

DARRYN CHIEW
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XXXXXX KUALA LUMPUR
MALAYSIA

CHOI TUCK WO
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STAR PUBLICATIONS (MALAYSIA) BERHAD
202, Jalan Sultan Azlan Shah
11900 Bayan Lepas
Penang, MALAYSIA

7 September 2011

Dear Sir,

In 2004, the Malaysian Government decided to honour members of the Armed Forces of the Commonwealth Countries who had served in Malaya during the Emergency and Confrontation period. This honour was in the form of the Pingat Jasa Malaysia (PJM).

In New Zealand and Australia, this medal was accepted and the recipient is allowed to proudly display this medal alongside his other medals, fondly known as “gongs” in military banter. However, the House of Lords in the United Kingdom refused to allow the PJM to be worn on parade or in public by their deserving recipients.

I recently stumbled upon a campaign called “Fight for the PJM” which seeks to lobby for permission for the PJM to be worn legally in the UK. I have had the pleasure to exchange a few emails with Mr. Barry Fleming, one of the liaison persons, who have informed me that the “official” people they spoke to referred to the medal with contempt. I strongly feel that our British friends are being denied the right to wear an honour that they have earned. It is by no means a mere shiny gong for doing nothing, as campaign medals are nothing new to the military system, and furthermore, medals have been awarded for far lesser significant events.

While on holiday in Australia in 2004, I met a friend of an Australian relative of mine who had served in Malaya. He still remembers how to speak Bahasa Malaysia, as he told me Penang was “Sungguh panas sekali” and that he had limited vocabulary as he “sudah lupa”. In the Fight4thePJM website forum, I again witnessed some British soldiers exchange a few phrases in Bahasa Malaysia. It is of no question that these gentlemen still look fondly back at their duty period in Malaya and are very proud of their PJMs.

May I appeal that more media coverage be given to this issue, so that people in Malaysia are also aware that this is happening? The mainstream media often covers news of Malaysians receiving

foreign honours, among the three most notable are Tan Sri Francis Yeoh, Datuk Jimmy Choo and Datuk Tony Fernandez being bestowed awards of the Order of the British Empire. However, little is mentioned of the reverse, except perhaps the Datukship of Shah Rukh Khan a few years back. It is high time this campaign is brought to light, and perhaps the British Government will come to their senses and allow the PJM its rightful place of honour on the chest of the deserving veterans.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours Sincerely,

(signed)

DARRYN K.Y. CHIEW

Kuala Lumpur

p.s. Barry has informed me that you may be publishing an article on this matter soon. Since I am based in Kuala Lumpur, if it is in the Penang edition of TheStar, could you kindly let me know? I noticed that certain sections of TheStar (Metro) is usually different from region to region and I don't want to miss the article. Thanks!