

THE SINGAPORE MEMORIAL

The Singapore Memorial commemorates by name 24,000 men and women of the Land and Air Forces of the Commonwealth who have no known grave. 21,356 of the names it bears are those of soldiers who perished during the campaigns in Malaya, Java and Sumatra or in subsequent captivity and 2,990 are those of airmen who fell during operations over the whole of Southern and Eastern Asia and the surrounding seas and oceans.

The Memorial is situated in the Kranji War Cemetery, on a hillside overlooking the Straits of Johore, fourteen miles north of Singapore.

Built by the Imperial War Graves Commission, the Cemetery and Memorial have been designed by Mr. Colin St. Clair Oakes, M.B.E., T.D., F.R.I.B.A. The entrance to the Cemetery is through a wrought iron gateway leading to a terrace on which stands the Stone of Remembrance, a traditional feature to be found in the larger war cemeteries throughout the world. From the gate the central avenue of the Cemetery passes between two shelter buildings and rises gently to the Cross of Sacrifice, which is common to all war cemeteries. Behind the Cross, flights of steps lead to the terrace on the summit of the hill on which the Memorial stands.

The Memorial consists of twelve wide columns bearing the name panels and supporting a flat roof giving protection to the inscribed names and shade and shelter to the visitor. Rising through the roof in the centre, to a height of 80 feet, is a great pylon surmounted by a star.

On a curved panel at the foot of this pylon are inscribed in English these words:

1939-1945

"ON THE WALLS OF THIS MEMORIAL ARE RECORDED THE NAMES OF TWENTY FOUR THOUSAND SOLDIERS AND AIRMEN OF MANY RACES UNITED IN SERVICE TO THE BRITISH CROWN WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES IN MALAYA AND NEIGHBOURING LANDS AND SEAS AND IN THE AIR OVER SOUTHERN AND EASTERN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC BUT TO WHOM THE FORTUNE OF WAR DENIED THE CUSTOMARY RITES ACCORDED TO THEIR COMRADES IN DEATH"

In additional inscription "THEY DIED FOR ALL FREE MEN" is also engraved in Hindi, Urdu, Gurmukhi, Chinese and Malay.

On the terrace, at each end of the Memorial, stand two smaller stone panels. One, to the East, bears the names of 107 men beneath the following inscription:-

"THE SOLDIERS WHOSE MEMORY IS HONOURED HERE PERISHED IN CAPTIVITY IN FEBRUARY 1942 AND LIE BURIED IN ONE GRAVE IN THE GROUNDS OF THE SINGAPORE CIVIL GENERAL HOSPITAL"

The other, to the West, commemorates 255 men buried in isolated places in Malaya where their graves cannot be maintained. This panel bears the following inscription:

"THESE SOLDIERS DIED SERVING THEIR COUNTRY AND LIE BURIED ELSEWHERE IN MALAYA"

3,955 of the comrades of the men in whose honour the Singapore Memorial has been built are commemorated by individual headstones on the graves in the Kranji War Cemetery. The names of a further 789 officers and men of the Indian Army, whose remains were created, are recorded on their own Memorial beneath these words:

"IN HONOUR OF THESE OFFICERS AND MEN WHO DIED IN BATTLE AND WHOSE MORTAL REMAINS WERE COMMITTED TO FIRE"

70 Chinese Malaysians who served with the local defence forces and who perished in captivity in February 1942 are commemorated on a memorial over the grave in which they lie buried.