

The Bleedin' War's Over!



**Reflections on Surrender
at the end of WW2 in the Pacific.
15 August 1945.**

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But by all means please feel free to share this with anyone
with an interest in WW2. Thanks.

TO ALL ALLIED PRISONERS OF WAR

THE JAPANESE FORCES HAVE SURRENDERED UNCONDITIONALLY
AND THE WAR IS OVER

WE will get supplies to you as soon as is humanly possible and will make arrangements to get you out but, owing to the distances involved, it may be some time before we can achieve this.

YOU will help us and yourselves if you act as follows :—

- (1) Stay in your camp until you get further orders from us.
- (2) Start preparing nominal rolls of personnel, giving fullest particulars.
- (3) List your most urgent necessities.
- (4) If you have been starved or underfed for long periods DO NOT eat large quantities of solid food, fruit or vegetables. It is dangerous.

- (5) Local authorities and/or Allied officers will take charge of your affairs in a very short time. Be guided by their advice.

ATROCITIES THAT WILL SHOCK WORLD

World War II Is Over — Peace On Earth Again! JAPAN SURRENDERS!

Jap Atrocities On Allies Were 'Unbelievable'

This is a collection of quotes I extracted from the primary research interviews I've done over the years, capturing the feelings of soldiers, POWs, and civilians on hearing of the Japanese surrender -- and the end of the war --
15 August 1945.

I feel privileged that these extraordinary people trusted with me with their innermost thoughts and stories.

At surrender, some of these interviewees were in Singapore, Vietnam, Thailand, Japan, one on a troopship near India, and a Japanese airman in Formosa (Taiwan).

Amazingly, two of them were even bitterly disappointed that the war ended when it did.

Try to put yourself in their boots at that moment, and imagine all the emotions and thoughts that would've been running through them when surrender finally came.

Lest we forget. Peace. Stuart.

Stuart Lloyd

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Singapore



British Gunner Dick Lee had been to hell and back on the Death Railway, and had now returned to Adam Road Camp where they were literally digging their own graves.

"We was out digging these bleeding tunnels at the time. But the tunnels were for us! The bastards were going to put us in them to do away with us. This particular day, we'd just finished eating tap root about 12 o'clock and the Jap guard says, Everybody put the tools away in the shed and go back to camp. 12 o'clock in the day? This is unusual. We'd already heard from the Chinese that the war is over, so we put two and two together.

Then all of a sudden a Japanese staff car came into the camp, the flags flying on the bonnet, a high-ranking Japanese with a couple of juniors, and went to see the Japanese sergeant major in his quarters and that's when we were brazenly told the war is over.

Three or four of the Japs that were bastards in the camp got off their mark. This little bastard I wanted to get hold of, he got off his mark. At the time I think I would've loved to have got stuck into him because I had a bleedin' sore back for weeks afterward, little bastard. But then you quickly forget about all this wanting revenge, you were so pleased to be free again.

Then the aircraft came over and dropped the leaflets down to tell us the war's over and for the Japs to still do their guard duty but to still treat a few of us ... because it took about a week for our troops to land in Singapore. It was a funny atmosphere during that week."

“We were told to stay in the camp for your own safety. Japanese will still be the guards there, but better food and the food was brought in. Red Cross parcels the bastards had been hoarding up for years all came in on trucks. Food and everything, clothing we never had – running about in G-strings, bare feet. All the Japanese clothes coming in to make us look good for when the troops came in a week’s time. They couldn’t do enough for us. Bastards!”

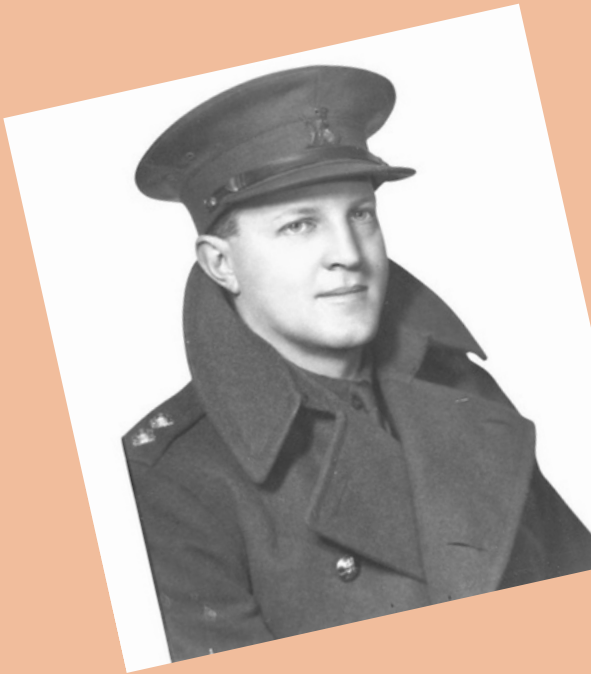


Dick's enlistment photo and some Christmas cards from Changi POWs

British Private Stan Sharpley, of the Lancashire Loyals, spent the balance of the war in Singapore as a POW. Soon after the liberation of Singapore, he and fellow soldiers were finally transported back to UK.

"We got on thi boat and had three days shore leave in Bombay and we were entertained by the British community in Bombay, they treated us like lords. Marvellous. When the boat docked, they had private cars there and they drove us to the houses. We got to Southhampton and I arrived home coincidentally on Armistice Day, 11th November."

Capt Hugh Pilkington of the 6th Royal Norfolks was in the Officers' Area, Changi Gaol, where three illegal wirelasses were in operation. He'd survived the Alexandra Hospital Massacre, and the rigours of Hellfire Pass, Thailand.



Jubilant scenes as POWs are released from Changi in September 1945 (NAS-SLV). Pilkington

"At about 2:30 am on the morning of 11 August I was asleep on the little balcony of our coolie quarter when an undue commotion from the Australian officers' hut over the road woke me up. Intrigued by the noise from the Australians, I walked across and looked in to see them feverishly sorting their belongings, and was told, 'We cannot tell you but you will hear soon'.

At 7:45 am when Colonel Harris woke up, I suggested to him that the Australians had some news. He went across and came back a few minutes later: "Gentlemen they have capitulated, but the Japanese themselves have not yet been informed".

No one spoke for several minutes, and then we all made a concerted rush for our little hoards of dried beans, fish, etc. and made fires to cook them on. By now we were really starving and food dominated our thoughts.

"At last" and "Thank God" were the only expressions heard.'

'For several days the Japs would not admit that they had capitulated. We were still left in suspense. Then it was finally announced that the Japanese Commander, on orders from the Mikado himself, had capitulated. Even this bit of news was in our hands before our Jap guards were notified."

Indochina



Ephiginie 'Effie' Gerolimatos was the daughter of a Greek entrepreneur active in China and Indochine pre-war. Living in Dalat, Vietnam, during the war they were largely free until 9 March 1945 when the Japanese took over, imposed Martial Law, and expatriate families were interned. Effie was able to return to her boarding school, where the Japanese placed a couple of guards at the driveway of the school:

"The Japanese kept the Vietnamese rebels at bay. It was difficult at times to comprehend fully who was the enemy. Nuns , girls and servants alike lived in dread of what the Viet Minh would do to them, to the school, to the community. It was a concept so frightening that no one ever talked about it.'

One day gathering vegetables near the refectory, five months after martial law, one stray American plane flew over the new chapel. It dropped a whirlwind of white leaflets. Written in five or six languages: Japan had capitulated and the war was over. 'The message was so simple and so unexpected at that particular moment, that we read it again and again, aloud and unbelieving. We kissed each other, we yelled, jumped, screamed , giggled, and danced all at once in an excited frenzy.



Effie, a 14-year-old convent student in Dalat.

Strangely enough we'd become happy in our total seclusion. The daily routine had given us all a certain sense of security.

One of the nuns let slip: 'Let's hope the Japanese don't leave the school before the French army or the Americans get here.' Systematic terrorism by the Vietnamese had already started and acts of violence were steadily increasing. We were all vulnerable targets now.

It has been 5 months since I had last seen my family. I was shocked to see my mother. Her hair was almost white. She now had an air of total submission. Her eyes had a haze of sadness across them. She told me how distressed she was each time she saw smoke coming from the direction of the school and how she feared a Viet Minh attack on the convent.

Father silently kissed the top of my head. 'I will get this family out of here soon.'

Despite surrender, the Japanese soldiers hung around, but restrictions on civilian movements lifted. Some day late in 1945 the Japanese guard of 12 soldiers who lived in the convent's laundry left without trace."

India



Captain (later Major) Roy Hudson of the Royal Bombay Sappers and Miners had been actively involved in India and Burma – where he was instrumental in the disastrous Battle for Sittang Bridge -- for four years. His Colonel decided he was due a break. He returned to England but soon requested to return to the front, so he boarded the Monarch of Bermuda to steam back to Bombay in August 1945.

“I volunteered to go back because the Japanese war had not yet finished ... I wanted to be with my pals. So went to the depot and they said You’ve been appointed baggage handler on Monarch of Bermuda. And I said Look I’ve been fighting a war for the past 4 bloody years I refuse to be appointed baggage master of a troop ship – you can find somebody has not yet done anything in the fighting line and put him in. I want a very nice quiet trip back to the East. Alright. So we got on the ship, and on my draft there was only 2 people: a captain and a major; myself. All I had to do was check that this chap was still on board then I could have a really easy time.

We set sail from Liverpool, and one or two nights after we set out, the ship announced it was going to show a film. But there were 3000 chaps on board, and everybody went. At 7 o’clock I was reading a book when I was called for on the tannoy: Major Hudson report to the OC troops immediately. So go to his office, he slaps on an armlet saying PM, meaning Provost Marshall. And my captain got APM, assistant. He said I’ve just appointed you Provost Marshall for the voyage and you’ll find on C Deck 20 police there, there’s a riot in the cinema.



Roy, in his early years in the Indian Army.

The place was packed, it's unsafe to have so many people in one place if anything happened you couldn't get out.

Of course the rest of the voyage I didn't have a quiet minute because I was in charge of the whole bloody ship.

I was on the Monarch of Bermuda when the Hiroshima Bomb went off and we were two days sailing out from Bombay and we were all given a free bottle of beer to celebrate, and so the war had actually finished by that time.



Former Japanese soldiers repairing Bangkok bridge end 1945, under the command of Sapper Roy Hudson.

Thailand



Gunner Fergus Anckorn, of the Royal Artillery, had arrived in Singapore in 1942 just in time to be bombed by a Japanese plane, end up amid the misery of the Alexandra Hospital Massacre, and spend a very wretched war on the camps along the Death Railway. He was still in a camp in Ubon, Thailand, after coming down from the Death Railway when the war ended.

"Some in my hut went off and got hold of Takamine the Korean guard who'd bashed by face a few days earlier. They said Right, come on , kill him now. But I said I didn't want to kill him. I just wanted to go home and forget everything. Someone passed me a spade and said, Go on knock off his head, and we'll bury him under the bed shelf. No one will know or care. I told them if we did that we'd be the same as they were.

I wrote to my parents: **"I am free - free - free! After three and half years."**



Japan



US Marine Harold Stephens was just going on 16 when he signed up and witnessed the horrors of kamikaze attacks on their ships in Okinawa, and was poised next to strike the main island of Japan in August 1945.

“Kamikaze pilots, suicide bombers, we faced the whole thing. They said, Nine out of ten of you are going to die in the invasion. Twenty million Japanese are going to die, be prepared. And the bomb saved us, I don't care what anyone says, that was it. They needed that jolt because they were ready to die for everything.

It was frightening to go ashore on Japanese territory. It would have been hell had not the war ended. The towns and cities were totally flattened, but out of this rubble came the Japanese, poking up their heads. They had laid down their sharpened bamboo and spikes but a few weeks before they would have defended their homeland to the last person and used them on us, and all of us would have died, over a million Americans and 20 million Japanese at least. We knew we would have to have killed anyone standing before us, and most likely would have run out of ammunition first. It was a dreadful thought. The entire countryside was dug in, like we had seen on Okinawa.



Former Marine Harold aged 78, home in Bangkok.

If we Marines hadn't been through the Okinawa campaign, we might have thought differently, but we witnessed thousands of people, women and kids as well as soldiers, jumping off cliffs into the sea, and pulling pins on grenades they held in their hands, rather than give up to the white man which, they were taught, could mean death more dreadful than suicide. That's why I believe the atomic bomb saved lives. Mine certainly.

With the war over, they redeployed to Guam where they got the shock news: 'The 29th is not going home. We're going to China.' Cheefoo on the north coast of the Shantung Peninsula, northern China, specifically. 'None of us had ever heard of Cheefoo.' He picked out three library books: The Dowager, one about the Boxer rebellion, and Spoken Chinese. 'That night before lights out - Tokyo Rose had gone off the air - I began teaching myself Chinese. I was really excited about going to China because I didn't want to go back to the coalmine. I didn't want to go back to the factories, I didn't want the war to end. A lot of us young kids didn't; boy this was fun.'

Taiwan (Formosa)



A reverse perspective from the point of view of Captain Yoshiaki Iwasaki, of the Imperial Air Force. He is immensely proud of the fact that his plane was the one to drop the bulls-eye bomb that sent The Repulse to the bottom of the sea off Malaya, pivoting the tide of that war. After Singapore, he'd flown from bases in Manila, Davao, Java, Borneo, Indian Ocean, Paramushir Island near Russia, Marshall Islands, Rabaul, Guadalcanal, Buna, Taiwan, Hainan Island, and Okinawa.

"Toward the end of war, my squadron was stuck in Taiwan and I couldn't even fly anywhere as there were always so many enemy planes flying over us. On August 15th, 1945, everyone was ordered to gather one place at airfield and we heard the radio message from the Emperor. Everyone got so upset or depressed so badly, and I didn't know what to do or how to live after that."





And I'll leave the last word to Lance Sgt Cyril Gilbert of the Australian 8th Division. He'd also had a torrid time in the worst stretch of the Death Railway, the Songkurai area in the far north adjacent the Thai/Burma border – where he 'celebrated' his 21st birthday -- and returned to Changi.

When I had a beer (or was it nine beers?) with him at Changi in 2005, I was struck by his positivity towards life and humanity.

So how was his life upon surrender?

“For two years it was wine, women, and song ... and I never sang a note!” he laughs.

Sources: All quotes used here were extracted from these books by Stuart Lloyd:

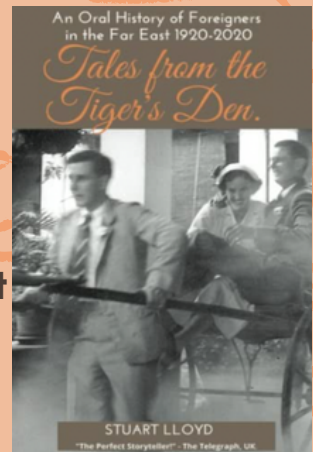
The Missing Years

A POW's Story from Changi to Hellfire Pass
(paperback/ebook/audiobook)

Tales from the Tiger's Den

**An Oral History of Foreigners in the Far East
1920-2020**

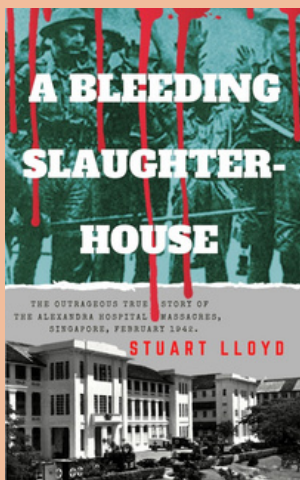
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A Bleeding Slaughterhouse

**The Outrageous True Story of the Alexandra
Hospital Massacre, Singapore 1942.**

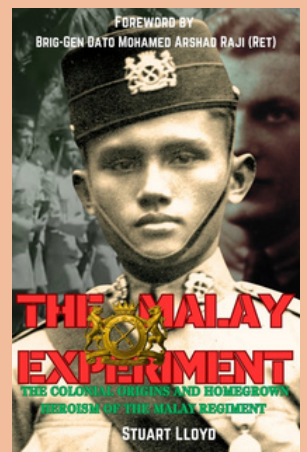
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The Malay Experiment

**The Colonial Origins and Homegrown
Heroism of The Malay Regiment**

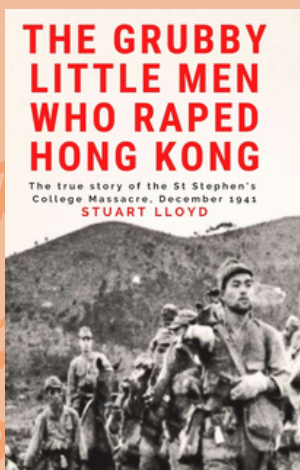
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The Grubby Little Men Who Raped Hong Kong

**The True Story of the St Stephen's College
Massacre, December 1941.**

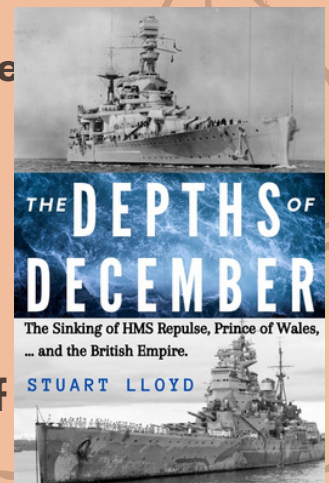
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The Depths of December

**The Sinking of the HMS Repulse, Prince of
Wales ... and the British Empire.**

(ebook/ audiobook)



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