



## Malaysia 1948 to 1962

In January 1948 British Army Gurkha battalions and British Other Ranks, all under strength started arriving in Malaya and Singapore.

The Malayan communist party had reactivated a guerrilla wing and its civil counterparts. Higher authority did not believe accurate reports about this reorganisation and the treat of revolutionary warfare it posed so nothing was done to counter it a first.

In June 1948 an emergency was declared and a purely guerrilla campaign started. Defeating this did not depend upon higher command but on the self-reliance of the man on the spot whose initiative resourcefulness and self-reliance in remote situations counted for more than conventional campaign.

Initially the guerrillas were known as bandits but this was changed to communist Terrorists or CT's. With the lawlessness of recently evacuated India still in everyone's mind the Ghurkhas called the Guerrillas Congress but this changed to and remained as Daku – Short for dacoit or enemy- for the duration of the emergency.

Initially there were some negative factors militating against efficiency in and out of the camp. Apart from a completely new system of administration many of the Ghurkha regiments still suffered from its men having been POW's during WW2 and staff losses due to the partition of India.

Raw recruits were sent to guard vital points before they new how to use a rifle safely or even shoot straight. At one-point orders were given that operation guard duties were to refrain from loading rifles but to use the Kukri or bayonet instead.

Equipment was found to be in short supply or unsuitable for the role to which it was now to be used. The open top scout cars in particular were found to be very vulnerable when hemmed in by dense jungle on narrow mountainous roads



Photo courtesy of <http://www.mapleleafup.org>.  
Photographer: Unknown  
Description: Escort just finished at Kluang Malaya 1956



Photo courtesy of <http://www.mapleleafup.org>.  
Photographer: Unknown  
Description :Dingo 340631 26 ZS 50 on Malaya

To combat this Dingo's were fitted with closed steel covers incorporating a gun turret that could be rotated through 360 degrees. Bren LMG provided armament although others were also utilized.

The cramped cabin and more restricted visibility made both the jobs of both driver and gunners more difficult.

The added weight of the turret reduced also the stability of the vehicle and it became infamous for rolling when cornering at high speed or at low speed when steeply inclined.

Malaya achieved independence in 1957 and operations for the British army eventually petered out in 1962.



Photo courtesy of <http://www.mapleleafup.org>.

Photographer: Unknown

Description: Pte Gordon Blakey from East Hills, N.S.W. and Pte Ron Gibson from Coolangatta, Qld used by 2 Bn Royal Australian Regiment in Malaya. Dingo F48229, 09 SZ 89 with an early turret design to accommodate the Bren gun armament

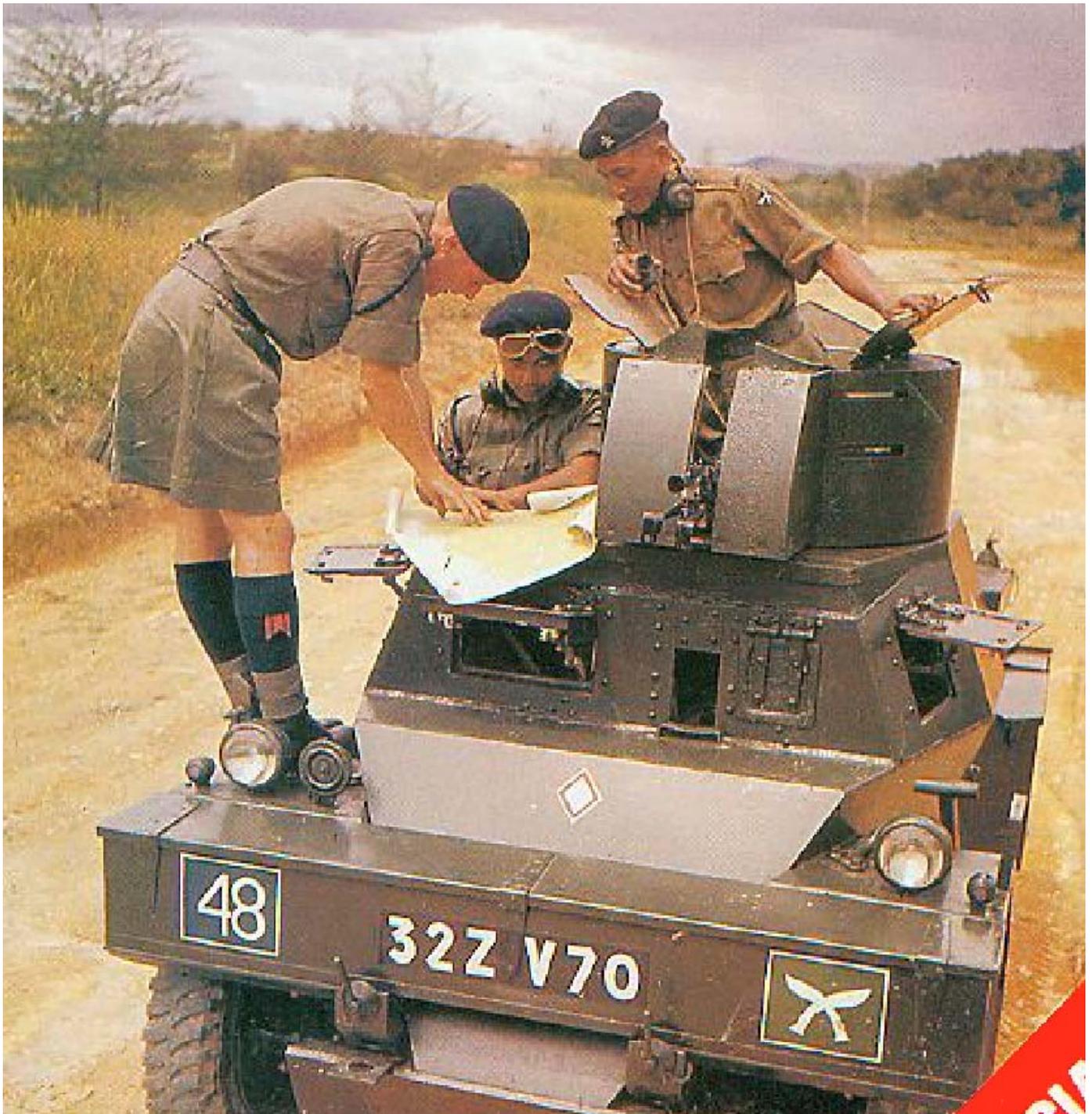


Photo courtesy of <http://www.mapleleafup.org>.

Photographer: Unknown

Description: Dingo 32 ZV 70

The crossed kukri div sign is for the 51st Gurka Div based in Kuala Lumpur



**Indrabahadur Limbu 1/7 Ghurkha Rifles remembers his service in Malaya.**

(Extract from Ghurkhas at War – Greenhill books)

I joined the army on 30 sep 1952 and went on a lot of operations. While still a young soldier I was escort to the CO (Lt Col A.I. Forestier-Walmsley, MBE).

He was inspecting rifle companies in their new locations after periodic retraining. He had a scout car in front and behind of his open and unnamed land rover.

I was gunner in the rear scout car.

On the way back to Seremban the road was steep and winding with thick jungle on both sides.

On the far side of Jebebu pass the leading scout car was too far ahead and we had fallen too far behind.

The daku ambushed him, killing him, the driver and the escort that was sitting with him.

They descended, stole the weapons and the CO's watch.

By the time the lead scout car realised it was not being followed by the land rover it was too late and the road was too narrow and winding for it to turn round.

As we came round the corner the daku were running away and the LMG jammed.

The CO was shot through the nose.

I stayed there all night and only the next morning did the ambulance come to take the bodies away\*.

I think that both he and the driver, a rai who had been allowed to reenlist after wartime service, were wrong in not looking into their mirrors to see if we could go as fast as the land rover uphill.

*\* The RMO had put some sticky plaster over the wound. The CO's wife was saddened to see the plaster and asked the RMO why it was there. He told her he had nicked the nose while shaving the corpse's face. She upbraided him but never learnt that her husband's face had been disfigured. His watch was recovered from a dead terrorist and the OC A Company recovered a rifle, 60 map squares away, which turned out to be the driver's.*



Photo courtesy of Linc Cpl Anthony Morris, ex HQ Squadron KDG

Photographer: Anthony Morris

Description: Tony poses against the local plantation manager's car.

Presumably a private purchase its make is unknown.



Photo courtesy of <http://www.mapleleafup.org>.  
Photographer: Unknown  
Description: Daimler Armoured Car F208445 / 87ZR26



Photo courtesy of John Plumb  
Photographer: Royal Engineer John Plumb  
Description: The 11th\_Hussars in with Daimler Mk 2 Armoured Cars



Photos courtesy of John Plumb  
Photographer: Royal Engineer John Plumb  
Description: The 11th\_Hussars in Kokoi,



Image courtesy of the Tank Museum Bovington image ref 2629-F3

Photographer: Unknown

Description: This Daimler armoured car has proved to be a load to much for this timber bridge. It looks like the crew bailed out in a hurry, straight into the river below judging by the wet clothes on the rear of the engine deck.

Date unknown



Image courtesy of the IWM K 14063

Photographer: Unknown

Description: A convoy of vehicles of the Malayan Armoured Corps, escorted by a pair of Daimler scout cars **31ZV94/48381** & **03ZS83/206783**, move along a road through the jungle.

Date: circa 1951



*An account of the Communist Terrorists Ambush inflicted on a platoon of the Royal West Kent Regiment, probably ranking amongst the worst during the Malayan Emergency*

*The place –The Ulu Caledonian Rubber Estate, near Ulu Yam, Selangor, Malaya*

*22nd October 1951*

*Preamble ...*

*There was a prelude to the events of that day, a typical murder of a planter and his guard that could have had some bearing on the resources available for the follow-up operations of above.*

Number One Platoon 'A' Company the Royal West Kent Regiment was based at Tanjong Malim accommodated in a gymnasium at the Malay Agricultural College just outside the town.

The platoon was commanded by *Lieutenant K S Beale, (later MC)* and for a short time *Sergeant F Bucknell MM* was the platoon sergeant until transferred to another company.

Like most platoons at that time it was under strength with only two sections as apposed to the normal three.

*Corporal W Harris* commanded No.1 Section and I (*Corporal J Burrows*).

commanded No. 2 Section

On the fateful day of the 22<sup>nd</sup> October most of the platoon was on a routine patrol in a rubber estate a few miles from Tanjong Malim. I had been left in charge of the base with several others; we had been on an uneventful night ambush and were resting after the ordeal.

It was about midmorning when a Malayan police inspector rushed into the base to report that firing had been heard coming from another rubber plantation a short distance to the west of Tanjong Malim, and there was much concern for the manager and his police guard who had not returned to the estate office.

Could our platoon provide support to his jungle squad as there few police available to follow-up and investigate the incident. He expressed concerned about the lack of protective armour to the police Gharry vehicle.

I explained, the platoon was operating in different area and were not due to return until later that afternoon, but I, could provide back-up in the **Dingo** scout car, and I would man the twin Brens. There was just the driver and I; we kept fairly close to the Gharry, the police, just young men, seemed very nervous, aware it could have been a ploy by the CTs to draw them into a trap. I like to think the presence of the scout car with its menacing Brens probing from side to side may have deterred any attempt at that.

Having arrived at the scene a short time later, the police started their search of the plantation where the manager with his police guard had been carrying-out routine inspections. We in the scout car were able to cover the police from the dirt road as they searched the area. It did not take long before the bodies of the manager and his guard were found, both brutally slaughtered. The police loaded the bodies onto the Gharry and returned to base. I was keen to get back and report the incident by radio to HQ knowing it would be a few hours before I could report to the platoon commander at the at RV pick-up. Had it not been for what had happened almost simultaneous that day, I am sure there would have been an immediate follow-up; the intelligence was good, numerous CTs had been seen in the area and the trail was red-hot.

After returning to the platoon base at Tanjong Malim and making what limited preparations we could for an immediate follow-up, should the platoon commander decide?



### ***Leading up to the events of the RWK ambush***

It was about an hour later when *Major V Dover MC* from BNHQ arrived at the base, he said it was a matter of urgency to mobilise the platoon for an immediate operation of the utmost priority, although there was over an hour before the platoon was due for the pick-up. I was ordered to make hast to the pick-up location to minimise any delay.

The platoon mustered at the base for immediate operations.

First, the major addressed the platoon and stated he had grave news. This morning No 11 platoon of 'D' Company had been ambushed on the Ulu Caledonian Estate at Ulu Yam. The battle lasted for over an hour and a half; and there had been many fatalities with the rest wounded. Medics had already been despatched to the scene with some supporting troops. But you of No.1 platoon are the nearest available troops to carry-out the follow-up operation to search out the CTs and bring them to battle. He went on to say - The CTs did not have it all their way; they left a number of their own dead.

There was no time to lose; we left for Ulu Yam in a matter of minutes in a convoy of two **scout cars**, one upfront the other at the rear, with two 3-tonners and the Land Rover between. Only three men were left behind to guard the base with some assistance from the police.

The events of the estate murders were of low priority compared with the magnitude of the West Kent's ambush, and unfortunately there were no resources available for a follow-up operation.

We arrived at Caledonian estate, the scene of the ambush perhaps an hour later.

The drive along the twisting road had frustrated our urgency to get to the scene, but caution prevailed as the opposing forces could outnumber us, and perhaps try their luck again.

The ambushed vehicles, a 3-ton and a 15-cwt truck, with a scout car remained stationary where they had been shot-up - holed and bloodstained. The casualties had already been evacuated; in fact we had passed an ambulance and truck on our approach to the scene. The Brens on the scout car were still in place, but the support carriage had been hit, causing the guns to slew and swing to one side

Lieutenant Beale' at once ordered the platoon up the slope above the dirt road and into the CT ambush positions. We found two CT bodies; others had been recovered on the road where they had been killed during the attack. We were ordered to spread out and mop-up, and not to take any chances, and to fire into any suspect hiding place, bush or undergrowth. The major and the platoon commander waited for the CO to arrive to make an appreciation and issue his orders for the follow-up operations. He was an embittered and worried man, he had lost nearly a tenth\*\* of his operational fighting force in just one battle - dead or wounded.

It was just after the arrival of the CO when firing broke out from the high ground. He immediately ordered his escorting scout car gunner to train his Brens in the direction of the firing, but to hold fire. He shouted. Who's firing? I replied not knowing it was the CO. We are mopping up! No enemy in sight! \*

The initial operation lasted for two days following the tracks and blood trails left by the retreating terrorists; then the rain came to obliterate any further signs. Our Iban trackers had all but refused to assist, they had lost all confidence. Three of their comrades had been killed in the ambush. Stubbornly they believed there had been a bad omen, and their lucky charms had not saved them. The following day our platoon was ordered back to base at Tanjong Malim leaving the depleted 'D' Company' to seek out and avenge their lost comrades. Other units assisted in the operations, supported by heavy concentration of mortars and air strikes over a wide area. There were a few brief contacts with the enemy resulting in several eliminations, although it was not established if these were the ambushers.

*\*NB.*

*More than forty-five years later an article appeared in a Malayan Veterans News Letter relating to this action, letters were exchanged.*

*Tony Mansfield' the CO's scout car gunner confirmed he clearly remembers the events of that day; his comment was 'it was a good job the CO' did not order him to open fire?*



### *An Account of the Battle at Ulu Yam, Selangor.*

It was during the morning at about 10.00 hours of 22 October 1951. No.11 platoon 'D' Company 1/RWK had completed a three day routine patrol. Transport had arrived at the rendezvous to pick them up for the return to Kuala Kubu Bahru (KKB). As they drove through the Ulu Caledonian rubber estate at Ulu Yam they entered a defile with a high embankment. There were three vehicles, the first a 3-ton truck, the second a 15-cwt and the third a scout car at the rear, when all three vehicles were in the embankment. A sudden intensive burst of automatic fire ripped through the vehicles, with the 3-tonner taking the initial full blast of the attack. It was thought that the company commander and the platoon sergeant were instantly killed together with several men and the rest were wounded. Seconds later more automatics opened up and other small arms and grenades rained down, a distinctive loud single explosion was heard as it struck the scout cars gun carriage effectively rendered the twin LMG's useless. The gunner brought out his Owen gun and kept firing from the scout car. Suddenly eight CTs charged down to try and grab the weapons from the dead soldiers; several of the charging terrorists were killed.

Many of the occupants of the 15-cwt, returned the fire before jumping from the truck into a ditch at the side of the road, it was difficult to fight back firing up the steep embankment. The CTs had chosen their site well. Heavy firing continued with grenades still raining down and exploding in and around the trucks as the troops leapt from the vehicles. The platoon commander was wounded twice. Some of the surviving troops managed to take cover under the embankment, others were pinned in and around the vehicles, few men were able to return the fire, and those who could were directed by the only remaining NCO, a lance corporal, until he too, was wounded. A senior experienced private (*37 years of age, Johnny Pannell a former NCO*) took command and rallied the men to fight back; he personally repulsed several enemy attacks with his Sten and grenades although he too had been wounded four times. He undoubtedly saved a complete annihilation of the young men around him. All the time the CTs were yelling obscenities, some in English, at the soldiers below. Victory was clear-cut or so they thought? But, they had underestimated the sheer guts and determination of the 'White Horse' soldiers from Kent. As the battle continued, denying the CTs a chance to capture a haul of weapons, including five LMG's and an assortment of other small arms. In their attempt they left six of their dead, and when they withdrew they carried several wounded comrades with them. They had charged down the embankment to capture the weapons from the dead and wounded soldiers but were cut down by withering SMG fire. The rest of the ambushers retreated and split into groups.

Towards the end of the battle a planter and four policemen bravely reinforced the surviving West Kent's. They too sustained casualties.

The casualties of the Royal West Kent's were, one officer and ten other ranks and three Iban trackers killed, and one officer, eleven other ranks and one civil liaison officer wounded. This was amongst one of the bloodiest battles of the Malayan Emergency.

It was sometime before any Ibans were prepared to join the affray again, they were convinced that, there was some premonition, a warning of a lurking death; the lucky charms of their fallen comrades had failed them.

### **Conclusion.**

Private J. L. Pannell was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal

Lance Corporal J. C. Martin was awarded the Military Medal.

The CTs failed to achieve their objective to capture weapons and took heavy casualties in the attempt, but they did learn a lesson.

'Not to mess with the West Kent's'.

It was later established that some of the CTs ambushers were involved in the ambush and killing of Sir Henry Gurney the High Commissioner - just a few weeks before. They failed then to achieve their objective to capture badly needed weapons and they had failed again.

**John Burrows**  
2006



Image courtesy of <http://cas.awm.gov.au>

Photographer - Hobson, Phillip Oliver  
Location: Malaya: Kedah

Description: Informal portrait of 3/2818 Private (Pte) Wally E Spurr, of Albury, NSW, 2nd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment (2RAR), manning a Bren gun. The gun has been fitted into the turret of a converted Daimler Mark 2 Dingo scout car, in preparation for guarding a convoy of soldiers from A Company, 2RAR, that will move deeper into the jungle in pursuit of Communist terrorists. Pte Spurr also served in Korea with 3rd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment (3RAR) from 1953-1954.

January 1956



Image courtesy of <http://cas.awm.gov.au>

Photographer /donor- Donor J Milne  
Malaya: Perak  
January 1956

Description: Two unidentified Australians from A Company, 2nd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment (2RAR), sitting on top of a British Daimler Dingo scout car.

These Australian crewed British armoured vehicles were lent to Australian units in Malaya for providing convoy defence and reconnaissance duties.

The British Army Registration number of the vehicle is . F205236 10- ZS 34 and it is armed with a Bren light machine gun with a spotlight fitted



Image courtesy of <http://cas.awm.gov.au>

Photographer - Hobson, Phillip Oliver  
Malaya: Kedah  
January 1956

Description: Members of the British 15/19 Hussars Cavalry Regiment on top of their Daimler armoured cars (background) and Alvis Saracen, Armoured Personnel Carrier (foreground), stand by ready to escort the gunners and QF 25 Pounder guns of B Troop, 105th Field Battery, to their new rendezvous point, where they will strike their first blow against Communist terrorists. The Trooper (foreground) is holding a Sten gun.



*Image courtesy of <http://cas.awm.gov.au>*

Photographer - Hobson, Phillip Oliver  
Malaya: Kedah

Description: Returned and Services League (RSL) representative, Lieutenant Colonel (Lt Col) W S Lonnie MVO, MC (left), shakes hands with 1/3028 Private (Pte) Don Wallace of Caloundra, Qld (centre). Watching on is 2/8678 Pte Owen Bobbin of Wentworthville, NSW (right). Both soldiers are from B Company (B Coy), 2nd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment (2RAR). Lt Col Lonnie is visiting all the Australian troops stationed in Malaya as part of his RSL duties.

The vehicle is a British Daimler Dingo scout car, and is the command vehicle of Major G H Bales, Officer in charge of B Coy 2RAR. Pte Wallace is the driver and Pte Bobbin, leaning on the twin Brens is the gunner. Pte Wallace also served in Korea with 1st Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment (1RAR) from 1954-1955.  
January 1956



Image courtesy of <http://cas.awm.gov.au>  
Photographer - Hobson, Phillip Oliver  
Malaya: Kedah

Description: Informal group portrait of 2/2818 Mechanic Craftsman John Singleton, of Lane Cove, NSW (left), 2/8828 Private (Pte) Ron Lawler, of Revesby, NSW (centre), and 6/991 Pte Laurie Marks, of Hobart, Tas (right), all from 2nd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment (2RAR), working on the engine of a Daimler Dingo scout car F205465 17 ZS 73 which is parked in a rubber plantation.

This vehicle, with the British Army Registration Number 17ZS73, is used to provide convoy protection for the troops of 2RAR as they move to and from positions in their pursuit of Communist terrorists in the jungle of Southern Kedah. Pte Marks was later accidentally injured during his time in Malaya  
January 1956



Image courtesy of <http://cas.awm.gov.au>  
Photographer - Hobson, Phillip Oliver  
Malaya: Kedah

Description: Informal group portrait of 5/2843 Private (Pte) Derek Evans, of Wyalkatchem, WA, Pte Max Martin, of Wilston, Qld and 3/410121 Pte Norm Simpson, of Merrigum, Vic, all from Support Company, 2nd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment (2RAR), having a meal beside a creek in a rubber plantation in Southern Kedah.

A Dodge one ton truck and a Daimler Dingo armoured car are parked near where the Company has set up camp in the background. There are two Number 5, Short Magazine Lee Enfield (SMLE), jungle carbines on the ground near the soldiers.

29 January 1956



Image courtesy of <http://cas.awm.gov.au>  
Photographer - Hobson, Phillip Oliver  
Malaya: Perak  
July 1956

Description: Lieutenant General (Lt Gen) Sir Henry Wells, KBE, CB, DSO, Chief of the General Staff Australian Army, travelling in convoy from Sungei Siput to Salak North in Perak, about to pass a check point which is controlled by traffic lights. He is conducting a tour of all Australian military installations in Malaya. Lt Gen Wells is probably travelling in the second vehicle - a sedan with three stars and a flag on the bonnet.

The convoy is being escorted by a Daimler Dingo scout car, armed with twin Bren guns (lead vehicle), an Alvis Saracen, armoured personnel carrier (fourth vehicle) followed by a Daimler armoured car at the rear. Further back, a car and a Landrover also follow the convoy.



Image courtesy of Nigel Watson / Jimmy Monte (late)  
Photographer - Jimmy Monte  
Malaya

Description: The above photographs were taken of car F47427, 26 ZS 97 in Malaya.  
The Alsatian dog had a kennel on the back of the dingo! And they used the him to flush out the CT's  
(he was very good at it seemingly).

It is also reported that they fitted the twin Brens on a pod at high level that it was able to be operated 360  
degrees from below the armour to spray the bush with fire

This was possible by the manufacture of special post and drop handles.

Circa 1950's



Image courtesy the internet, source unknown

Photographer: Unknown  
Malaya:

Description: It is thought that this is one of the cars provided to the Federation Army by the British government prior to the country becoming independent. This is hinted at by the lack of divisional or tac markings and lack of British WD issue numbers.



Image courtesy of Life

Photographer: Unknown  
Malaya:

Description: It is thought that the tanker behind the escorting Dingo is spraying defoliant onto the trees to provide additional visibility to vehicles using the road. This would lessen the risk of ambush by terrorists.



Squadron recovering a ditched Daimler armoured car commanded by Lieutenant Mark Burns. The repair bill came to Mark Burns later took part in the film *The Charge of the Light Brigade*, proving that he was better on four feet than four wheels!



Photos courtesy of John Plumb

Photographer: Unknown

Description: The 11th\_Hussars recover a Daimler Armoured Car lost down a ravine,



Photos courtesy of Simon Hamon  
Photographer: Unknown

Description: At work on an army scout car 17ZS73 at Taiping are Driver Alan Kirby (left), from Yorkshire and signalman Ronald Pleyton, of the Australian Army, from Victoria.  
November 1957



Photos courtesy of Andrew Morgan  
Photographer: Unknown  
Description: Daimler scout cars 03Z570 and 12Z508 in Malaya.  
Date: not known.





Photos courtesy of Internet & Simon Hamon  
Photographer: Unknown. Description: Daimler scout car F206059 03ZS26 Malaya.  
Date: not known.



Photos courtesy of Ferdinand VanBoomen  
Photographer: Unknown. Description: Daimler scout car F207555 84ZR96 Malaya.  
Date: not known.



Photos courtesy of Internet & Ferdinand VanBoomen

Photographer: Unknown

Description: Daimler armoured F208282 84ZR80 car stops to inspect work at a native labour camp Malaya.

Date: October 1959.



Photos courtesy of LCpl Lance Cruse  
Photographer: LCpl Lance Cruse  
Description: Dingo Scout car.



Photos courtesy of P McCarthy  
Photographer: Unknown  
Description: Dingo Scout car (reputedly 00ZS00) and inspection by Anthony Eden  
Date: 1949



Information to be researched further

13/18 Hussars were based in Malaya and vehicles serviced by, 2 inf workshop REME Taiping  
Derrack

2nd Guards Brigade signal squadron used dingo's, confirmed by Signalman John Eggleton.

1st Bn Royal West Kent's used Dingo's in 'Kuala Coo' & 'Boo Buruo' 52-54 ?

Daimler armoured car 84ZR62 used in Malaya.

Daimler Scout car 00ZS59 H/T used by 1 KDG in Malaya