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The brass band of the 1st Battalion of the Royal Malay Regiment in front of Buckingham Palace yesterday.

Malay Regiment 'invades' the Palace

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■ **From Zaharah Othman in London**

THE presence of the Royal Malay Regiment (RMR) in full military splendour brought out the crowd to Buckingham Palace yesterday.

Even the sun shone and the atmosphere was like a carnival with people sitting in the park with their picnics.

The 1st Battalion took up their post at the Buckingham Palace yesterday, three days after their first ceremonial duties at Windsor Castle.

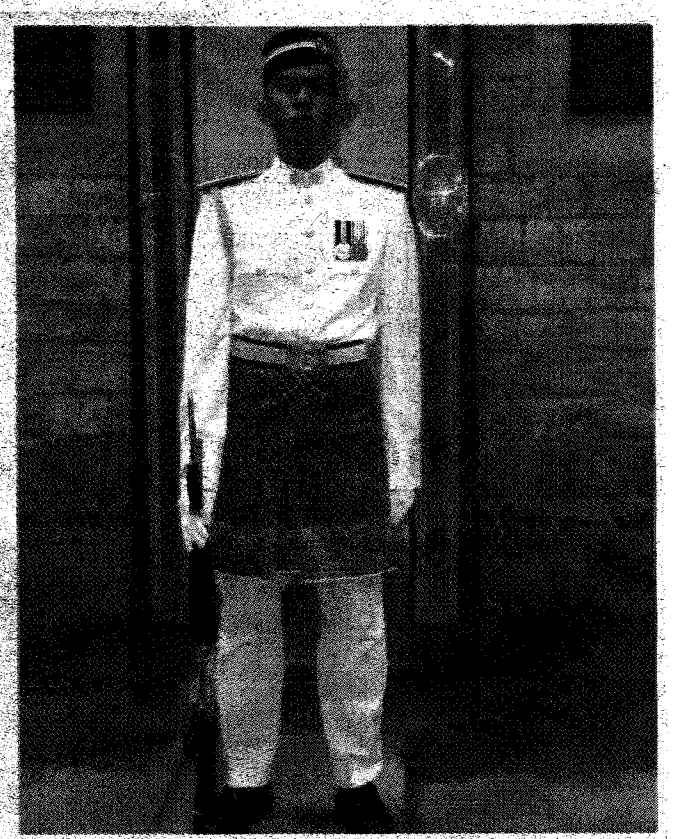
The flag, fluttering on top of Buckingham Palace denotes the presence of Queen Elizabeth II and this brought a lot of excitement among those involved, knowing that the queen could be watching them on parade.

Led by Captain of the Guard Major Mohd Fuad Mohd Ghazali, the London Public Duties Company, as they are known here, marched from Wellington Barracks to Buckingham Palace, with the regiment's brass band playing patriotic songs along the way.

At the palace grounds, it was a ceremony full of tradition as the members of the RMR took over the duties from the Welsh Guards, watched by a large crowd of locals and tourists.

As bands from both regiments took turns to play their songs, members of the RMR escorted the Welsh Guards from their posts and out of the palace.

Royal Malay Regiment soldiers changing duties with a Welsh Guard. Inset: Malaysian Defence Attache in Britain, Col Mohd Tajri Alwi



Private Suhaimi Yahya standing guard at Windsor Castle.

At the same time, Welsh Guards from St James Palace nearby were escorted back by the members of the RMR.

For added colour, two horse-drawn carriages carrying diplomats arrived at the palace to present their credentials to the Queen.

When the Welsh Guards left the palace gates, the members of the RMR were officially in charge guarding the palace.

Garrison Sergeant Major Warrant Officer 1 W.D.G Mott, who went to Malaysia to arrange for the two-month long ceremonial duties, said he was very impressed with the performance.

"I am very sure Her Majesty was watching," he added.

At Windsor Castle, watching the Changing of the Guards ceremony was Peter Bolton, 84, who was with the 3rd Malay Regiment in the 1950s.

"I trained them. I am very happy to see them here," he said proudly.

Bolton is a recipient of the Pingat Jasa Malaysia for his services during the emergency.

Malaysian Defence Attache Colonel Mohd Tajri Mohd Alwi is confident that the company will maintain its good showing throughout its stint here.

One hundred and twenty two members and eight officers of the RMR arrived on April 17, a cold wet day for a two-month stint in London.

Their duties would include guarding Buckingham Palace, Windsor Castle and St James Palace. They are also taking part in a ceremony at the Tower of London.

Next week, they will be performing at the Royal Windsor Tattoo as well as at the interval during a rugby match in Twickenham.

They are based at the Royal Air Force Base in Uxbridge.

Members and officers of the regiment expressed great pride in being able to carry out the ceremonial duties at the palaces.

Malaysia is the fourth country to be invited to do so after Australia, Canada and Jamaica.