

Sarawak to find, preserve war relics
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KUCHING: Sarawak's Tourism and Heritage Ministry will allocate funds in its budget next year to finance expeditions to trace, recover and preserve World War 2 relics, like downed warplanes in the jungle.

Its assistant minister, Liwan Lagang, said the money would also be used for researchers, historians and writers who want to research and write about wartime experiences of survivors.

"It's a heritage that would be lost (if nothing is done about it)," Liwan said after opening the Bario Commandos Heritage exhibition at the Sarawak Arts Museum yesterday.

The exhibition coincides with the 67th anniversary on Sunday of the parachuting of British and Australian commandos into Bario, in the Kelabit Highlands in Baram, to start a counter-insurgency campaign against the Japanese Imperial forces in Borneo.

It was on March 25, 1945, that the first group of Allied soldiers, led by Major Tom Harrison, returned to Sarawak to harass the Japanese, prevent them from entering the interior, and cut off the supply of rice, buffaloes and native labourers which the ethnic tribes in Baram had been forced to supply.

Liwan said the wreckage of two warplanes, one in Limbang and another in Miri, had never been retrieved for preservation and that there were no records of any kind of a warplane that was reportedly uncovered in Ulu Rajang. Liwan believed there were many war relics just waiting to be uncovered.

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