

# The Graves of the Britains Smallwars.

By ex T/14476568 Cpl G Tullis

A few months ago there was much in the UK media about the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC). However, it must be recognised they are only responsible for the graves and roll of honour for those that died during the two world wars.

The graves of those who died in Palestine, Korea, Malaya, Aden, the Falklands, and no doubt many other places around the world, do not come under their control. These graves are usually looked after by associations, embassies or service units, but sometimes due to varying conditions in the country to which they are located it is difficult to get to them and maintain standards. One of these locations, where the graves have been looked after since 1980, is now called: - 'God's Little Acre', which is in the Christian Cemetery in Batu Gajah not far from Ipoh, in the State of Perak, West Malaysia. In this cemetery are the graves of the rubber Planters', tin miners, police and members of our armed forces that died in the immediate area during the early stages of the Malayan Emergency. There are many other places around Malaysia, and indeed the world, where our servicemen and colonial police are buried but I have no report on their condition.

Up until 1980, the Batu Gajah cemetery had been badly neglected and vandalised and if it had not been for the Officer Commanding Police District (OCPD), Superintendent R. Thambipillay, who took it upon himself to do something about the situation that prevailed at that time, all would have been lost. His efforts, along with the Perak Planters' Association, (PPA) have resulted in the maintenance of the graves since then along with an annual remembrance service each year

This year the service will be held at 7.30 a.m. on the 16th June 2002. A very poignant time, as the Malayan Emergency commenced some 53 years ago with the killing of manager Mr. E. A. Walker, from Edinburgh, on the Elphill rubber estate near Sungei Siput at approx 8.00 am on that date by the CTs (Communist Terrorists). During 1989 a large cross was erected by there by PPA and last year a 'Roll of Honour' was added to 'God's Little Acre' made of granite stone with the names of all who those were buried there engraved in gold colour.

The same situation does not prevail further north of Ipoh where 7 policemen are buried in the Kamunting Road Christian Cemetery in Taiping, Perak, where their graves are in a poor condition. See the details attached from the Australian Malaya & Borneo Veterans Association.

I understand through the media that the UK Government intend to erect a monument in London to the armed services who died during the British small wars, however, at the moment I am trying to obtain details of this. With this situation that can prevail throughout the world where Commonwealth and UK servicemen's graves are not cared for two questions can be asked: -

Should there not be a Commonwealth or National Register or 'Roll of Honour' for all who died in the wars or conflicts, 1945 and onwards?

Should not their graves be included in the Commonwealth War Graves Commission to ensure they are looked after?

I can only comment for Malaya, where I served from 1948-51, but I am sure many veterans of the many campaigns will have the same thoughts as I. Your comments and suggestions as to what we can do about this would be greatly appreciated.

George Tullis

The Annual Commemorative Service  
Held at 'God's Little Acre' Batu Gajah, State of Perak, West Malaysia

Last year's visit to Batu Gajah, Perak, West Malaysia for the annual commemorative service June 2000 was attended by many from around the world so I have included extracts from the Australian Malaya & Borneo Association and also the UK, NMBVA Southern Source Magazine personally sent to me by Angus Fraser.

Malayan Visit 2000

We thank the Queensland State President, David Kent, for the following report.

The ceremony held at Batu Gajah was superbly organized and attended by approximately 300 people. The wreath laying proved an emotional moment for many of those attending. The Royal Malaysian Police provided the guard of honour, which was duly inspected by the Assistant Commissioner of Police, representing the Chief of Police Perak State, Tuan ACP Ismail bin Md Hussin. After prayers, the last post was played followed by one minute's silence, and then Tuan Ismail laid the symbolic wreath, while the lament was played by the Ghurkha Pipers from Brunei.

The wreath laying then commenced, with the assistance of cadets from the Royal Malaysian Police. The Australian High Commission was represented by H.E. Mr. Peter Varghese and also representatives from the British, New Zealand, Canadian and Indian High Commissions. Many British Regiments were present comprising the: - Royal Ranger Regiment, Coldstream Guards Assoc., 8th Ghurkha Rifles Regt. Assoc. (UK), 4th Queens Own Hussars, King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, Royal Marines 42 Commando, Worcester Regt., and the Royal Regt. of Artillery.

David Kent carried out the Australian NMBVA wreath laying, Tom Turnbull, on behalf of Colleagues of the Federation of Malaya Police Force, Paddy Bacskai on behalf of the Western Australia Branch, and Tom Turnbull also laid a wreath on behalf of the Royal Malaysian Police former Officers Assoc. of U.K in the absence of their representative, Paddy Giles. Mr. Angus Fraser and Fred Simpson of the Sunshine Coast Sub-Branch, who gave us full support throughout these proceedings, represented the U.K NMBVA.

Without the effort, imagination and research of our 'sister' organisation The Malaysian Veterans Assoc., the ceremonies held at Batu Gajah would most likely never have eventuated. The current chairman, Mr. Tambipillay (Pillay) spent years of his time involving himself in this project, with strong support from Dato John Bishorek, to a point it has now reached today.

In addition, the Perak Planters' Association have given full backing and co-operation to make this annual function the great success it undoubtedly is by providing the 'hub' and contact for the administrative activities that are required to be carried out.

Full marks and thank you to this association. David Kent

The U.K. NMBVA Represented by Angus Fraser

At a Moving Ceremony in Malaysia



Angus Fraser about to lay the U.K. National Malaya & Borneo Veterans Association (NMBVA) Wreath at the cross-erected by The Perak Planters Association at "Gods Little Acre" in the Christian Cemetery in Batu Gajah, Perak, West Malaysia in June 2000.

The inscription on the base of the cross says:-

Erected by  
THE PERAK PLANTERS ASSOCIATION  
AND  
OTHER WELL WISHERS  
IN MEMORY OF ALL THOSE WHO LIE AT REST IN  
GODS LITTLE ACRE  
PIONEERS, PLANTERS, MINERS, POLICE AND THE MILITARY  
MANY OF WHOM GAVE UP THEIR LIVES WHEN FIGHTING  
COMMUNIST INSURGENCY  
1948 -1960  
WE SHALL REMEMBER THEM  
Erected 17<sup>th</sup> June 1989

Extract from the Southern Source Magazine of the U.K. NMBVA

Every year a commemorative service is held at 'God's Little Acre', Batu Gajah, in West Malaysia. Comrades from all regiments and many countries rest in peace here, but the site does not qualify for maintenance by the War Graves Commission, as it is mainly a cemetery for the civilians killed during the emergency. The Perak Planters' Association is responsible for the upkeep and administration of the memorial gardens including the organisation of the annual service.

his year the service took place on the 17th June 2000 and included in the official wreath-laying party was Angus Fraser, 4th Queens Own Hussars, who laid a wreath on behalf of the National Malaya & Borneo Veteran's Association (U.K.) This was particularly poignant for Angus as eight comrades of the 4th Hussars are buried here. They arrived in August 1948 and were killed in an ambush on the last day of the same year.

After the wreath-laying ceremony, Angus was guest for lunch hosted by the Perak Planters' Association at the Royal Ipoh Club. During the lunch gathering, Angus presented the chairman of 'God's Little Acre' sub committee with a cheque for £200 donated towards the cost of the plaque by NMBVA.UK. Angus said this was an emotional and memorable trip, but also enjoyable.



The Commemorative Plaque erected by the Perak Planters Association.  
The Two Missing Graves At the Christian Cemetery Batu Gajah, Perak ,West Malaysia

On the morning of the 11th day in November 1950, NCOs and other ranks from the workshop section and "A" Pltn. of No. 3 Company (General Transport) Royal Army Service Corps from Tanah Rata in the Cameron Highlands went on a visit to Batu Gajah.

This had been organized so that they could pay their respects, lay flowers and take photographs of the graves of their fellow soldiers who had been killed in a road ambush by the CTs (Communist Terrorists) just beyond the small village of Brinchang in the Cameron Highlands on the 2nd March 1950. For many of the men this would be their last opportunity to visit the graves before they were due to complete their National Service and return to the U.K.

The graves that we visited were that of: -

Service No	Name	Rank	Age	Grave No	All No3 CoyRASC
393609	Richards .W.J	2nd Lt	20	422	OC A Pltn
T/141188039	Ritter C.R	Sgt	21	423	Workshops Section
T/21181957	Hand .F	Cpl	26	614	A Pltn
T/2548873	Hoggett.N	L/Cpl	21	424	Workshops Section
T/22203119	Jones.R.H	Dvr	19	425	A Pltn

Photos taken by me on our visit to Batu Gajah on the 11th November 1950.

Top left photo is Private Brimmer & Tregedgier of the workshop section of No. 3 Company RASC, Cameron Highlands taking photo of Dvr. Jones's grave. The one to the left is L/Cpl. Hoggett's grave. The two white crosses to the right are men of the 2nd Batt. Coldstream Guards' graves.



Photo top right. Left to right are the graves of 2Lt. Richards, Sgt. Ritter and L/Cpl. Hoggett

Photo bottom left is the Grave of L/Cpl. Norman Hoggett.

Photo bottom right are the graves of 8 of the 4th Queens Own Hussars who arrived in Malaya in August 1948 and were ambushed and killed on the 31 December 1948.



The crosses on the graves had to be made by the Regiments or Corps they belonged to, but at sometime they were replaced by a standard headstone showing the Name, Rank, Service No., Date of Death, and Regiment or Corps. Cpl. F. Hand died of wounds on the 5th March 1950 and was buried in the Roman Catholic part of the cemetery.

At the time of our visit all the graves of the RASC, 4th Queens Own Hussars, Kings Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, Coldstream Guards and many others all appeared to be well looked after. During 1994 I was sent a copy of the 'Register of Graves' of the servicemen buried at Batu Gajah and was surprised to find to find that 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Richards and Driver Jones not on it. I queried this with the sender who put my mind at rest saying that he would have the error corrected.

However, a few years later I was listening to BBC Radio 2 program of the Charlie Chester show that had been recorded during a Royal British Legion pilgrimage to Malaysia. This again got me concerned about the graves, for during the broadcast Charlie Chester interviewed Thambipillay who was telling him, as OCPD Tapah, how he had found the Batu Gajah cemetery neglected and vandalised and how his policemen had set about to clean it up.

During the early part of 1998 an old comrade (Vic Priest) who had taken Cpl. Hand's coffin on his truck to Batu Gajah, went on a private visit to the cemetery and he could not find the graves of 2nd Lt. Richards or Dvr. Jones. Though he knew from photographs taken in 1950 that 2nd Lt. Richards was buried to the left of Sgt. Ritter and that Dvr. Jones was buried to the right of L/Cpl. Hoggett.

This obvious omission caused great concern and I was advised to write to the address given below with as much information as possible.

Ministry of Defence  
Personal Services 4(Army) (Casualty/Compassionate (Co-ordination))  
Trenchard Lines  
Upavon  
Wiltshire SN9 6BE

They replied to me very promptly with several nice informative letters telling me that 2nd Lt. Richards and Driver Jones' remains had been exhumed and cremated at the Sek Ken Crematorium, Kuala Lumpur, on the 15th September 1969 and that their ashes were returned to the undertakers in their home towns of Chester in England and Tonypany in Wales.

So ends the saga of the missing graves, however, it did not quite finish there for after looking at the web page of the Australian Malayan & Borneo Veterans 1948-66 and their section on 'God's Little Acre' in which there was Thambipillays address I decided to write to him requesting a copy of his book and that the names of 2nd Lt. Richards and Dvr. Jones be added to the Roll of Honour. I had a very nice reply from him to which I duly replied, but I was sorry to tell him that Charlie Chester had died in 1997.

Copy of Pillay's letter,  
Dear George,

Thanks for your letter sent through the PPA. I will send a copy of my reprint copy of the God's Little Acre Book through Col Roger of the British High Commission with my compliments & duly autographed. The correction about your comrades killed in the C/Highlands have been done in the reprint as these names did not appear in the list of names I first received from the High Commission as there remains were exhumed long ago.

However, you and, your colleagues and loved ones will certainly be happy to note that I have ensured and in fact their names along as well as a few others whose bodies were subsequently exhumed in B.G. are engraved in gold colour on the granite memorial plaque.

For information this granite slab is imported from South India with Italian technology, meaning its life span is 20 years as against local granite. I was given the task of handling this project so every detail was checked for accuracy like, design correct names other personal details including decorations & order of traditional precedence of the various armed forces units.

Just a correction, I was the founder & organised the first Remembrance Day in B.G in 1980 & continued to do so for two more years. With my transfer to Ipoh as head of CID early 1983 I handed over the organising of this Remembrance Day to the PPA (because there are quite a number of expatriate Rubber Planters Buried there) to ensure its continuity I committed myself to it for the last 17 years and as an invited member of the sub committee running this Remembrance Day under the auspices of the PPA. Non Planters, like me are not qualified to be a member of the PPA so I am not the chairman of the PPA.

However, every development & progress for the sake of those lying there, the loved ones, friends and colleagues vis-à-vis the direct or indirect publicity, prominence, importance & significance of this Remembrance Day both locally and abroad, the publication of the book in question as a tribute in conjunction with the celebration on the 16th June 1998 of the 50th anniversary of the declaration of the Emergency (all proceeds are donated by me to God's Little Acre Fund) & my long cherished idea to construct a permanent & historical Memorial Plaque with the names of 116 people resting in B.G - all of these gives me great pleasure & satisfaction although not many may know my contribution unless one reads my first and second reprint books.

You are an exception to appreciate (I thank you) although you didn't seem to have had access to my book. But I will always remember the British High Commission in KL which realised in 1988 what I had contributed for the past 18 years & recommended me for a Hon.MBE. How nice if I had the opportunity to visit BP & a couple of friends like you (your ex service associations & police Officers in the UK) to reminisce,

On the other hand, my wife & both my children were lucky to meet the Queen & Prince Philip in person at the investiture in KL when she came to close the Commonwealth Games in 1988. Right now I have been invited by a planter Mr J.J Black(U.K.) to serve in the Anglican Church Building committee in B.G. which has embarked on a multi-purpose hall next to the church costing RM 500,000.

I have given the addresses of ex armed forces associations in the UK & Australia as well as ex Police Services Associations to the pastor who is the chairman of the building Committee to send appeal letters for donations.

In your reply please let me know a little bit more about yourself especially when you are showing a keen interest about your colleagues killed in the C/Highlands

How is Charlie Chester for the last letter I had from him for the last I read with sadness from a letter from his secretary in reply to my letter was that he was not in good health this was a good two years ago.

Can I address you as George & please call me Pillay.

With sincere regards & goodnight

Pillay

## Seven Policemen

There are seven policemen buried in Kumunting Road Christian Cemetery, Taiping, Perak, West Malaysia, and all were killed during the Emergency

Their graves are not well looked after. In particular, the headstone of police Lt. M. R. Livingstone (killed in Grik, Perak, Dec 1950) has fallen over whilst the graves of European Sgts. K. Webb and L. Wernham, killed in ambush July 1950, have suffered damage. Neither the Malaysian nor U.K. Governments will accept responsibility for the upkeep.

So the Australian Branch of the National Malaya & Borneo Veterans Association is calling for subscriptions to renovate these graves and mount a police roll of honour in the church portal. This proposal has been agreed by the church authorities in Malaysia who will oversee the work on receipt of the funds. Donations can be sent by cheque made out to "KRRC Appeal" crossed 'Not Negotiable' and sent to: -

Queensland State President (Mr David Kent)

NMBVA  
PO Box 36  
Buderim  
Queensland 4556  
Australia



Since having this article published some three years ago I am pleased to tell you that Policemen's graves have been refurbished and a updated article is now attached.

All police graves throughout Malaysia are now being looked after by the Military Section of the British High Commission in K.L.