



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Johore Battery at Changi, Officially Opens to Mark the 60th Anniversary of Singapore's Fall**

15 Feb 2002



Singapore's fall under British defence to the Japanese 60 years ago, will be recounted at the launch of one of the most important war sites -- the Johore Battery -- on 15 February 2002.

BG (NS) George Yeo, Minister for Trade and Industry, will officiate the launch ceremony and unveil the Historic Site Marker as part of the 60th Anniversary Commemorative Programme of Singapore's fall to the Japanese. He will also launch "Singapore's 100 Historic Places", a new guidebook co-published by the National Heritage Board and Editions Didier Millet.

More than 200 former prisoners-of-war (PoWs), war veterans and their families and friends are expected to witness the launch ceremony.

The Johore Battery was constructed in 1939. It comprises a labyrinth of underground tunnels, used to store ammunition for three 15-inch Monster guns, which the British had constructed for the integrated coastal defence of Singapore.

The three "monster guns" were so called because they were the biggest guns to be installed outside Britain during World War II. The site derived its name from the Sultan of Johore's

donation of £500,000 in support of the British war campaign.

Johore Battery was part of the British's integrated coastal defence strategy during World War II. The name 'Fortress Singapore' signified the 'fortress system' of gun control that was used to defend Singapore. Installed to guard the Eastern approach to Singapore, the guns at Johore Battery were later destroyed by the British upon Japanese advance.

Mrs Pamela Lee, STB's Senior Director Special Projects said: "Working on the project, we gained greater insight into the provisions made during WWII to protect Singapore. Imagine, we had the biggest British guns, outside of Britain, right here at Changi. We hope that all those who visit the site, especially young Singaporeans, will understand the importance of flexibility and strategies."

Mr Lim Siam Kim, CEO of the National Heritage Board, said: "The marking of Johore Battery as the 60th historic site is a strong reminder that we must pay heed to the lessons history teaches us, so that we do not repeat the same mistakes. It also reminds us that we must constantly review our defence strategies to meet the new challenges of an uncertain world."

The highlight is a replica of the "15 inch monster gun". Visitors can mount the gun and have a sense of the scale of this weapon that was used during the war. A replica of an ammunition shell –weighing over 800 kg-- can be lifted with a lever to experience its sheer weight.

Other on-site interactive displays include a periscope that will give visitors a view of the underground tunnels and an echo tube that provides visitors with a sense of the tunnels' depth. These interactive exhibits are designed by the Singapore Science Centre.

Spearheaded by the Singapore Tourism Board, the Johore Battery project is a collaborative effort with the National Heritage Board, National Institute of Education, Singapore Prisons Service and the Singapore Science Centre.

Former PoWs are encouraged to participate in the activities organised under the Commemorative Programme. These include activities such as a conference by the History Department of the National University of Singapore, titled "Sixty Years On – The Fall of Singapore Revisited", a guided tour of "Reflections at Bukit Chandu" :A WWII Interpretative Centre at Pepys Road and the Singapore Philatelic Museum WWII Exhibition.

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News Release from Singapore Tourism Board

Fact Sheets:

- Historic Site Marker Text for Johore Battery (Document No: MINDEF\_20020215003\_1.pdf)
- Agencies Involved in the Johore Battery Project (Document No: MINDEF\_2002021500\_2.pdf)
- 60th Anniversary Activities Open to Public (Document No: MINDEF\_20020215003\_3.pdf)

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