



SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS STATEMENT.

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HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS
ON THE OCCASION OF THE UNVEILING OF
THE MEMORIAL ON H.M.S. LABURNUM ON
TUESDAY, JULY 16, 1957 AT 6 P.M.

The heroism and the faithfulness unto death which we are here present this evening to commemorate took place 15 and more years ago, but at least to those of us who were here at that time and to those who are relatives of the fallen, the memory of their courage and devotion to duty will not fade. The men whose names we commemorate belonged to the Malayan Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve, the Royal Naval Reserve and the Malay Navy. From the beginning of the World War, these men were engaged on their routine duties, and when, in December, 1941, the impact of war itself struck this land with violence, they rose to this challenge, they carried on their duties in small ships, patrolling, sweeping the mines and keeping the sea lines free from submarines. These men, as I say were in small ships; they represented only a small part of the Royal Navy which, with its Reserves, was engaged throughout the waters of the world, but they lived up to the very highest traditions they had inherited from the Royal Navy; they did their duty as their country expected them to do it and they engaged the enemy wherever he might be found, or whatever strength and of whatever size. I do not propose to describe the events of the brief but intense battle which involved Malaya in bloodshed and the grim years of occupation which followed. My concern, and your concern, this evening is to do honour to a gallant company of men who served their country well and who died off the coasts of Malaya and Singapore, in the Banka Straits, in the channels of Rhio Archipelago, off Sumatra, in the Sunda Straits and in the Indian and Pacific Oceans as well as in the prison camps of the enemy. These were brave men drawn from the many races which go to make up our Commonwealth. By giving their lives in the defence of Singapore and Malaya, they have added in fine measure to the best traditions of man in adversity; they have passed on to us a great obligation - to cherish the spirit of man at its best and to protect the freedom of society from oppression. If we play our part in support of the forces of the free world, they will not have died in vain. Their memory must remain fresh with us and our course of endeavour is clear. I would like to quote two verses of Laurence Binyon's:-

"Where our desires are and our hopes profound,
Felt as a well-spring that is hidden from sight,
To the innermost heart of their own land they are known,
As the stars are known to the night.

As the stars that shall be bright when we are dust,
Moving in marches upon the heavenly plain,
As the stars that are starry in the time of our darkness,
To the end, to the end, they remain."

And now, to the glory of God, and in honour of brave men, I unveil this memorial.

JULY 16, 1957.

(Time issued - 1600 hours.)