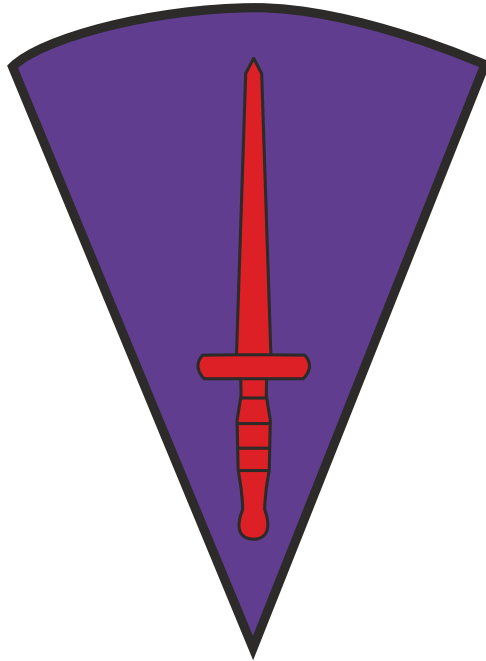


THE PILGRIMAGE
by
3 COMMANDO BRIGADE



**1 and 5 Army Commandos,
42 and 44 Royal Marine Commandos, and
901 Flotilla**

**Veterans Return to Burma
10th to 20th March, 2005
after sixty years**

TAUKKYAN WAR CEMETERY



A memorial service, attended by HM Ambassador Miss Vicky Bowman and Vice Chairman Royal British Legion, Peter Cleminson, was held at the Taukkyan War Cemetery in Rangoon (Yangon) that now commemorates nearly 28,000 souls who fought and died in the Burma and Assam conflicts.

THE WREATH



Ted Ridley read the poem of Hill 170 “The Battle of Kangaw” on behalf of 3 Commando Brigade. Then representative Veterans from each of the 4 Commandos presented a dedicated wreath. The Last Post was played by two Burmese Buglers.

PRIVATE



The Commandos remembered their own fallen with an additional private service including the Royal Marine and Commando prayers and the Kohima Epitaph.

UNITED IN THOUGHT

All the Veterans from 3 Commando Brigade in front of the memorial stone to the Reverend H C W Manger, RNVR Chaplain, HMRM Commando.



ANOTHER SIDE TO RANGOON

The fabulous gold bejewelled Shwedagon Pagoda built in 600BC, making it older than the Taj Mahal.



THE 'RIVER CRUISE'

Government restrictions made it impossible to approach Myebon by sea, as the Commandos had so many years before. Instead, it was all aboard an eighty-year-old ferry for a 'luxury' river cruise down the Kalladin to Mrauk U, that would take eight hours.



DINING ABOARD



What a surprise, there was rice on the menu!

THE ROAD TO KANGAW



The three-hour trip by bus to Kangaw Village was interrupted by a broken bridge where the Vets walked the plank!

ARRIVAL AT KANGAW VILLAGE...AT



The welcome at Kangaw village was beyond our wildest imagination – quite literally the whole village had come to see us and laid on green tea.

THE FINAL LEG OF THE PILGRIMAGE

And so, after many miles and many hours the Vets stopped at the exit of Kangaw Village, poised to begin the final march to Pinner and Hill 170.



PINNER SIXTY YEARS ON

Crosses were laid on Pinner in a private tribute to those who fell here sixty years before.



THE LAST MARCH TO 170

The reason these hills were so important sixty years earlier becomes obvious as you see their commanding presence over the landscape. It was sizzling hot, around 40°C as the Veterans made their journey across the paddy fields from Pinner to Hill 170.



HILL 170



Three-and-a-half hours on a bus on very rough tracks; a 40-minute walk to Pinner in searing heat; at least another hour's march in the open sun across paddy fields: it was quite tough going for some of the Veterans but at last Hill 170 was there.

THE WELCOME AT CAR DAUNG SWE



An incredible welcome was given by all the inhabitants of the village, Car Daung Swe, at the foot of Hill 170. The village Elders greeted us, we were refreshed with coconuts and these young girls from the village sang songs and danced. It was an unforgettable spectacle.

TWO COMMANDOS ON TOP OF HILL 170



Pat Ready and 'Timber' Wood stand on top of Hill 170. Not much had changed in sixty years – there was still an overgrown foxhole and the remnants of an ammo-dump. The well was still at the bottom of the hill, and John Headley, 42 Commando, could even identify the spot where his comrade had fallen and he was almost fatally wounded as he tried to help him.

CROSSES FOR THE FALLEN

On 170 crosses were banged in the hard ground; there was two-minutes silence followed by the Kohima Epitaph in memory of those who did not come home. To our knowledge, the only other visitor to these battlefields had been a sole Marine in 2004.



LOOKING OUT FROM HILL 170

This view shows clearly the strategic importance of Hill 170 sixty years ago with its commanding views.



JOURNEY DOWN THE CHAUNG

The Veterans were by now very tired and so the organizers had laid on six canoes to save the long trek back across the paddy fields. The canoes leaked and for some, it was tricky sitting so low – but what a blessing!



ON THE BEACH SIXTY YEARS ON



All the veterans near where they landed at Akyab sixty years before. Back row, l-r: Pat Ready (44), Jimmie Grahame (5), Ted Syms (44), John Headley (42), Les Wood (42), Ted Ridley (42), Jan Webber (44), John Street (42), Timber Wood (44); Front, l-r: Willie Falconer (42), Tug Wilson (42), Bill Moore (5), Alfred Clamp (901 Flotilla), Henry Bernini (1), Harold Grayson (44), Robert Taylor (5), John Wall (5).

AKYAB (SITTWE)



Farewell to the Arakan. It was at Akyab that the Commandos had made an unopposed landing in 1945.

FAREWELL AT THE



After all the rice, a farewell dinner at The Strand Hotel, Rangoon. Luxury!

What a memorable trip, an emotional one too, but after sixty years...not forgotten...and never to be so.