

THE UNIVERSITY OF PERADENIYA

ORANG RÉJIMEN : " THE REGIMENT PEOPLE "

A study of the Malays of the Ceylon
Rifle Regiment, 1827 - 1873



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A thesis presented to the University of
Peradeniya for the Degree of Doctor of
Philosophy in the Faculty of Arts

382205

October, 1984.

SYNOPSIS

This study deals with the Malay soldiers who served in the Ceylon Rifle Regiment (1827 - 1873) which was the most important native military establishment of the British colonial government in Sri Lanka.

Chapter one introduces the contemporary Malay community, and briefly examines their social, economic, and cultural situation.

Chapter two looks at the early Malay contacts with Sri Lanka with a view to ascertain whether there could be any links between the early Malay arrivals during the pre-European period and the present day Malay population of Sri Lanka.

Chapter three examines the way in which the Sri Lankan Malay community had evolved out of the various Easterner groups introduced to the island as soldiers, servants, political exiles, and others during the period of Dutch rule.

Chapter four reviews the factors which confirmed the position of the Malays under the Governorship of Frederick North as a military clan to serve the British colonial government.

Chapter five discusses amalgamation of various Ceylon regiments into one single native infantry battalion under a new title the Ceylon Rifle Regiment, in which the Malays came to play the leading role.

Chapter six spans the remaining period of the Ceylon Rifle Regiment, taking into account various ancillary establishments of the regiment which dominated the lives of the community.

Chapter seven is a commentary on the social, cultural, and economic life of the Malay soldiery, and examines the impact of the regiment life in the subsequent development of the community.

Chapter eight is retrospect with some comments on the aftermath of the disbandment of the regiment on the life of the Malays.