

Perspectives of Parit Sulong

Garth O'Connell

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The first documented massacre of Australian troops by the Imperial Japanese Army at Parit Sulong during the Second World War was a tragic chapter in the history of the Australian Defence Force.

In mid-January 1942 a small Australian and Indian force was cut off by the Japanese Imperial Guards Division around Bakri and Parit Sulong in Malaya (now known as Malaysia). The Australians and Indians doggedly fought their way out, losing almost half their men. Lieutenant Colonel Charles Anderson was awarded the Victoria Cross for leadership in this fight.

The Japanese, enraged by the losses they had suffered in the severe fighting over the previous week, massacred a group of 145 Australian and Indian wounded left behind at Parit Sulong before sunset on 22 January 1942. Of the 110 Australians, only three survived.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

ART24477

[Accession Number: ART24477](#)

Action at Parit Sulong, January 1942 by Australian Official War Artist Murray Griffin (1903-1992). The Australian crewed 25 Pounder field gun of the 2/15th Field Regiment in the foreground is firing over 'open sights' straight down the road. The sides of the road are littered with damaged, burning and abandoned Allied vehicles and armoured cars. This artwork was completed by the artist in Changi Prisoner of War camp in 1943.



A different perspective to the well known artwork above. This is a contemporary Imperial Japanese artwork depicting their attack on Parit Sulong. It was made in early 1943 and printed as part of a series of Japanese victories against the Western Allies. Others in this series include the Landing at Kota Bharu and the Fall of Singapore.

Note the many similarities to the Murray Griffin artwork (which in the background shows these tanks advancing towards the Australians) and the amount fire being poured at them by the Australian and Indian troops. Source : personal collection.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

117519

[Accession Number: 117519](#)

MUAR AREA, JOHORE, MALAYA. 1945-09-26. THE WRECKAGE OF AN AUSTRALIAN CONVOY LITTERING BOTH SIDES OF THE ROAD AT PARIT SULONG WHERE IT WAS DESTROYED DURING AN ENEMY AMBUSH. ON THE LEFT CAN BE SEEN SOME OF THE GEAR OF SOME 150 WOUNDED AUSTRALIAN AND INDIAN TROOPS WHO WERE MASSACRED BY THE ENEMY.

Photograph taken immediately after the surrender of the Imperial Japanese in Malaya of the Parit Sulong battlefield depicted in the above images.



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AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

REL/18489.001

[Accession Number: REL/18489.001](#)

The Victoria Cross, Military Cross and service medals of Lieutenant Colonel C G W Anderson, 2/19 Battalion, AIF. These medals are on display in the Hall of Valour at the Australian War Memorial. AWM REL/18489.001



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

045111

[Accession Number: 045111](#)

Portrait of NX12595 Lieutenant Colonel (LtCol) Charles Groves Wright Anderson VC MC, 2/19th Infantry Battalion taken during 1940.



THE Military Medal has been awarded to PRIVATE ARTHUR A. WILLIAMS, of Westby, NSW. Under heavy artillery and rifle fire at Bakri and Parit Sulong, Malaya, he went many times into occupied territory to bring in wounded soldiers. *"He performed duties far beyond those required of a stretcher-bearer, and showed exceptional bravery."* Private Williams is reported missing in Malaya.

[Accession Number: P05030.001](#)

Portrait of NX35709 Private (Pte) Ancel Arthur Williams, 2/19th Battalion, Australian Army Medical Corps, of Westby, NSW. Pte Williams enlisted on 25 June 1940. He was awarded the Military Medal (MM) on 5 March 1942 for 'Under heavy artillery and rifle fire at Bakri and Parit Sulong, Malaya, he went many times into occupied territory to bring in wounded soldiers...' He was presumed dead on 22 January 1942 in Malaya.

Portrait of one of the Australian victims of the Parit Sulong massacre, stretcher bearer Private Arthur Williams.

For further information on the campaign fought in Malaya and the massacre at Parit Sulong, I recommend the search engine of the Australian War Memorial website <http://www.awm.gov.au/#search/all/?op=Search&format=list> and the following :

Australian Army History Unit's publication 'Malaya' by Brian Farrell and Dr Garth Pratten <http://www.army.gov.au/Our-future/Publications/Australian-Army-Journal/Past-editions/~//media/Files/Our%20future/LWSC%20Publications/AAJ/2010Winter/12-MalayaByBrianFarrellAnd.pdf>

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The book "The bridge at Parit Sulong : an investigation of mass murder" and website of Australian military researcher, author and historian Lynette Ramsay Silver OAM - <http://lynettesilver.com/research-projects/parit-sulong-west-malaysia/>

Mant, G; Grim glory / with a foreword by H. Gordon Bennett (monograph, 1943) - <http://www.awm.gov.au/view/book/7718/>. Note that it was re-published several times post-war in addition to the 2/19th Battalion Association official "The Grim Glory" .

The Australia's War 1939-1945 website <http://www.w2australia.gov.au/japadvance/paritSulong.html>

The 2/19th Battalion history (AWM website) https://www.awm.gov.au/units/unit_11270.asp

Welsh, R; It's turned out rice again - Wartime memoirs : 2nd/19th Battalion, 8th Division, A.I.F. 1940-1946. (Roy Welsh, 1995) <https://www.awm.gov.au/view/book/31034/>

2/19th Unit War diary - <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/awm52/8/3/19/>