to take on some of the work in progress issues.

Mentioning Work in Progress, I list: Copyright; medal issues other than the PJM; the German Branch viability; NMBVA potted history; Armed Forces Day in Plymouth in 2012; Charity Status of NMBVA which might enable us to Gift Aid donations and possibly subscriptions; Federation or Affiliation with our International MBVA Colleagues.

You will hear a few words about the reunion dinner and laying up Service a little later from our National Secretary Ted Williams but I am particularly pleased that Jean Rhodes wife of our late President will be with us tonight.

Colleagues, in 2012 I believe we should take a long look at where we want to be and what we want to do in the next decade. If the proposal for a Branch Secretaries Symposium is accepted by the AGM I think that could provide the perfect opportunity.

I conclude by repeating for the next year our theme from the past year, **"Give the Members what they want."**

Yours aye

Tex Pemberton

Lieutenant Colonel Tex Pemberton OBE
Chairman
National Malaya & Borneo Veterans Association