



**Commonwealth
War Graves
Commission**
Country Report:
Malaysia



CWGC
Commonwealth War Graves Commission

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) is responsible for maintaining commemorations of 4622 individuals at 16 locations in Malaysia, with the majority of casualties being commemorated on the Labuan Memorial or buried in Labuan War Cemetery.

Labuan War Cemetery, Malaysia



Labuan (part of Sabah, Malaysia) is a small island in Brunei Bay, off the coast of north-west Borneo. The cemetery lies on the Jalan Tanjong Batu road which leads from the airport to the town. It is less than a kilometre from the airport and about 3 kilometres from the Island's town; Victoria. Within the Cemetery will be found the Labuan Memorial and the Labuan Cremation Memorial.

When the Australian Army Graves Service entered Borneo they followed the route from Sandakan to Ranau, and found many unidentifiable victims of this infamous march. These and other casualties from Battlefield Burial Grounds and from scattered graves throughout Borneo were taken in the first instance to Sandakan, where a large number of prisoners of war were already buried. This flat coastal area, however, was subject to severe flooding and it proved impracticable to construct and maintain a permanent cemetery. The Sandakan graves, numbering 2,700 of which more than half were unnamed, were therefore transferred to Labuan War Cemetery, specially constructed to receive graves from all over Borneo.

As well as the graves from Sandakan, about 500 are from Kuching where there was another large prisoner-of-war camp. The total number of burials is 3,922, which includes 2135 unidentified war dead. The preponderance of unidentified graves is due to the destruction of all the records of the

camps by Colonel Suga, the Japanese commandment, before the Australians reached Kuching, his headquarters. When apprehended, this man committed suicide rather than face questioning on his conduct of the Borneo Camps.

Labuan Memorial



The Labuan Memorial was primarily intended to commemorate the officers and men of the Australian Army and Air Force who died while prisoners of war in Borneo and the Philippines from 1942 to 1945 and during the 1945 operations for the recovery of Borneo, and have no known grave. Subsequently it was found that a number of men belonging to the local forces of North Borneo, Sarawak and Brunei who were killed on war service also have no known grave, and they too are honoured here. Men of the Royal Australian Navy who lost their lives in the south-western Pacific region, and have no grave but the sea, are commemorated on Plymouth Naval Memorial in England, along with many of their comrades of the Royal Navy and of other Commonwealth Naval Forces.

This memorial consists of a colonnade forming a forecourt immediately inside the wrought iron gates of the main entrance to the cemetery. On the inner faces of the pillars are bronze panels on which are engraved the names of those whom it honours and the dedicatory inscription is on the frieze facing the entrance. Some of those whose names appear on the memorial are undoubtedly buried in unidentified graves in this cemetery.

Malaysian casualties

There are 228 individuals recorded as from, or with a family connection to, Malaysia, the Federated Malay States or Malaya (excluding Singapore) within our records. The following sites have the highest number of Malaysian casualties commemorated:

- SINGAPORE MEMORIAL – 108 individuals
- SINGAPORE (UNMAINTAINABLE GRAVES) MEMORIAL - 38
- KRANJI WAR CEMETERY, Singapore – 21
- PLYMOUTH NAVAL MEMORIAL, United Kingdom – 15

In addition, the CWGC commemorates 974 individuals who died while serving with a military unit associated with Malaysia:

Malay Regiment – 270 individuals
Federated Malay States Volunteer Force – 243
Malayan Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve – 159
Royal Navy (Malay Section) – 143
Federated Malay States Police - 139
Malayan Volunteer Air Force – 13
Local Defence Corps (Malaya) - 10