

MACVA

MEMOIRS

of the Malaysian Armed Forces Veterans



TUN DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD



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of the Malaysian Armed Forces Veterans

Presented to

YABhg Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Md Ali
With Compliments



BRIG GEN DATUK GOH SENG TOH FMAF
President



LT COL DR LIEW NGOH CHIN
Editor-in-chief



MACVA

Malaysian Armed Forces Chinese Veterans Association

PUSTAKA PERDANA



1011620

This book, 'Memoirs of the Malaysian Armed Forces Veterans' provides an excellent platform for men and woman with valor from our ethnic Malaysian Chinese, to showcase their sacrifices through blood and sweat in serving our King and Country with pride and honor. It broadcasts their unwavering sacrifices and relentless patriotism as they fought gallantly shoulder to shoulder in unison with their 'brothers-in-arms' from various ethnicity and race, in upholding the national defence during the 1st and 2nd Emergencies respectively as it lays the foundation during the infancy stage of the MAF; accompanied with invaluable photos aligned chronologically which makes the reading process a joyous experience to dive in towards an era filled with defining moments and experiences.

Lastly, on behalf of the MAF, I sincerely thank all veterans; thank you for the examples that you have set for all of us throughout your service. Salute! And to our serving members... thank you for the risks you take and the sacrifices you make on a daily basis. Not forgetting those who have stepped forward to contribute splendidly towards the realization of this Memoirs.

"ATM Benteng Pertahanan Negara"

GEN TAN SRI DATO' SERI PANGLIMA HJ ZULKIFLI B HJ ZAINAL ABIDIN
CHIEF OF DEFENCE FORCE

~~~~~

*A moving and heart wrenching book depicting the services and contributions of the Chinese Veterans in the Malaysian Armed Forces. Every page tells a story of how the Chinese Veterans had served the country with great honour and pride; as well as directly contributing to the process of Nationhood of Malaysia. The book is an excellent reference for those who wish to understand the counter-insurgency and confrontation in the early years and the valour and sacrifices by the Chinese in the Malaysian Armed Forces. Should be placed in all libraries across the country lest people forget. A good read. Congratulations to the members of the Editorial Board.*

---

**BRIG GEN DATO' HON MUN LOONG**

~~~~~

"Congratulations to MACVA for the tiresome task in collating a wide spectrum of personal encounters and events in the three services. A tremendous achievement documenting sacrifices and contributions in nation building."

AIR VICE-MARSHAL TAN SRI DATO' SULAIMAN BIN SUJAK
FIRST MALAYSIAN CHIEF OF AIR STAFF, ROYAL MALAYSIAN AIR FORCE

I joined the RMN in May 1955 and remain proud that I was part of an era when our MAF were held in high esteem by not only the Commonwealth countries but also the superpowers. The MEMOIRS record this era and is essentially about the unrecorded contributions of those who had served loyally and faithfully with great distinction in the defence of their beloved country. I can testify that their loyalty and patriotism were beyond reproach; some even sacrificed their lives for their country.

It is the most appropriate moment to collate articles and narratives of their undivided contributions to King and country. These narratives clearly demonstrate the absolute patriotism, loyalty and dedication displayed by service personnel of all races of that era. It is hoped that more will step forward to add to these stories.

Copies of this book should be housed in the National Archives, National Library and other places of Records for posterity. It is also important that the expedient politicians are made aware of the contributions of all races in the nation-building processes.

REAR ADMIRAL TAN SRI DATO' SERI (DR) K. THANABALASINGAM
FIRST MALAYSIAN CHIEF OF NAVY (1967 – 1976)

~~~~~

*“An excellent piece of history on the involvement of the Malaysian Chinese in the defence and security of the nation. They all have shown courage and some paid their lives in the defence of the nation. Their untold stories of bravery should be read by all Malaysians as a reminder that Malaysian Chinese like all other Malaysians had contributed and sacrificed their lives to save this nation during the troubling period of the two communist insurgencies, the Indonesian Confrontation and service under the auspices of the United Nations. Congratulations to MACVA for this outstanding historical recollection.”*

---

**BRIG GEN DATO' MOHAMED ARSHAD RAJI**  
PRESIDENT, NATIONAL PATRIOTS ASSOCIATION

~~~~~

“This is a story that was just waiting to be told. This book will hopefully spur others to write about their experiences so that the full story of the gallantry of our armed forces during the Emergency years can be fully recorded for the benefit of the next generations”.

PHILIP MATHEWS
AUTHOR AND EDITOR

Dedication to Our Pahlawan

Members of the Malaysian Armed Forces on enrolment made a pledge to serve King and Country without any hesitation and that at any moment of their service, they could either be injured or killed. The MEMOIRS depict explicit events of their activities whilst in service. Even though we have left the service, our DNA has not changed and this book expresses our fond memories of our comradeship in arms whilst serving in the Armed Forces. To the veterans I salute you and to those who are no longer with us, you are our Pahlawan and you will always be remembered.

I congratulate Malaysian Armed Forces Chinese Veterans Association for the publication of The Memoirs and it should be read by all Malaysians

GEN TAN SRI (DR) HASHIM MOHD ALI



Front Cover :

'Tugu Negara' commemorates those who died in Malaysia's struggle for freedom, principally against the Japanese occupation during WWII and the Malayan Emergency .

Photo courtesy of Lt Col Raymond Goh.

Dedication

TO THOSE WHO GAVE THEIR
ALL FOR THE COUNTRY IN
ORDER THAT THEIR FUTURE
GENERATIONS WILL LIVE IN
HONOUR, EQUALITY, PEACE
AND PROSPERITY.



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FOREWORD

BY BRIG GEN DR LEONG WENG FOON

It gives me great honour and pleasure to write a foreword for this Memoirs.

“Old soldiers never die, they simply fade away”

Yes, memories fade with time; with individuals, with communities and with society as a whole. Therefore, it is timely that this Memoirs is compiled to record the physical and emotional experiences and memories of those who have served in the Malaysian Armed Forces.

I am aware that this Coffee Table Book (CTB) Project was first conceptualised in 2016 at a small gathering in Harmony Valley at Janda Baik. The hilly and forested terrain there reminded a number of us of those ‘action’ days past, although it was quite different watching the jungle from above its canopy compared to operating and living under it in ‘those’ days, with the expectation of the unexpected happening anytime. Many of these memories will become more distant as time passes by. We are generally not in the culture of documenting or recording past events. Many of these memories and events and stories will fade totally and remain buried as we pass on; and that would be such a pity. So, this Memoirs is timely.

Someone previously raised the issue of the movie ‘Black Hawk Down’, a movie of an event in which the Malaysian Contingent had braved the odds to help rescue the American Rangers that had been encircled and overwhelmed by the local militia. Strangely, the Malaysian contribution to the rescue was not depicted nor mentioned in the movie at all. This tells us the stark truth that history is in the eyes of the narrator. There is no compulsion for others to tell your story. If you have something to tell, go tell your own story – write it, record it, document it, put it in the archives! So, this Memoirs is appropriate.

As veterans, we collectively or individually experienced various phases of our service lives, witnessed many periods of active military operations. As a young medical officer attached to an infantry battalion at the frontline, and in later capacities, I saw how service personnel, irrespective of race and religion, colour or creed, answer the call of duty and contribute gallantly to the defence of the nation. Some had fallen in action, some badly injured; most suffered in one way or another. We call all these sacrifices and contributions, all in the name of patriotism, loyalty and duty to King and Country.

We have witnessed the transformation of the Armed Forces, with changing doctrines, arms and equipment, strategy and tactics, even military culture. We saw changes in leadership and leadership styles. We have experienced great comradeship, camaraderie and friendships and, most of all, *esprit de corps*.

Sadly, we have also seen some instances of injustice, discrimination and the resultant frustration and despair.

I am glad that some means of recording these moments and milestones of service life and military history is finally taking place, led by the CTB team from MACVA. I look forward to seeing more contributions from other veterans to add on to this Memoirs, or subsequent or other editions or versions of it, to make our veterans' record more complete.

I congratulate the editorial team – all veterans, many old and fully retired (never tired), but many still actively working – taking whatever times and days off they can, participating in meetings, interviews and research and working late into the night, putting pen to paper, fingers to keyboard and nose to the grindstone to make this Memoirs a reality.

Whilst we veterans have seen our days in service, I hope this book will serve as an inspiration and start point for the new generations of veterans to add on.

“Let not we forget: Let not anyone forget...”

For King and Country!

PREFACE

The stability, peace and prosperity we enjoy today is the result of the sacrifices of all the brave men and women who served King and Country. Many military personnel of various ethnicity were badly injured or had sacrificed their lives defending the nation -- from the time of the Malayan Emergency until Independence. Unfortunately, many of their stories were not well documented.

A group of Chinese veterans gathered to recollect, reminisce and place on record some of the events. All these short stories are placed alongside milestone events that took place around the period for purposes of context and clarity. Many of the photographs are invaluable original artefacts. We have endeavoured to use articles published in newspapers, magazines and books to make the narratives more vivid.

The recollections have been told from the perspective of the writers. The Armed Forces is a large family and any accomplishment is a result of teamwork. We acknowledge that due to the passing of time, and the death of those who died in action or had passed on in service after retirement, some names or events might have been inadvertently forgotten or had become indistinct. The writers and editorial team would therefore welcome clarification and suggestions and will make amendments, should follow-up editions be published.

Nevertheless, the editors had persevered to cross-check the authenticity of stories as they were told.

These stories will remain in our hearts forever.

Let the truth be told!

A Soldier's Prayer

*At the time of my passing
I asked that you do not mourn
For when I enlisted, I pledged
The nation's battle had to be won
And when the day was finally done
I asked that you share our journey of immensity
The separation, sacrifice and camaraderie
For a lasting peace...Our Victory*

LT COL DR LIEW NGOH CHIN

PROLOGUE

We have to start somewhere.

This Memoirs, though started by a group of Malaysian Armed Forces Chinese Veterans, is intended to put on record what the Armed Forces personnel went through in the past. We hope this will be a starting point of reunion for all veterans, wherever they may be. Together we reignite the memories and reminisce the past. We renew our bonds and remember those who have passed on.

It is our hope that more veteran groups will join us in subsequent editions, such that our history is told from a more complete and wider perspective for the benefit of later generations.

MEMOIRS OF THE MALAYSIAN ARMED FORCES VETERANS

Spanning 70 years from the time of the Malayan Emergency in 1948 till now, little is recorded of the contribution of the Malayan and later, Malaysian Armed Forces, certainly not from the perspective of the local military.

There are numerous publications and books on the Malayan Emergency by the British forces but most of these narratives are of people looking in from the outside. It is time that local people who were directly involved narrate their experiences.

The Malay Regiment, Police Force, Special Branch, Federation Regiment, Home Guard, Rangers and different corps of the Malayan Armed Forces contributed to the defence of the nation in the Malayan Emergency and later in Confrontation and Counter-Insurgency Warfare. This book also describes the roles of the Royal Malaysian Navy and the Royal Malaysian Air Force in the war and how the corps were established.

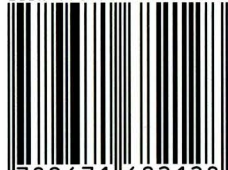
Besides defending the nation, the Armed Forces also participated in many successful United Nation peacekeeping missions and local civic actions that benefited the public.

The Malaysian Armed Forces Chinese Veterans who contributed significantly in the early years decided to take the lead in narrating their experiences. There are two parts to this book. Part 1 is an introduction or preamble, which describes milestone events that occurred and Part 2 consists of personal experiences as narrated by the veterans.

Two key elements in this book deserve attention - the narratives of the veterans who were in the events that occurred through the seven decades and the invaluable artefacts such as photographs, newspaper clippings and personal effects which act as time capsules, providing us with snapshots into their lives back then.

As this book was taking shape, some of the veterans who contributed to it, have passed on. This memoir preserves their thoughts and records their journey.

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