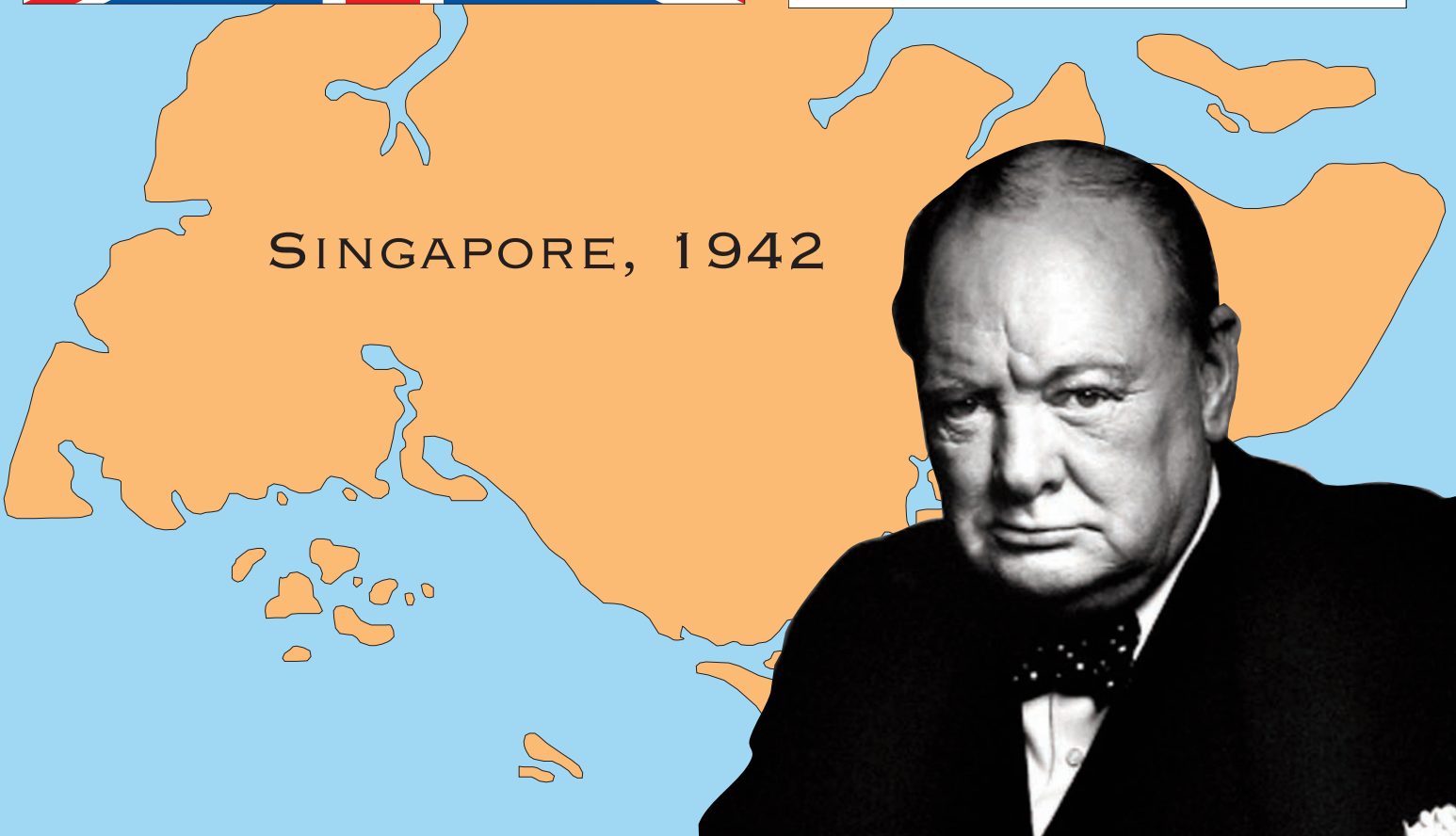
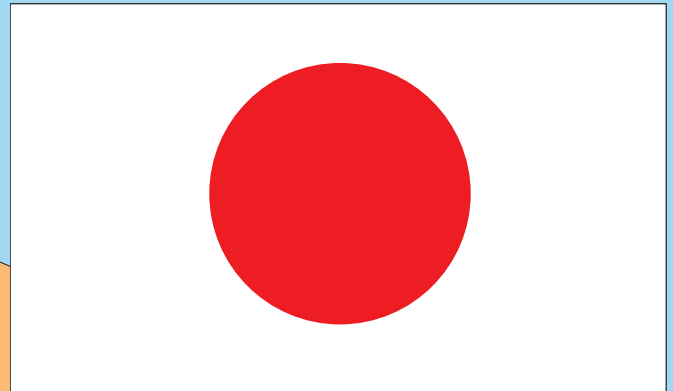
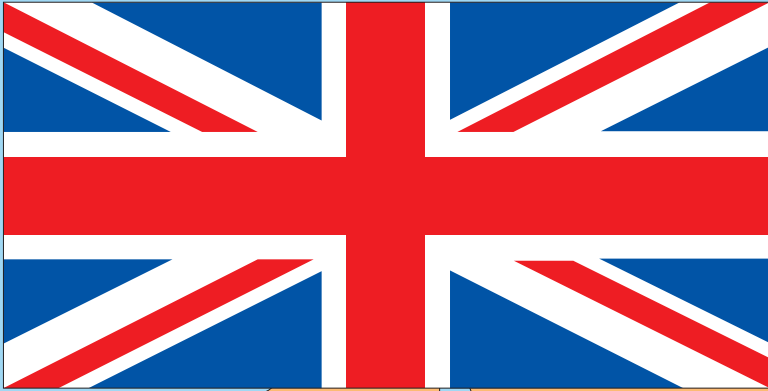




# MEMO



**“The battle must be fought to the bitter end...  
Commanders and senior officers should  
die with their troops.”**

**-Winston Churchill, 10th February 1942**

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## A Message from the Executive Director.



Greetings from the Churchill Memorial! I hope this, Fall, edition finds you all well. We had a busy summer here in Fulton with many new visitors coming through the new Winston S. Churchill: a Life of Leadership Gallery. As always, we would like to see more but we are beginning to reap the benefits of a more concerted effort to promote our existence and our wonderful institution. We have actively tried to recruit more tour companies to bring groups to Fulton as well as to better announce our presence through the employment of two prominent billboards on Interstate 70, the main cross-state highway in Missouri. (see pictures below). These efforts combined with much free media (television, print and radio) and judicious use of resources for paid advertising is showing results.

We also have a much improved website, [www.churchillmemorial.org](http://www.churchillmemorial.org), which will continue to evolve over the course of the coming year. We aim to begin a regular electronic bulletin of events and news. To facilitate that we, of course, require email addresses of interested parties so I encourage you all to provide your email address when you renew your annual Friends' membership or simply go to [www.churchillmemorial.org/go/email](http://www.churchillmemorial.org/go/email), and I will add you to the list of recipients! Our new Education Coordinator, Mandy Crump, has been very busy since joining the Memorial team and she is working on getting as many school children to the Memorial as is possible and also to get Churchill to them as well. Her 'Educational Update' can be found on page 5. This will be a regular feature in forthcoming Memos. If you are connected to a school or can help us to contact teachers who might be interested in what our education programs have to offer please contact Mandy.

We are currently working on a collaborative project with the Churchill College Archives Centre at Cambridge. This will involve the conception and co-curation of a major exhibition looking in some detail at the origins and impact of the Sinews of Peace address utilizing documents in the Churchill archives themselves. I will have more details of this in the future.

I wish you a happy fall!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rob Havers'.

Rob Havers  
Executive Director



Billboard on Interstate 70



# SAVE THE DATE

## Victorian Christmas 2007

Begins November 15!  
 Kettledrum Tea 10 am – 2pm  
 5 pm – 8 pm cocktails and shopping  
 Admission is FREE (November 15th only)

Victorian Christmas runs November 15 – January 1, 2008



### Credits

**On the Cover:** Winston Churchill's famous exhortation was part of a longer telegram, sent at 1:20 am on the morning of 10th February, to General Wavell. Sir Martin Gilbert quoted the text as follows: "There must at this stage be no thought of saving troops or sparing the population.' Churchill telegraphed to Wavell. 'The battle must be fought to the bitter end at all costs.' Commanders and senior officers, he added, 'should die with their troops'...'the whole reputation of our country and our race is involved.'"

Quoted from Martin Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill: Road to Victory, 1941-45*, p. 54.

#### Special thanks to:

John Hensley, *Archivist/Curator,*  
*Churchill Memorial*

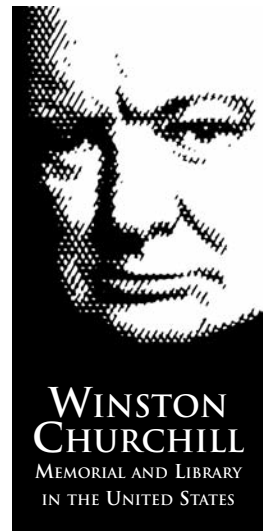
Amanda Crump, *Educational Coordinator,*  
*Churchill Memorial*

Submit suggestions and comments to:  
[memo@westminster-mo.edu](mailto:memo@westminster-mo.edu) or

The Winston Churchill Memorial and Library  
 in the United States  
 501 Westminster Avenue  
 Fulton, MO 65251

Visit our website at  
[www.churchillmemorial.org](http://www.churchillmemorial.org)

For more information on the Churchill  
 Memorial and Library in the United States  
 please call (573) 592-5324.



## Breakfree at the FDR Museum!

On Friday 15 June the FDR Presidential Library and Museum unveiled a new addition to their collection, a magnificent Churchill Bust. The occasion was a double celebration as it also marked a re-dedication of the wonderful Breakfree sculpture, the work of one of Governors, Edwina Sandys. Breakfree is, of course, the sister piece to our own Breakthrough and its center piece features the two cut-out figures of a man and a woman taken from Breakthrough. The occasion was followed by a dinner and was attended by Edwina Sandys and her husband Richard Kaplan as well as Aurelia Nemon- the daughter of the late, great sculptor, Oscar Nemon, as well as Dan Myers from the Churchill centre and Alan Collins the British Consul General from New York amongst others. I would encourage you all to make the trip to Hyde Park, when in NY State and to see both the bust and Breakfree as well as the Presidential Library and museum there.



Above: Rob Havers, Edwina Sandys, Cynthia Koch; Director of the FDR Library, Christopher Breiseth; President and CEO of the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute),

Left: Hans Janitschek, Edwina Sandys and Richard Kaplan in front the Breakfree sculpture

## Educational Programming Updates



Just rounding out my second month, I have been working on a variety of projects focusing on getting the word out to Missouri schools and organizations about the Memorial's excellent education program. Right now, our focus is on schools in Audrain, Boone, Callaway, Cole, St. Charles Co., St. Louis Co., St. Louis City, and Warren Co. We hope that students will enjoy their experience and will want to come back year after year. To make this a success, our lesson plans gear towards fourth through 12th grades. Depending on the grade level, students will experience three themes representative of Churchill's life and achievements. Elementary students will learn about Churchill's life and times. Middle school student will learn about his wit and wisdom. High school students will learn about his leadership skills.

One of the goals for the Memorial's education program is to provide a place for the local community to come and learn about themselves and their lives through Churchill. As a native of Fulton, I believe we can create an excellent model for which other Missouri cities and towns can strive to replicate. As a small-town community, Fulton provides the backdrop for what can be a successful community-school relationship. Local citizens, business owners, and professionals can all commit to the furthering education of our children. Taking what we have in the community, such as the Memorial, and presenting it to the students in a meaningful and constructive way, we can help connect students to the "real world" and help build community pride.

My focus for this fall and winter is to make contact, through e-mail, phone calls, or site visits, with 790 public and private schools within our 8 county radiuses. Once the CDs are finished, I will ship them off to these schools. By May 2008, I would like for roughly 160 of those schools to have visited or have scheduled a visit to the Memorial. This is an ambitious feat but I am willing to strive for this goal. Other activities that I am working on include speaking to various local organizations (including the Fulton Rotary Club and Fulton Kiwanis Club). Statewide organizations I would like to meet with include the Missouri National Education Association, Missouri State Teacher Association, Families for Home Education, and the Missouri Council for the Social Studies.

Rob and I had the opportunity to attend this year's 13th Annual Character Education Conference in St. Louis, MO. Characterplus, a company within the umbrella corporation Cooperating School Districts (CSD) of Greater St. Louis, sponsored this conference. At this conference, Rob gave a short speech regarding the Memorial's educational opportunities to approximately 800 teachers, 400 of which were from Missouri. This was a great opportunity to reveal our curricula. I appreciate the help and enthusiasm of Liz Gibbons, Executive Director of Characterplus, as well as the rest of her staff. We hope next year to obtain a booth at this conference to have a more one-on-one conversation with the teachers. I hope also to have the opportunity to present at one of CSD's teacher workshops. This workshop is for the St. Louis Parkway school district. I will be in contact with the coordinator, Liz Morrison, next month to confirm.

Besides marketing the education programs to area schools this fall, I would also like to attend a few professional conferences, including the Association of Midwest Museums (AMM) Annual Conference and the Missouri State Teachers Association (MSTA) Convention. Attending the AMM conference provides a great opportunity for me to connect with other cultural institutions as well as to learn more about the museum field. Our goal for the MSTA convention is to promote our education curricula by obtaining an exhibit space and possibly giving a seminar.

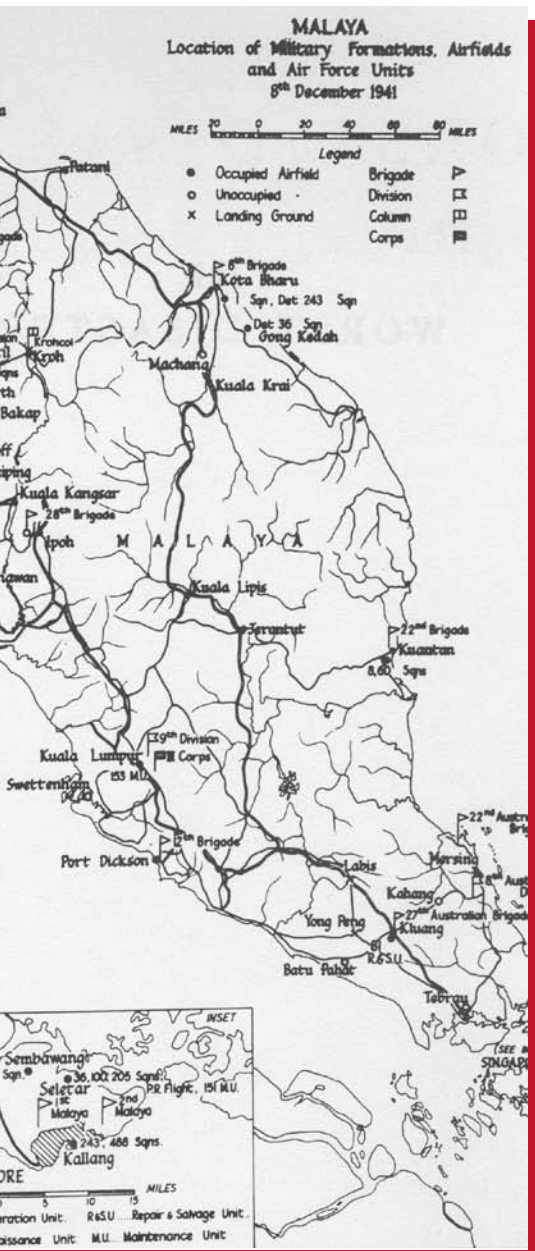
We have several projects in their preliminary stages. First, we are working with Courtney Swan, Westminster's Director of Community Action and Service-Learning, to create special community outreach tours for three local DYS/DFS organizations – Rosa Parks, FTC, and Girls Town. These tours will consist of a shortened guided tour followed by time where the teenagers can explore on their own. The Women's Center on campus has also come to us with the idea of a leadership camp for underprivileged high school women. This camp would include a tour of the Memorial and history on Churchill, highlighting the strong, influential women in Churchill's life. Both projects are a great opportunity to bring together different sectors of the community.

We have a lot of work to do, but we can succeed. I look forward to the rest of the year!

~ Mandy

Amanda Crump, *Educational Coordinator*  
(573) 592-6242  
crumpa@churchillmemorial.org

# Winston and the Fortress That Never Was



Writing a note to a member of his “syndicate” of assistants as his memoir-history, *The Second World War*, took shape, Churchill noted that no one in London seemed clear in December 1941 exactly what effect Malaya’s northeast monsoon season would have on military operations there, adding “it is not to our credit.” The inattention and lack of accurate information on a key matter that he highlighted could well stand both as a summary of Singapore’s real place in British strategy in 1940-41 and an explanation for the debacle of February 1942, which Churchill succinctly and accurately labeled “the worst disaster” in British military history. As Prime Minister and Minister of Defence during those years, it would therefore seem both logical and appropriate to assign Churchill the prime responsibility for Singapore’s fall. Nothing, however, about the Singapore disaster is quite that straightforward.

In judging Churchill’s personal contribution to the 1941-42 disaster in the Far East, it is important to keep in mind the situation he inherited when he became prime minister. British strategy for the defense of its Far Eastern interests and possessions had been based for two decades on the most optimistic of assumptions. As those assumptions were eroded by implacable reality, this strategy gradually became an exercise in bluff and hoping for the best, long before Churchill moved into Downing Street.

Confronting a radically altered strategic landscape after World War I, successive British governments took a series of decisions that mark the starting point of the road to February 1942. In the face of both financial constraint and American pressure, London agreed in the 1922 Washington treaties to limits on the size of the Royal Navy. At the same time, again under American (and Canadian) pressure, the British dropped their 1902 alliance with Japan. That country had henceforth to be considered a potential enemy (indeed, the Admiralty viewed it in this light well before the end of World War I).

The conundrum of how to defend a global empire with a one-ocean navy was neatly resolved by the creation of a major fleet base on the north shore of Singapore Island, a base to which the Royal Navy could redeploy from its normal Atlantic and Mediterranean stations to confront a Japanese threat to Britain’s Asian interests and possessions or to Australia and New Zealand, both still depending on Britain for external security. It was, on paper, a neat solution – with a fatal flaw. It assumed that when an Asian-Pacific threat arose, the Royal Navy would be free to execute the “main fleet to Singapore” strategy. That in turn assumed European tranquility. But what if a European threat pinned the Royal Navy down in the Atlantic and Mediterranean? Despite the fact that such a situation would create precisely the conditions in which Japan would be more likely to turn hostile, there was a tacit agreement in both London and the Pacific Dominions not to raise this inconvenient fact. Everyone agreed to pretend that it would be, as the show business adage has it, all right on the night.

Churchill was a member of successive British cabinets during the time when the Singapore strategy took shape, and he therefore bears some of the responsibility for its excessive optimism. Europe – and the Far East – of course looked relatively placid in the Twenties, so perhaps the optimism seemed more soundly based than it does to us. The gruesome decade of the Thirties (which Churchill, of course, spent out of office) rapidly exposed the problem, however. German rearmament after 1933 led the Committee of

Imperial Defence in London to designate the new Third Reich as the principal threat Britain faced; estrangement from Italy after 1936 deepened the threat. At the same time it came to seem to British strategic planners that maintaining Britain's position in the Mediterranean and Middle East would be crucial in any new European conflict. Singapore still formally ranked second only to the United Kingdom itself on the empire's strategic priorities list (and would continue to do so), but its real position was suffering a slow, unacknowledged erosion. The "period before relief" – the time during which the Singapore garrison was expected to hold out – ominously lengthened until by 1939 the original seventy days had become six months. At the same time Japan, now dominated by its aggressive and expansionist military, became steadily more menacing, particularly after the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war in 1937 put it on a potential collision course with both Britain and the United States.



Maj. General Percival (far right) General Officer Commanding (GOC) Malaya walks to General Yamashita's headquarters to negotiate the surrender of Singapore- what Churchill would later call "the worst disaster in British Military History".

Though he was in the "wilderness" and without influence on military policy, Churchill fully concurred with this change in the relative weights of Singapore and the Mediterranean in British strategic thinking, writing to Neville Chamberlain in March 1939 that "on no account" must Britain weaken its Mediterranean position even if it meant "losses and punishment" in the Far East. This clearly remained his point of view when he returned to the Admiralty in September 1939 and then succeeded Chamberlain as prime minister at the most perilous moment in Britain's modern history.

In June 1940, with disaster in every direction, Churchill ruled – in the face of suggestions that the Mediterranean should be abandoned – that the British position there would be held. This was the final nail in the coffin of "main fleet to Singapore." Matters could not simply be left at that, however. For a generation Australia and New Zealand had been told that Singapore guaranteed their security. Now Singapore's "time before relief" had become indefinite – just as the two Dominions were preparing to send most of their first-line troops to the Middle East (ultimately New Zealand's sole division and three of Australia's available four served there). Something clearly had to be done, and in August 1940 something was. In a major strategic review, which Churchill accepted, the British Chiefs of Staff shifted responsibility for the defense of Singapore (now recognized to require the defense of the whole Malay peninsula) from the Royal Navy to the RAF. Even though London and the local commanders in the Far East were never able to agree on exactly how many aircraft would be needed to defend Singapore, the RAF began an extensive program of airfield construction the length and breadth of Malaya – and did so without troubling to consult the army, which would nonetheless be expected to defend them. But those airfields were destined to remain largely unoccupied. The RAF could no more spare aircraft from the European war than the Royal Navy could spare ships. When Japan attacked, less than half the number of aircraft prescribed by the Chiefs of Staff as necessary for the defense of Singapore were available in the Far East.

Few of those available aircraft were modern; many were museum pieces.

After the August 1940 strategic review, the whole question of how Malaya and Singapore were to be defended sank into a kind of limbo in London. There was certainly no dearth of other serious matters requiring attention: the battles of Britain and the Atlantic, the invasion threat, the Blitz, the deepening war in the Mediterranean and the Middle East, fraught negotiations to draw in American support, and finally, after the strategic thunderclap of June 1941, the need to aid in every possible way Russian resistance. It was fatally easy to ignore the whole issue of the preparedness of Malaya and Singapore for a war that, with luck, would never come. To implement the August 1940 strategy, a retired Air Chief Marshal was reactivated and sent to Singapore as commander-in-chief, Far East, with minimal staff and incomplete powers. Thereafter the prime minister brushed aside all attempts to raise the issue of the adequacy of British defenses in the Far East. The Australian prime minister, visiting London in the late winter of 1941, was assured that Malaya's ration of mediocre American fighter aircraft (rejected by the RAF for use in Europe) would be perfectly adequate deployed against the Japanese. (Complacent assumptions about western superiority and bad intelligence were both at work here.) The Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Sir John Dill, attempted to raise the issue of Far Eastern defense preparations with the prime minister in the spring of 1941 and was dismissed with a withering minute. (In

fairness to Churchill, Dill's credit with the prime minister had been dwindling for some time.) At one point in a discussion of resource distribution, Churchill minuted "Malaya can wait." It is clear that the prime minister's own policy for defending the Far East was to commit the bare minimum to it and rely on the deterrent power of the American Pacific fleet to restrain Japan. It is also clear that he was not adverse to soothing Australian anxieties by giving assurances he did not actually expect to have to redeem – indeed, ones he knew that Britain at that moment could not redeem.



The surrender of Singapore is signed! General Tomoyuki Yamashita, commander of the Japanese forces in Malaya can be seen, seated, at 3rd left. Yamashita's success earned him the nickname 'Tiger of Malaya'. His alleged inability to control his troops during the Malayan campaign- during which time several massacres of allied personnel and civilians were carried out earned a trip in the gallows in February 1946. Second from the right is Percival himself. The table on which the surrender was signed can be found in the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. The surrender was signed in the old Ford Motor company factory on Bukit Timah road. The factory still stands there today.

During the eighteen months between the fall of France and the Japanese attack, London's inattention was further compounded by the growth of a fundamental misconception that took root in Churchill's mind (and not in his alone) about the nature of Singapore's defenses. Singapore had been – and continued to be – described as an "impregnable fortress" although it was not, and had never been, designed to be such. It was, rather, a naval base with formidable coastal batteries guarding against seaborne assault (legend would have it that "the guns pointed the wrong way" but legend is wrong; most of the guns had all-round traverse and could fire at inland targets – but by 1941 that was irrelevant). To defend the island against overland assault from the north required the defense of the entire Malay peninsula. Should an attacking army arrive in southern Malaya, it would have to be stopped well north of the narrow Straits of Johore that separate the Malay peninsula from Singapore Island, both to protect the mainland reservoirs that supplied the island's drinking water and because the naval base on the north shore of the island would be rendered immediately untenable if an enemy controlled the north side of the straits. Defenses on the north side of the island had therefore never been part of the Singapore defense scheme. Nonetheless the image became fixed not only in the public mind, but in Churchill's and that of many others in Whitehall, of a true fortress, able to meet attack from any direction. This seems to have been the result of inattention, difficult as that may be to credit. Lieutenant General Sir Henry Pownall (a very able staff officer and later a key figure in Churchill's syndicate of assistants on his war memoir) said after the war that during his tours at the War Office in 1938-39 and then as vice chief of the Imperial General Staff in 1941 he could remember no discussion of Singapore's landward defenses. Certainly Churchill thought of it as a real fortress. His shrewd and very able chief staff officer, "Pug" Ismay, admitted in the first draft of his postwar memoir that he did as well (an admission that was dropped from the final published version). This misperception – still hard to understand except as a product of the terrible pressures of 1940-41 on everyone in London – was only the last of a long series of mistaken assumptions underpinned by comforting illusions that paved the road to Singapore's fall.

In early December 1941 British defenses in the Far East thus consisted of an insufficient number of aircraft scattered over a great many airfields, defending an empty naval base; those airfields in turn were protected by a garrison strong in numbers but composed of newly raised, completely inexperienced Indian Army formations that were weak in leadership, training, equipment, and cohesion – and all presided over by a weak, divided command structure. At the last minute, however, an "Eastern Fleet" had arrived, sent largely at Churchill's initiative in the hopes both of deterring Japan and of showing Australia and New Zealand that Britain stood by its promises. Despatching the two ships was a gamble Churchill soon – and lastingly – came to regret.

When the Japanese struck on December 8, they rapidly shredded not only British defenses but every assumption on which British strategy was based. The U.S. Pacific fleet was eliminated as a factor immediately; the RAF was driven from its airfields in northern Malaya in the first forty-eight hours; the army, crippled by tactically unsound dispositions forced on it by those ill-sited airfields, was rapidly beaten in detail and tumbled into disorganized retreat. The "Eastern Fleet" was sunk on December 10 – the first time that capital ships, underway and thus able to maneuver and fight back, had been sunk by aircraft (an event that, more than Pearl Harbor, marked the end of the battleship era). For Churchill, the loss of Prince of Wales and Repulse and the death of Admiral Sir Tom Phillips, whom he knew and liked, was one of the bitterest moments of the war (years later, when writing his memoirs, he was still dictating notes defending Phillips's handling of his ships). Churchill now had to face not only the wreckage of British strategy in the Far East but also the increasingly vocal anxieties of his Australian allies and the demands of his long-sought but very assertive American partner.





The prime minister spent late December and early January in Washington, hammering out a series of agreements that shaped the first stage of the Anglo-American war effort. Containing Japan while focusing on Germany was the core decision. The powerful U.S. Army Chief of Staff, General George Marshall, pushed the idea of a unified American-British-Dutch-Australian command (ABDACOM) in the Far East and suggested General Sir Archibald Wavell, the commander-in-chief, India, as its head. Churchill could have had few illusions about ABDACOM's prospects, and he had already sacked Wavell once. Nonetheless, he found it politic to agree to both American suggestions. He also came face-to-face with a Washington reality that he would henceforth have to keep continuously in mind. If he were to summarize in one word what he learned in Washington, he later told Wavell, that one word would be "China."

When the Japanese landed on Singapore Island and the end was clearly near, Churchill sent a message to Wavell ordering a "last man, last round" defense, pointing to the American stand at Bataan and the Russian counteroffensive to save Moscow and telling Wavell that British martial honor was at stake. With a million civilians behind his rapidly crumbling lines and water supplies failing, however, the hapless British commander in Singapore, Lieutenant General Arthur Percival, had no realistic option but the surrender he signed on February 15, 1942, in the glare of Japanese cameramen's lights – the moment when the British Empire in Asia began to die.

Dealing with the Americans was complicated for the prime minister by an irruption of Australian anger while he was staying at the White House. Existing tensions over the use of Australian troops in the Middle East were compounded by the unfolding disaster in Malaya (which to Australians was not the "Far East" but the "Near North"), where their last field force division was deployed. On December 27 John Curtin, the Australian prime minister, published an open letter in the Melbourne Herald threatening to repudiate British strategic leadership for American. Churchill was henceforth on notice that military defeat would set off a major crisis in Anglo-Australian relations.

When he returned to London to face a restive parliament, Churchill had immediately to cope as well with the next major Far Eastern shock, this one administered by a message from Wavell explaining the true state of Singapore's defenses. This was swiftly followed by another major row with Australia as the prime minister tried to adjust British strategy to the now likely prospect of Singapore's early fall. The British 18th Division had been on its way to the Middle East when Japan attacked. It was then placed at Wavell's disposal and rerouted to Singapore. When the scales fell from Churchill's eyes and he realized that Singapore was, in his pungent phrase, "a battleship without a bottom," he was first furious with his staff for failing to explain the true situation to him and then seized by the realization that diverting the 18th Division to Rangoon to assist in the defense of Burma might preserve America's cherished link to China, the "Burma Road." It was a reasonable decision in the circumstances, but the prime minister reckoned – as he so often did – without the Australians. When Curtin's government got wind of the proposal, they pronounced it an "inexcusable betrayal." In his memoirs, Churchill would deny that this was decisive, but clearly it was. The 18th Division steamed on, most of it reaching Singapore only weeks before the final surrender.

Of course, afterwards there was a great deal of explaining to do. Churchill felt that there ought to be a Royal Commission on the fall of Singapore – after the war. When that moment came, he was out of office. Clement Attlee, who had been a key member of Churchill's wartime government, explored the idea in 1946. When, however, the Chiefs of Staff committee's Joint Planning Staff pointed out that it would be impossible to confine any such grand inquest only to what happened in Malaya and on Singapore Island and that the whole question of strategy and priorities as well as the allocation of forces – London's role, in short – would have to be discussed as well, Attlee's cabinet decided to leave that can of worms unopened. When Churchill returned to office in late 1951, he let Attlee's decision stand. Meanwhile he had begun writing his memoirs.



Victorious Japanese troops march through Singapore town.

Although in private notes written for his syndicate of assistants he was both very frank – and unrepentant – about his wartime priorities, the chapters in *The Grand Alliance* and *The Hinge of Fate* that dealt with the Malayan campaign and the fall of Singapore, largely written by Pownall, focused on what the local commanders did, or failed to do. (This was a tactic that the Joint Planning Staff report had, in fact, suggested as a way of preventing any inquiry from becoming embarrassingly broad – Churchill may never have seen the report, but he understood the technique). Churchill was, however, too honest and too respectful of history to try to deny his own responsibility, but one must go well beyond his account – and much farther back in time – to understand what actually caused “the worst disaster.”

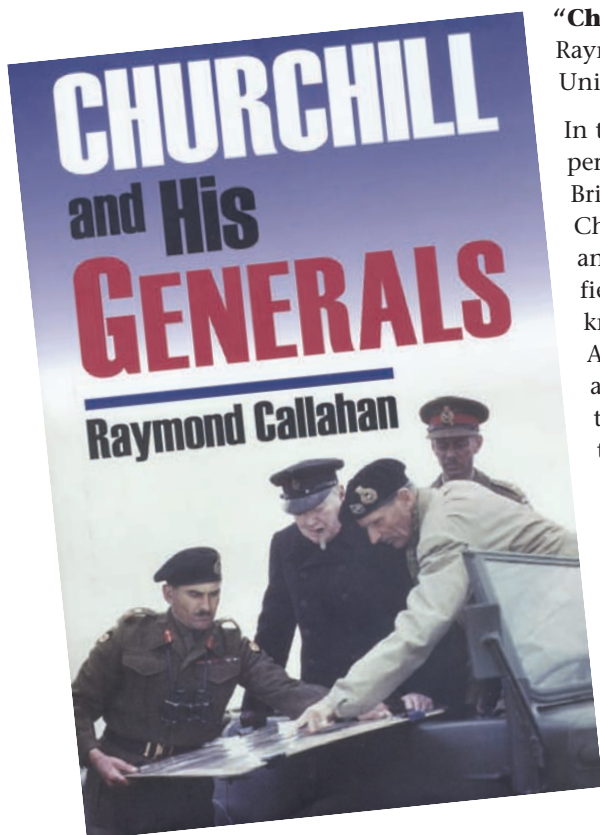
The policy followed by successive British governments after 1919 of trying to sustain a global empire with inadequate resources became, from the early Thirties on, unsustainable. By 1939 it was a gigantic bluff. Churchill assumed power in circumstances that made it imperative to focus on the European struggle where Britain’s very existence was at stake. Churchill saw this clearly and enforced the priority of the European war ruthlessly. In the Far East, bluff – and hope that America would deter or divert Japan – was the only policy available. No one in London was candid with the Australians, who seem, however, to have been almost complicit in this British lack of candor. After all, if Britain could not defend them, who would? The whole episode underscores the observation of Major General James Wolfe, the conqueror of Quebec, that “war is an option of difficulties.” Churchill does not emerge scatheless from any consideration of the 1941-42 debacle in the Far East, but his strongest defense is and will remain the one he set down in a private note while working on his memoirs – there was no other choice.



Raymond Callahan  
Newark, Delaware  
30 April 2007

*Professor Raymond Callahan is a Governor of the Churchill Memorial.*

## Book Review:



### **“Churchill and his Generals”**

Raymond Callahan,  
University Press of Kansas, 2007

In this well written and very readable book, Raymond Callahan explores the performance of the British Army in world War Two and how the principal British Army generals interacted with the ‘looming presence’ of Winston Churchill. Ray Callahan, Professor Emeritus at the University of Delaware and a Governor of the Churchill Memorial, has written extensively in the field of military history in general and British military and brings this knowledge to bear in this insightful examination of the evolution of the Army: from Imperial police force to multi-Army formation, deployed against disparate foes around the world. Then chronological approach that Callahan favors is especially useful for those unfamiliar with the topic and the book provides a useful framework of understanding in terms of whom the British fought and when. For readers unfamiliar with the British successes (and failures) against the Japanese, especially, this work will likely fill a gap in their knowledge and understanding. The exploration of Churchill’s role as Prime Minister and the discussion of his relationships with complex men like Field Marshalls Bernard Montgomery and William Slim make this a valuable addition to any Churchillian’s bookshelf. This book is thoroughly recommended to all readers of *The Memo*.

# “Churchill and the Great Republic”

## Curating A Churchill Exhibit



Second from left, Allen Packwood and third from left Daun Van Ee

*By Daun van Ee*

When it comes to museum exhibits, the Library of Congress is sometimes overshadowed by the glorious, big-budget presentations done by the Smithsonian on the National Mall. Recently, however, the great institution for which I have the honor to work assembled for public display a host of documents, photographs, drawings, sound recordings, maps, and video clips that attracted international attention and helped revive interest in one of history’s greatest and most interesting men—Winston Churchill. On February 4, 2004, President George W. Bush opened “Churchill and the Great Republic” in the Library’s magnificent Great Hall, and it has since left Washington to be viewed by enthusiastic audiences elsewhere. It has also been translated into an award-winning virtual exhibit, accessible through the Library of Congress website: [www.loc.gov/exhibits/churchill/](http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/churchill/).

The original idea came from a proposal made by Allen Packwood, Senior Archivist (and later Director) of the Churchill Archives Centre, Churchill College, Cambridge. As originally conceived, the exhibit was to be a joint effort of the Archives Centre and the Library of Congress, with a substantial degree of participation by the Churchill Center, a private non-profit group devoted to encouraging Churchill studies. The “hook” that would give it special distinction was that this would be the first comprehensive display of Churchill documents outside the British isles.

My own participation dated from my first day at work at the Library, where I had taken a position after twenty-seven years as editor of the Eisenhower papers at Johns Hopkins University. My new boss, Manuscript Division chief James Hutson, had explained that all Library of Congress exhibits had to provide at least half of the material on display. Explaining that a purposeful and thorough search of the Division’s collections would be a good way to learn about its holdings, he charged me with coming up with enough good Churchill material to meet this requirement.

My heart sank. As a result of my work as a historian and documentary editor, I knew that the principal sources for Churchill were located elsewhere. The Library’s Manuscript Division collected only American materials, and the great Presidential libraries – Truman, as well as Roosevelt and Eisenhower – would seem to be the most likely sources in the United States. Moreover, all American sources put together were almost insignificant when compared to the extraordinarily rich collections in the Churchill Archives.



Churchill hands a personal note from King George VI to FDR aboard the "Augustus," August 1941.

After I began digging, however, I realized that there was far more at the Library than I had realized; indeed, far more than anyone had ever realized.

The most promising sources, connected to the theme of the exhibit, related to World War II. Among these were the papers of W. Averell Harriman, who had been President Roosevelt's envoy to Churchill early in the war; and the diaries of General George S. Patton, who recorded his candid assessment of the British Prime Minister on many occasions.

The greatest find, however, came almost by accident. During a coffee break one day a colleague casually mentioned that he had seen a picture of Blenheim Palace, built by Churchill's illustrious ancestor, John Churchill, the 1st Duke of Marlborough. Thinking that I might be able to find something to illustrate Churchill's heritage, I went to a dark and little-visited corner of the manuscript ranges to look at an obscure, un-inventoried collection. To my surprise, I discovered about 15 previously unknown holograph letters—very important and exceptionally revealing letters—from Churchill to his cousin, the 9th Duke of Marlborough.

The most remarkable of these letters was dated September 29, 1898, when Lieutenant Churchill, then 23, had ridden in the British Army's last great cavalry charge. Another previously unknown missive had been sent in 1916 from the Western Front, at a time when Churchill's career was at its lowest ebb and he had volunteered to serve as an infantry battalion commander. The collection also included a 1706 letter from Churchill's famous ancestor, the 1st Duke of Marlborough, after his triumph – one of his greatest – on the battlefield of Ramillies.

In the end, the Library was able to provide some 70% of our more than 200 items. Many more wonderful pieces had to be put aside because there was no room. Aside from a wide variety of graphic items and evocative film clips, it turned out that my own Manuscript Division held the papers of one of Churchill's uncles (Moreton Frewen) as well as those of his daughter-in-law (Pamela Digby Churchill Hayward Harriman).

Our British counterparts at the Churchill Archives Centre supplied many other wonderful and evocative things. Among them were hand-written notes exchanged by Winston and his bride-to-be, Clementine, on the morning after he had successfully proposed to her. Of equal interest, and of more significance in the eyes of history, were the reading copies in blank verse (or "psalm" form) of some of the greatest speeches ever delivered in the English language, including this classic from a critical period of World War II:

*We shall not fail or falter. We shall not weaken or tire. Neither the sudden shock of battle nor the long-drawn trials of vigilance and exertion will wear us down. Give us the tools, and we will finish the job.*

On March 5, 1946, of course, Churchill made perhaps the best known of all his pleas for Anglo-American cooperation: "The Sinews of Peace," better known as the Iron Curtain speech. I dug into the Library's vast collection of still photographs to illustrate that great event; my colleagues in the Library's Motion Picture and Recorded Sound

branch supplied other audio-visual items for both our physical and virtual exhibits.

Developing a concept and securing display items were major steps toward putting together the exhibition, but there was still much to be done. Periodically I was asked to support efforts to secure the thousands of dollars in outside funding necessary to support the exhibit. This I was happy to do, because it enabled me to show off the treasures I and my curatorial colleagues were uncovering; it also allowed me to assess the impact of the various ideas, artifacts and images that we contemplated using. Our efforts eventually were rewarded through the generous support of John W. Kluge and the Annenberg Foundation. A major factor in sustaining the concept of the exhibition and ensuring its success was the enthusiastic participation of the Librarian of Congress, Dr. James H. Billington.



Churchill and Eisenhower, May 1944. Churchill is demonstrating his "Siren Suit."

The intellectual integrity of the Library of Congress and the seriousness of the subject mandated an application of scholarly rigor to our efforts. Following past practices, a panel of outside British and American experts was chosen to offer a critical assessment of the exhibit's themes and language. I should have anticipated that they would divide along national lines over one key issue – Churchill's

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support, or lack thereof, for the cross-Channel attack into Northwestern Europe. Our objects and explanatory captions emphasized Churchill's initial hesitations and doubts regarding this strategy; some of our British experts felt that this feature had been given undue weight. Since the exhibit was in part a commemoration of the 60th anniversary of D-Day, the question was critical, but in the end compromises in the language of the captions enabled us to satisfy everyone involved.

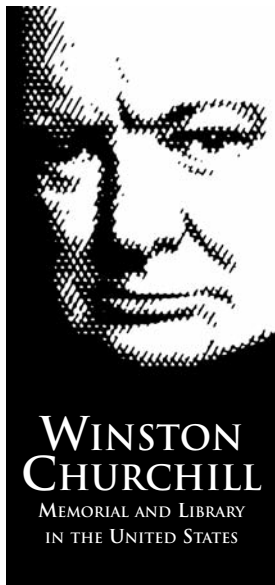


Churchill addressing the U.S. Congress, December 26, 1941.

These decisions were made under severe time constraints. Shortly after funding had been secured in May 2003, a generous offer of support by the Churchill Center allowed us to proceed with a companion book for the exhibit. At the first meeting with the Library's publication office, it was announced that Allen Packwood and I had to deliver the text for the book in three month's time. Having had experience with publication deadlines, I laughed at the thought of delivering a manuscript in so short a time with everything else that was happening – arrangements for publicity and media coverage, writing hundreds of exhibit captions, meeting with the advisory group, planning for visits by members of the Churchill family and other dignitaries, and designing the structural layout of the exhibit. I was the only one laughing, however. After much effort, Allen and I managed to complete our task in the allotted time.

There was one final worry. Shortly before we opened, a knowledgeable observer told me that one of our photograph captions, which I had written, was incorrect. We had identified a young woman leaving 10 Downing Street after the election of 1945 as Churchill's daughter; my informant said that it was probably a secretary. It was too late to change the panels before visitors poured in to view what we had created. As it happened, however, it was my great privilege to escort the very person in question (now Dame Mary, The Lady Soames) through the exhibit, and she informed us that it actually was her in the picture, albeit out of uniform and with an altered hairstyle. I felt relieved if not vindicated.

As a result of the efficiency and hard work of Irene Chambers, head of the Library's Interpretive Programs Office, and the efforts of Exhibition Director Kim Curry, everything came together in time for the scheduled unveiling early in February 2004. The President opened the exhibit with a personal appearance and a speech. A gala reception was held in the Library's magnificent Great Hall, but I was too busy showing VIPs through the exhibit to enjoy it. In fact, much of my time for the next five months was devoted to tour-guiding and lecturing about Churchill and the items we had on display. The exhibit proved to be one of the most popular ever put on at the Library of Congress, and certainly one of the most satisfying activities in my career.



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