



# Our Man in Malaya

*Margaret Shennan*

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The career of John Davis was inextricably and paradoxically intertwined with that of Chin Peng, the leader of the Malayan Communist Party and the man who was to become Britain's chief enemy in the long Communist struggle for the soul of Malaya. When the Japanese invaded Malaya during WWII, John Davis escaped to Ceylon, sailing 1,700 miles in a Malay fishing boat, before planning the infiltration of Chinese intelligence agents and British officers back into the Malayan peninsula. With the support of Chin Peng and the cooperation of the Malayan Peoples Anti-Japanese Army, Davis led SOE Force 136 into Japanese-occupied Malaya where he operated from camps deep in the jungle with Freddy Spencer Chapman and fellow covert agents. Yet Davis was more than a wartime hero. Following the war, he was heavily involved in Malayan Emergency affairs: squatter control, the establishment of New Villages and, vitally, of tracking down and confronting his old adversary Chin Peng and the communist terrorists. Historian and biographer Margaret Shennan, born and raised in Malaya and an expert on the British in pre-independence Malaysia, tells the extraordinary, untold story of John Davis, CBE, DSO, an iconic figure in Malaya's colonial history. Illustrated with Davis' personal photographs and featuring correspondence between Davis and Chin Peng, this is a story which truly deserves to be told.



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