

SINGAPORE

Free e-book launched at scaled-down World War II memorial ceremony

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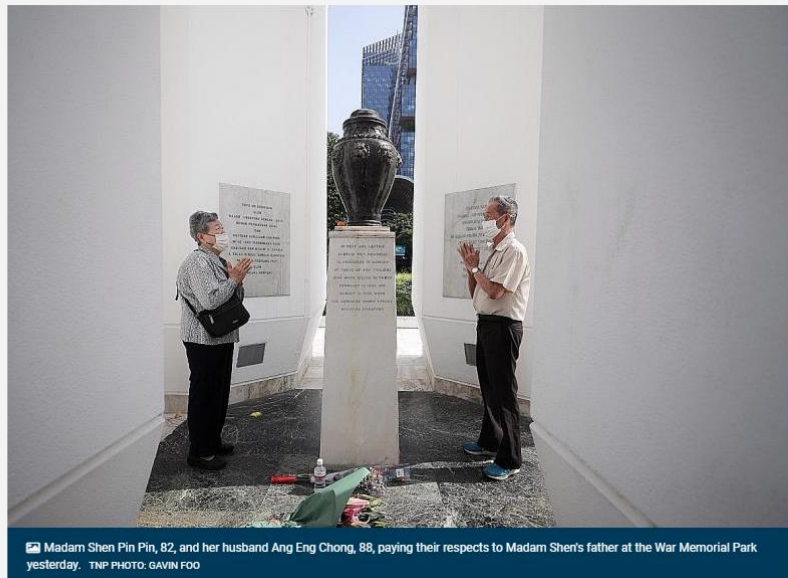
Clement Yong
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World War II veterans, families of those who died during the Japanese Occupation of Singapore and religious leaders attended a scaled-down memorial ceremony yesterday, as a free electronic book was launched to detail the sacrifices of people during the tumultuous years.

At the War Memorial Park in Beach Road, about 50 attendees split into two zones observed a minute of silence and laid wreaths in a small ceremony. In previous years, up to 1,000 participants attended.

Yesterday marked the 79th anniversary of the British surrender to the Japanese in 1942 and was also Total Defence Day.



Madam Shen Pin Pin, 82, and her husband Ang Eng Chong, 88, paying their respects to Madam Shen's father at the War Memorial Park yesterday. TNP PHOTO: GAVIN FOO

The event was the 54th commemoration service since 1967, when the memorial was unveiled by founding prime minister Lee Kuan Yew.

The hour-long ceremony was co-organised by the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCCI) and Nexus, the department responsible for total defence and national education in the Ministry of Defence. The organisers focused on keeping alive the memories of the war essential to Singapore's national narrative.

SCCCI president Roland Ng said at the ceremony: "We hope our future generations can fully understand the importance of freedom and peace because of the lessons learnt from the Japanese Occupation, reiterating the importance of staying united, defending our country and being prepared for danger in times of peace."

The SCCCI launched its 36-page e-book, *The Story Of The Civilian War Memorial*, yesterday. It contains brief information on how the memorial was erected and some stories from the war.

It is written in English and Chinese, and is aimed at the younger generation who are more distant from a war which the pioneer generation lived through and to this day are unable to forget.

Education Minister Lawrence Wong, the guest of honour, said: "As time passes, the generation that endured the occupation... will gradually fade away. It is important that we keep these memories alive.

"(The e-book) will help new generations growing up to understand how we got here, why it could have easily turned out very differently, and why Singapore is worth defending."



Madam Shen Pin Pin, 87, and her husband Ann Eng Chong, 88, paying their respects to

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by CLEMENT YONG

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clementy@sph.com.sg

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