

# The Malaysian Emergency: a war with and without bullets<sup>1</sup>

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SUMMARY: The Malaysian Emergency is an almost forgotten part of Britain's colonial past. This article presents one view – from the jungle, rather than the halls of academe or the establishment.

KEY WORDS: Conscription, discipline, war, Malaysian Emergency

And when it comes to action, put your trust in discipline and silence... Meet the enemy, therefore, in a manner worthy of your record in the past.

Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*<sup>2</sup>

The official Scots Guards version of the Malaysian Emergency tells a story of a successful if troubled campaign.<sup>3</sup> In his introduction to *Noone of the Ulu* Field-Marshal Sir Gerald Templer's version is more upbeat.<sup>4</sup> Doug Newnes, a regular soldier who served from 1948–1951 tells a different tale. This is his story, faithfully recorded by his son in a series of discussions poring over a faded photo album. These talks are a tale in themselves: the story of a son and father who, finally, sat

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1. This is an extract from *Malaya* published by Real Press, 2019.

2. Thucydides (1954). *The Peloponnesian War. Book Two*. Warner R (trans). Harmondsworth: Penguin (p183).

3. Erskine D (1956). *The Scots Guards: 1919-1955*. London: William Clowes & Sons Limited.

4. Holman D (1984). *Noone of the Ulu* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

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Doug Newnes was a guardsman, dad, gardener, factory worker, mechanic, drummer and car lover. He died shortly after writing an account of his small part in the Malaysian Emergency.

Craig Newnes is an author, musician and retired Consulting Critical Psychologist. His latest books are *The Billy and Bonzo Stories* and *A Critical A-Z of Electroshock*, both from Real Press.