

# The Japanese Surrender Kuching, Sarawak

September 11<sup>th</sup> 1945







- Sarawak -- largest of Malaysia's thirteen states by area
- Population about 2.5 million.
- Capital Kuching population about 500,000
- About 70% Bumiputera (Indigenous) including Dayaks, Iban, Malay, Bidayuh, Kelabits and Melanau.
- 30% Chinese, Indian and European. Dozens of languages with English the common language. Most English speakers have a very strong Irish accent.
- Although Islam is Malaysia's national religion about 50% of the population is Christian, 35% Sunni Islam, 12% Buddhist and the rest Hindu and local sects.

# Japanese Occupation 1941 to 1945

- December 16<sup>th</sup> 1941, Japanese forces landed in Miri.
- Occupied Kuching on Christmas Eve.
- Most European officials were rounded up and interned at Lintang Camp (now Batu Lintang Teachers College) in Kuching.
- Confined in appalling conditions with high death rates.
- Administrative and economic infrastructures severely damaged.
- Civilians suffered great hardship & treated cruelly. Crops seized, assets commandeered, Japanese culture imposed & people virtually enslaved.
- Locals did their best to assist the prisoners by smuggling food and other supplies into the camp. Those who were caught were executed.



Hospital & Mortuary



Hospital



Section of Cemetery

## Timeline of Occupation

- **December 16, 1941:** Forces landed in Miri.
- **January 1, 1942:** Navy landed unopposed in Labuan.
- **April 1, 1942:** British troops surrendered.
- Borneo was strategically important due to its oil resources.
- North Borneo divided into five provincial administrations (*shus*).
- Airfields and several prisoner of war camps constructed.
- Allied soldiers, officials & members of underground movements imprisoned.
- Malay leaders forced to work for the Japanese & foreign workers were brought in.
- Locals were treated atrociously by the Japanese.
- When Z Special Force parachuted into the jungle, they had no trouble recruiting troops.
- The occupation lasted from **December 1941** until **August 15, 1945**.
- About 75,000 Australian troops took part in the campaign.

## Casualties

- Thousands of casualties on both sides.
- 2,434 prisoners as a result of the Sandakan death marches.
- Devastating impact on civilians.
- Civilian casualties probably many times greater than military casualties.













# Z Special Unit – Jack Tredrea – Operation Semut

Z Special Unit was one of Australia's independent forces that operated behind enemy lines in the South West Pacific during the Second World War. It was the elite forerunner to the Australian S.A.S.



SX 18853

WO Jack Tredrea MM

- Parachuted into jungle March 25 1945
- Established rapport with locals
- Treated the sick & injured
- Trained guerrilla force
- Attacked & harassed Japanese troops
- *“That night six Japanese heads in cane baskets were being smoked over fires”*
- Returned to his occupation as a tailor after the war
- Connected with families of his Malaysian troops & made several trips to Sarawak
- Died July 17<sup>th</sup> 2018 aged 98





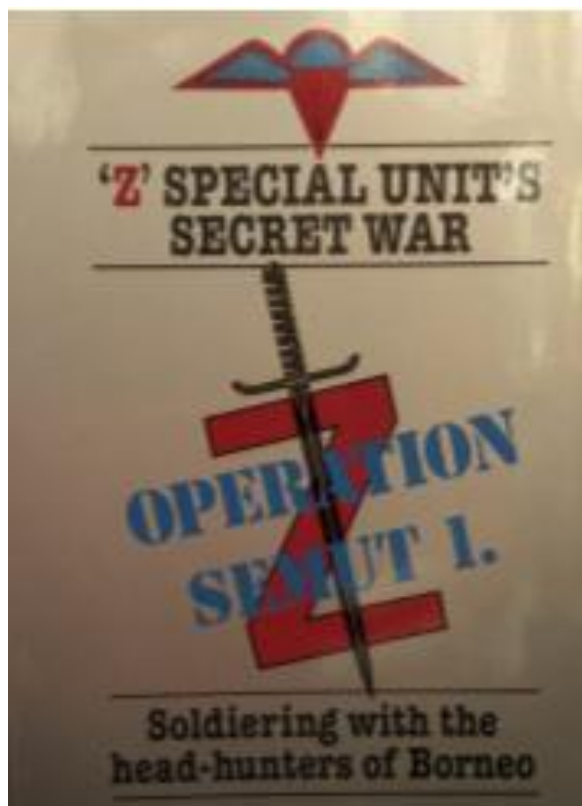






# Memorial at Bario





*"In Bario on March 25<sup>th</sup> 2025, the legacy of Semut 1 was celebrated with symbolic parachute jumps and a ceremony attended by Col Corey Shillabeer, Australia's defence advisor to Malaysia, descendants of Malaysian and Australian troops and local dignitaries."*

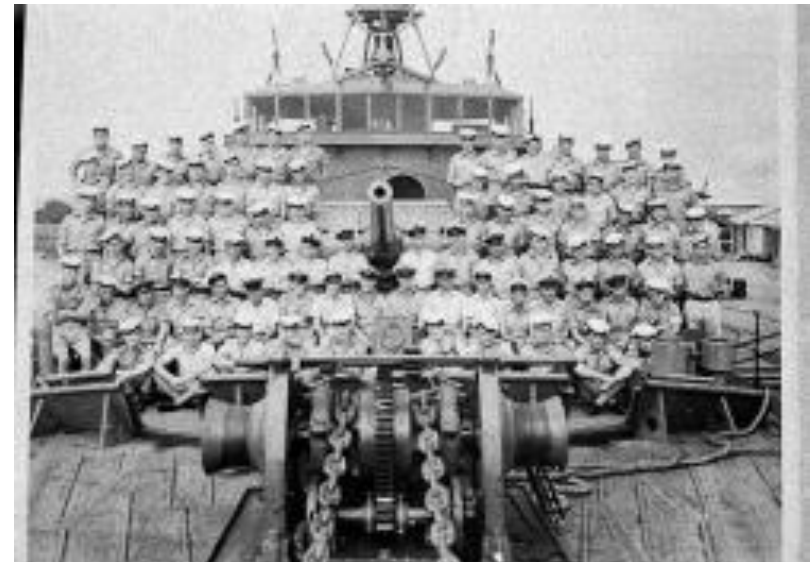
Borneo Post March 26<sup>th</sup> 2025





# The Surrender

- August 6<sup>th</sup> 1945 Hiroshima
- August 9<sup>th</sup> 1945 Nagasaki
- Surrender August 15<sup>th</sup> 1945
- Local fighting continued until the September 10<sup>th</sup> surrender in Balikpapan
- September 11<sup>th</sup> 1945 unconditional surrender accepted by Brigadier Eastick on HMAS Kapunda at Kuching



# Impact of the atomic bombs

- The atomic bombs saved approximately 123,000 military and civilian prisoners
- That equates to roughly half the combined death toll at Hiroshima and Nagasaki.
- Orders found at the Lintang POW camp by Australian liberating forces showed:
  - *POWs to be marched into the jungle, shot and burned.*
  - *Women internees, children and nuns to be given poisoned rice.*
  - *Internee civilian men and Catholic fathers to be shot & burned.*
  - *Sick and weak to be left at the camp to be bayoneted, and the entire camp to be destroyed by fire.*



The Japanese surrender group about to board HMAS Kapunda



# Major General Hiyo Yamamura hands his ceremonial sword to Brigadier Thomas Eastick



# Signing the unconditional surrender documents











Brigadier Thomas  
Eastick's son  
Dr Bruce Eastick with  
the Sword & one of  
the three copies of  
the document.



1975







**Batu Lintang  
Teachers  
College 1975  
and today**



1975





**Today**





1975





**Today**



























# After the War



- The fate of Major General Hiyo Yamamura is unknown
  - **Brigadier Thomas Eastick** returned to civilian life, working for *Colton, Palmer and Preston* and *Angas Engineering*.
  - Recalled to service in 1950 to command the Headquarters of Central Command in Adelaide.
  - Honorary aide-de-camp to the Governor-General of Australia, Sir William McKell.
- 
- Served the RSL as SA State President and National President.
  - President of the Australia Day Council
  - Held honorary roles in about 25 organisations.
  - Received a Knighthood in the 1970 New Years Honours.
- Sir Thomas Charles Eastick, CMG, DSO, ED, JP died on December 16<sup>th</sup> 1988.

Several members of the Eastick family will attend the Kuching memorial event next month