



Never Forgotten

Vol. 5, Number 1

SPRING 2004

The Official Newsletter of the TAIWAN P.O.W. CAMPS MEMORIAL SOCIETY

The Year That Was!!!



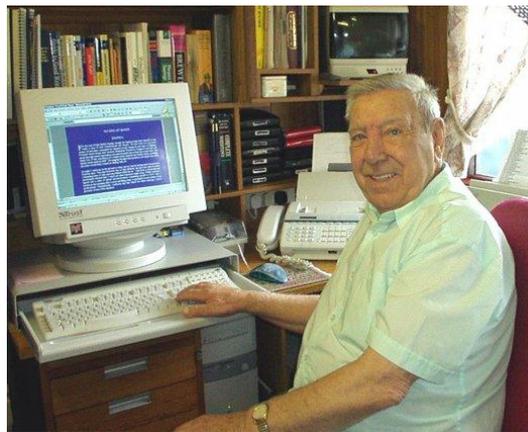
The Steeles with former guard and friends at Heito Camp



Sharing the story of Kukutsu Camp with local residents



The new Kukutsu POW Memorial



Maurice Rooney - as I will remember him



Former Taiwan POW, John Emmett

[See Photos' Stories on Page 3]

REMEMBRANCE WEEK 2004

Be sure to mark the week of November 10 – 17 on your calendars and in your date books, and plan to be with us for this great event which features a POW banquet and the memorial service at Kinkaseki. We hope that former POWs and their families will make an effort to come as we have a special program prepared for these guests. If you are interested, and for more information, please contact the Society by mail or email at the addresses shown on page 2 of this newsletter. Hope to see you in November!

**TAIWAN POW CAMPS MEMORIAL
SOCIETY**
P.O. BOX 665, YUNG HO
TAIPEI 234, TAIWAN, R.O.C.
TEL. 8660-8438 FAX. 8660-8439
E-MAIL society@powtaiwan.org

TAIWAN POW CAMPS MEMORIAL SOCIETY - BOARD OF DIRECTORS -

Michael Hurst, MBE – Society Director -
VP and General Mgr. J. Chen Enterprises Taiwan;
Writer; Historian
Stuart Saunders - President, Esdesign Industrial
Design
Jack Hsu - Supervisor. Admin Dept., SEMPO,
DORTS, Taipei City Gov't.
Prof. Jerome Keating, PhD. - Writer; Historian;
Professor
Gerard Norris - Pharmaceutical Executive

HISTORICAL ADVISORS. . .

Prof. Jack Geddes - Professor, Historian, Writer,
Missionary, Canada
Harry Blackham – former FEPOW, England

POW REPRESENTATIVES. . .

UK - vacant
Australia - Sid Dodds
USA - Geoff Monument
New Zealand - Lawrie Philpott

EX-OFFICIO. . .

Derek Marsh - Director-General, British Trade and
Cultural Office, Taipei
Frances Adamson - Representative, Australian
Industry and Commerce Office, Taipei
Charles Finny - Director, New Zealand Commerce
and Industry Office, Taipei
Ted Lipman - Director, Canadian Trade Office in
Taipei

LOGO of the TAIWAN POW CAMPS MEMORIAL SOCIETY

Our logo - a poppy cross superimposed on a map of
Taiwan - was chosen because in the fall of 1998 the
returning POWs laid poppy crosses at all the former
campsites they visited. The poppy cross is recognised
worldwide as a symbol of remembrance to war
veterans.

THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE TAIWAN POW CAMPS MEMORIAL SOCIETY. . .

- * to continue the search for survivors of
the Taiwan POW camps from 1942 – 45.**
- * to search for the locations of the
former Japanese POW camps on the
island of Taiwan.**
- * to ensure the memory of the Taiwan
POWs is not forgotten.**
- * to help with the organization of, and
participate in, the Commonwealth and
Allied memorial service for the Taiwan
POWs at Kinkaseki every November.**
- * to help educate the people of Taiwan
in a little-known part of their history.**
- * to provide information to researchers,
scholars, museums and POW groups
on the Taiwan POWs' story.**

TAIWAN POW CAMPS MEMORIAL SOCIETY ON THE 'NET !

We welcome you to visit our website. There you will
find a list of all the POW camps that were on Taiwan,
and by clicking on the name on the list, you will be able
to read more about the camps and the men who were
interned in them. We also have an Honour Roll with
the names of many of the former Taiwan POWs.

Please visit our homepage at -

www.powtaiwan.org

Please give us your comments, questions
and suggestions.

Our email address is -

society@powtaiwan.org

* * * * *

From a FEPOW . . .

“It is not necessary to exaggerate or
embellish on the stories of the Far
East Prisoner of War camps or the
men who were interned in them – the
story is unbelievable enough as it is !

2003 + . . . the Year in Review

by Michael Hurst MBE

So much has happened this past year since our last newsletter that I hardly know where to start with this report.

Beginning in February 2003 we participated in a special event to highlight the Kukutsu POW Camp in the hills south of Hsintien. The county government held an open house in the area and we were invited to share the story of the POWs and the former camp with the local community. This led to a great deal of interest in the POWs' story and a drive to get a new site established for the Kukutsu POW Memorial stone which had to be relocated due to a construction project. In the weeks and months that followed a location was found and a base for the new memorial was designed.

On February 17 this year we finally got the former Kukutsu POW Memorial stone re-mounted into the new permanent base that was constructed late last year. A ceremony to re-dedicate the newly mounted memorial stone will take place on May 16, 2004. More to come on that later.

In March we had a visit from Kent Steele and his wife Vivian from Canada. Kent's father Lt. William Paton Steele of the Royal Engineers had been a POW in the Heito Camp in the fall of 1942 for several months before being moved on to Japan where he remained for the rest of the war until liberation.

Lt. Steele had told his family that there was a guard at the Heito Camp who he thought must have been a Christian as he gave him some verses from the Bible to cheer him up one day when he was feeling particularly down and despondent. We related this story to one of the former guards we know in Pingtung and he said that it would have been him as he was the only Christian he knew of. He had felt sorry for a lot of the POWs and often tried to cheer them up or slip them a cigarette through the bamboo fence.

We had the pleasure of taking Kent and Vivian down to the Heito camp for a visit and also to meet his father's former guard. It was a wonderful time of fellowship and remembrance, and another opportunity for reconciliation which we are glad to have a part in.

On April 3rd I was informed of the sudden passing of my dear friend Maurice Rooney. It came as a real shock to me, as it was to many of our FEPOW friends. I flew to the UK to be at his funeral, which was attended by many of his friends and former POW mates. The service was very moving and while of course a sad occasion, it was also a celebration of the life of a man who was loved by so many, and who contributed so much to the happiness of his family and those he came in contact with, as well as the FEPOW community in the Norfolk area. As the UK representative for the Taiwan POW Camps Memorial Society for five years, he also made many friends with the former Taiwan POWs and their families all across the UK. I miss him so much, and there is hardly a day goes by that I don't think of him and remember his cheery smile and happy ways.

After spending a few more days in Norwich with Maurice's family and friends, I moved on to Nottinghamshire to stay with former Taiwan POW Stan Vickerstaff and his son Roger for about a week. During that

time we were able to dedicate the Taiwan POW Memorial Tree at the National Arboretum in Staffordshire (see story on page 6), and also to pay a visit to former POW Maurice Cunningham who lives in Birmingham.

I particularly wanted to see Maurice to show him some photos that I had taken of the area of the former OKA Camp that we had been trying so hard to find. Upon seeing the photos he felt that this was the area, and as it fit the description that has been given to us by other survivors of that camp as well, we now feel that at last we can confirm the location of the last camp. (See story on page 5).

Throughout the year we did further research at several of the camps – Taihoku Mosak #5, Inrin and Inrin Temporary Camps, Shirakawa Camp and Toroku Camp in September (see story on page 8). I was also privileged to address the students at Fu Ren University on two occasions to introduce them to the Taiwan POWs' story.

We also had a visit by Mr. Chang, the Head of the Academia Historica, Taiwan's highest government research institute, in the fall, seeking our co-operation in helping make the story of the Taiwan POWs known to the people of Taiwan. We are currently working on that project as well.

Then it was our annual Remembrance Week activity from November 12 – 20 with former POW John Emmett of Brampton Canada in attendance. (See story on page 4).

In the past few months we have been working with the management and staff of the new museum in Chinguashi with regards to getting the POW display up so that everyone who visits the museum will know of the POWs and their story – not only at Kinkaseki, but the other camps as well.

We are still in negotiations with regards to placing the fourth POW memorial at the site of the Heito Camp in Southern Taiwan, and continuing research on the crash site of the PB4Y-1 shot down in the sea off the southern tip of the island. In the coming months we are also planning to get more information about the camps onto our website.

Longer range projects involve further work on a permanent Taiwan POW Museum, putting our artifact collection on the website, and co-operating on the production of a documentary on the Taiwan POWs. Somewhere in all of this, I hope to continue work on the book on the Taiwan camps and the stories of the men who were interned in them, and hope to finish it by the end of the year if at all possible. So it's going to be a busy time indeed.

We are still finding former Taiwan POWs every month, and we encourage anyone who was a POW, or knows of someone – family or friend, who was, to contact us, as we want to know more about you or your loved one. Let us all work together to continue to learn more about the Taiwan POWs' story – we need the help of everyone to see that this is accomplished and that these wonderful men who gave so much are "Never Forgotten".

(Photos from some of the items mentioned in this article appear on the cover of this issue.)

REMEMBRANCE WEEK – 2003

This past November we had only one former Taiwan POW return for our Remembrance Week, reflecting the age and physical status of many of our beloved POW friends.

John Emmett from Brampton, Ontario, Canada – a member of the famed Gordon Highlanders, was our special guest and what a wonderful time we had together.

On the first day we visited Kinkaseki and Keelung Harbour - where many of the men who were first sent to the Kinkaseki and Taihoku camps, arrived in November 1942. It was also here where all the POWs who remained on Taiwan at the end of the war, departed from on their way home.

The next day was spent on local sightseeing, and Saturday morning we paid a visit to the site of the former Kukutsu Camp. John recognized many things at Kinkaseki and Kukutsu, and it must be said that he has the greatest memory for recognizing the former campsites of any POW who has returned to Taiwan in the past seven years.

John gave a moving address at the Saturday evening POW banquet sponsored by the Canadian Trade Office in Taipei and the Taiwan POW Camps Memorial Society. A variety of WWII artifacts were displayed - courtesy of the POW Society, and the British and Japanese military items and articles used by the Taiwan POWs, generated a lot of interest among those who were present. These items will form part of the future POW display at the new museum presently under construction in Chinguashi (Kinkaseki), which is scheduled to open in 2004. The evening finished off with the showing of the Canadian film "A War Story".

Sunday November 16 was anything but clear and bright, and those in attendance at the memorial service experienced the only really rainy day we have ever had for the event. Despite this it all went off very well and we had a very moving service to honour those men who sacrificed so much for our freedom. At the wreath-laying ceremony John saluted his comrades amidst the wind and the rain. Thanks to the Chinguashi Community Centre, we had a nice dry place to hold our picnic after the service.



L/Cpl John Emmett, salutes his former comrades

John had also been a POW in the Heito Camp near Pingtung in the south of the island, and so on Monday and Tuesday November 17 and 18, we made a trip down there for a look at his former place of enslavement. While there he met two of the former camp guards and a wonderful time of reconciliation took place.

Many times during his visit with us, John commented on how wonderful it was to be able to return to Taiwan and revisit the places of his former captivity again. He spoke of how it had brought him peace and closure, and how thankful he was to everyone who had made his visit such a success. We are glad he was able to make the trip and wish him well in the days to come.

DUTCH POWS ON TAIWAN...

The Dutch POWs were the third largest group of allied POWs to be held on Taiwan during WWII, after the British and the Americans.

Most of the Dutch POWs who were held here came from the Netherlands East Indies following its surrender in March 1942, and the group was largely made up of the most senior officers and also the top civilian personnel from the Dutch East Indies, including Governor van Starckenborgh.

We are pleased to report that in the past year, with the co-operation of several Dutch friends of the Society around the world, we have now found the names of all of the former Dutch POWs who were held on Taiwan.

According to official information supplied by the Dutch Government and the Dutch Veterans' Associations, there were 108 Dutch POWs held here. From various sources, we have gathered information on all of these men, and they are now all listed in the Honour Roll on our website.

This past year we also located a former Dutch POW who is living in Australia. He is the first surviving Dutch POW we have found. Previously our only other contact was with the son of Maj. Gen. Hans de Fremery, who also lives in Australia.

We want to thank Mr. Henk Nouwens, Deputy Representative of the Netherlands Trade & Investment Office in Taipei for his continued help and interest in our project, and for the great translation work he does on our behalf. We would also like to thank Mr. C.M. Leewenburgh, the only surviving Dutch POW we have found so far, for the information and remembrances he has provided. Also to be acknowledged is Mr. Nick Posthumus of the Netherlands, the great-nephew of Col. Rimke Posthumus who died while a POW on Taiwan in the Shirakawa Camp, and Mr. John Tesselaar from Ontario, Canada and his family in Holland who have been a great help as well.

These people have given us a lot of valuable assistance, and we couldn't have successfully completed our listing of all the former Dutch POWs without their dedication and efforts on our behalf.

If anyone knows of any other surviving Dutch POWs who were interned on Taiwan, or their families, please get in touch with us as soon as possible. We want them to know that they have not been forgotten!

Comings and goings...

We are sad to report that after 44 years of faithful service as a missionary, teacher, historian and community member in Taiwan, our dear friend and historical advisor Jack Geddes has left the island to return to Canada. Jack and his wife Betty have supported the Society over the past six years and we thank them for their friendship, encouragement and help. We will miss them and we wish them well in their new life. Jack will still remain on our board and serve as he can from his home back in Canada.

LIST OF TAIWAN POW CAMPS. . . all found !

1. KINKASEKI #1 (Chinguashi) - found
2. TAICHU #2 (Taichung) - found
3. HEITO #3 (PingTung) - found
4. SHIRAKAWA #4 (Chiayi) - found
5. TAIHOKU #5 MOSAK (Taipei) - found
6. TAIHOKU #6 (Taipei) - found
7. KARENKO (Hualien) - found
8. TAMAZATO (Yuli) - found
9. KUKUTSU (Taipei) - found
10. OKA (Taipei) - found
11. TOROKU - (Touliu) - found
12. INRIN - (Yuanlin) - found
13. INRIN TEMP. (Yuanlin) - found
14. TAKAO (Kaohsiung) - found
15. CHURON (Taipei) - found

UPDATE ON THE POW CAMP SEARCH PROJECT...

We are so pleased to finally be able to announce that we have found all fifteen of the former Japanese Prisoner of War camps on Taiwan.

It has taken seven years and a huge amount of time, effort, expense and work, and now one of the main tasks that we had set out to do has been completed.

Thus the second major aim of the Taiwan POW Camps Memorial Society is fulfilled, and we can now devote our time to other areas of research and the promotion of the Taiwan POWs' story.

That is not to say that we are going to forget about the camps. We have just recently completed the relocation of the former Kukutsu POW Memorial stone (see article on back page) and are continuing negotiations with the Taiwan Government and the military regarding erecting a POW Memorial near the site of the Heito Camp in the south of Taiwan. As mentioned in our last newsletter, it is taking longer than anticipated, but we have been encouraged by recent developments and are optimistic that we should be able to get the approval to erect this fourth POW memorial stone on the site of the Heito Camp sometime this year.

There is still much work that needs to be done to ensure that what went on in those camps is known and recorded for history, and that the memory of the men who were interned in those camps is not forgotten.

OKA CAMP. . . found at last

(The background on Oka Camp from our earlier issue. . .

In June of 1945, with the war going very badly for them, and Taihoku (Taipei) being constantly bombed, the Japanese POW camp HQ in Taihoku decided to "recruit" a group of POWs to go into the mountains and build huts so that men in the main camp could be transferred up there "for their safety". In fact, as it is now known, the prisoners were to be killed there when the Allies landed on Taiwan.

A party of around 100 men left Taihoku Camp #6 on June 12 and spent all day hiking up into the mountains to where the camp was to be located. They were billeted at a school while they finished the first two huts, and then they were moved into this new camp where they had to sleep on the ground in the huts and had very little food to eat

On July 2nd, 50 more men came "up the hill" to add to the already overcrowded state. A third hut was finished but the food got worse. Most of the men were sick and suffered from fatigue and beatings from the guards. By July 18 more than 100 were so sick they were unfit for work. Ten men died in the camp - from starvation and beatings, and of those who went up to OKA Camp, seven more would die within days of their return to the camp at Taihoku at the war's end.)

During the past couple of years we had found the village with the school and the temple where the ten men who died were buried, but after searching for almost three years, we could still not find the exact location of the camp. As we searched, we did find one location that seemed to be a very likely place, as it was about the only spot in the area that was large enough and level enough to house that many men.

The POWs also spoke of a stream and waterfall that ran near the camp, and there was one that flowed down the mountain just to the side of the site we found. We weren't sure this was the waterfall that the men had referred to, so last year on my trip to the UK I met with former Oka Camp survivor Maurice Cunningham and showed him photos of the area and the stream in particular. While not 100% sure, he did say that it looked like the area, and the stream was much like the one they used to wash in, so with that confirmation and since there is no other location even close to that in the whole area, we have come to the conclusion that this has to be the site of the former camp. This photo below shows an overall view of the site, which is partially farmed by a nearby local resident who knew nothing of the former POW camp.



Taiwan POWs Remembered with the Dedication of Memorial Tree at the National Memorial Arboretum. . .

Thursday April 17, 2003 was a clear bright day as former Taiwan POWs and friends gathered at the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas, Staffordshire for the dedication of the Taiwan POW Memorial Tree. The Taiwan POWs were represented in person by Stan Vickerstaff and Eric Carter and his wife Joan. Katherine Heard and Pat (Heard) Riley and her husband John represented former POW Gerry Heard who died in 1968. There were other friends present as well including Ms. Jackie Fisher, the acting Director of the National Arboretum, and Michael Hurst, Director of the Taiwan POW Camps Memorial Society in Taiwan.

The event was organized by former Taiwan POW Stan Vickerstaff and Katherine and Pat Heard. Pat and her mother visited Taiwan in 2000, and since that time she has been a tremendous inspiration and help in the work of the Society in the UK. She and Stan worked with the National Arboretum in the autumn of 2002 to see that the POW tree was planted and that everything was ready for the dedication ceremony. She contacted the local press in Derbyshire and a nice write-up appeared in the newspaper on the day of the event.

The ceremony featured a short address by Michael Hurst MBE, Director of the Taiwan POW Camps Memorial Society. He mentioned the significance of the POWs' tree - a Red Maple, and how that maple trees grow in every country that had POWs on Taiwan, including Taiwan itself, and that a "red" maple was chosen to remember the suffering and the blood that was shed for our freedom by those men.

The address was followed by the reading of a poem penned by former POW Maurice Rooney, greetings from the director of the National Arboretum, Jackie Fisher, and remarks by POWs Stan Vickerstaff and Eric Carter. A short prayer of dedication followed and the ceremony closed with the laying of poppy crosses at the foot of the tree. A wonderful time of fellowship followed the ceremony as everyone met together for a lovely dinner hosted by Pat, John and Katherine.

Now at last, the Taiwan POWs have a memorial right alongside the memorials to the men who slaved on the Thai-Burma Railway, the Sumatra Railway, and the Children and Families of Far East POWs (COFEPOW).

The Taiwan POW Memorial Tree is located at the front alongside the memorial stone to the Thai-Burma Railway POWs, with a plaque containing the following inscription placed in front of it –

"In Memory of the Taiwan Prisoners of War - those who died and those who returned"

It is hoped in the future to be able to have a small memorial stone carved from Taiwan marble – similar to the various Taiwan POW memorial stones that have been erected on the sites of some of the camps in Taiwan, placed at the base of the tree, as a permanent memorial to these wonderful men.



Above: Friends gathered at the Dedication Ceremony

Below: (l to r) Katherine Heard, Stan Vickerstaff, Pat Riley, Jackie Fisher – National Arboretum Director, and Eric Carter



The Taiwan POW Memorial Tree

Collecting for a Taiwan POW Museum... by Michael Hurst MBE

“Collectors are the preservers of history and passionate seekers of knowledge”

When I first started visiting the site of the former Kinkaseki POW Camp back in 1997 I realized that there wasn't much left from the days when the POWs occupied the site and worked the mine. Like everything else in Taiwan, so much has changed over the years in the interests of modernization and economic development. However there were still a few evidences of those former times – it just took some digging (literally) to uncover them.

In September of that year I spent 10 days at Chinguashi doing an archeological survey of the campsite and area around the mine. I had help from some of the local people who knew exactly where things had been in the “old days”, and they were very helpful in my search for the truth of the past.

During my excavations I found a number of artifacts remaining from the POWs' time at the camp. The director of the local historical association in Chinguashi asked me if I would consider putting some of the items into a new community museum that they were planning to build in the future, and would I also tell the story of the POWs who had come to work in the mine. I readily agreed, and so began a seven-year odyssey to collect as much information and as many artifacts as possible to better help tell the story of the Taiwan POWs.

Being a “rat” character in the traditional 12-animal Chinese zodiac makes it natural that I should be a collector. All my life – since I was a boy – I have been collecting things – stamps, coins, seashells, hockey cards, antiques, military memorabilia – you name it, so this was nothing new to me – just a new line of things to collect! The POWs and their families have loaned me many articles, photos, diaries etc. to copy, and I have amassed a huge amount of data from archives around the world, but what about POW artifacts and those items that were used by the Allied and Japanese military. I began to search antique markets around the island but there wasn't much remaining from those days of 60 years ago.

One day someone told me about Ebay on the internet and I checked it out. In the several years that I have been watching it since then, I have picked up many wonderful and interesting items. Everything from badges to backpacks, medals to medical kits and bandages, army blankets to bayonets, mess kits to old medicine bottles, and much, much more. It has been exciting to find these interesting items and get them for the collection. Every year in November at our Remembrance Week POW Banquet I take some of the best items out and put them on display for those in attendance to see, and every year the collection – and the display, has grown.

I have met some wonderful people on Ebay too during the course of my collecting. I always tell those I buy from what the items are for, and many have replied saying what a great cause we are working for. Some have even offered to donate the item or the cost of shipping. Others have written back with new items that they have found letting me know they are up for sale. I have met many people who had fathers or brothers or uncles who served in the war and they are grateful that we are doing what we can to help remember them and their sacrifice.

So what to do with all this stuff I have collected? About a year ago I was approached by the Taipei County government to see what I had collected, and if I would loan some articles to them for the new museum that is presently under construction in Chinguashi. It is going to be primarily a mining museum, but they realize the importance of the POWs' story and they want to have at least a small display representing this era of the town's past, so that this little-known aspect of Taiwan's history can be brought out. Since there will not be room for all of my artifacts in the main mining museum, I have been hoping to find another location to create a permanent “Taiwan POW Museum” which will tell the story of all of the POW camps on the island and be able to display all the artifacts, photos and documents that I have collected.

Just recently the government has been talking with me again on this matter, and we are now close to confirming a location for a larger, permanent museum with their support. It is wonderful to see the care and interest being shown by many in the government and the community, and I am grateful for the support I am receiving to this end. In the future I also hope to put many of the artifacts from our collection on display in a “virtual POW museum” on our website for everyone to enjoy.

Exciting days lie ahead as we push forward with our goal of making this story of the Taiwan POWs known in Taiwan – and around the world. The new museum in Chinguashi will open in August of this year and perhaps in another year so will the “TAIWAN PRISONER OF WAR MUSEUM”. We're working hard toward that goal.

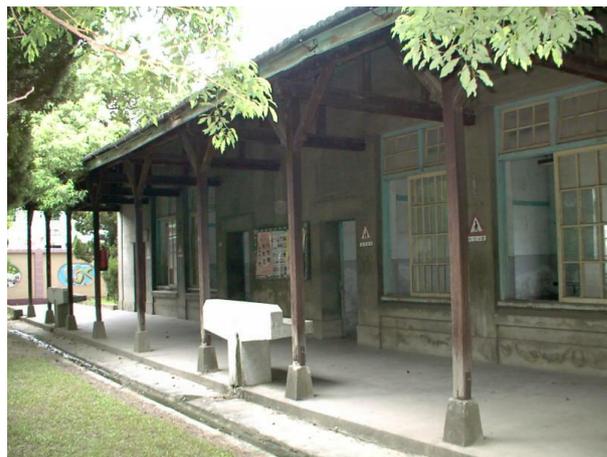
ARE YOU A CHILD OR FAMILY MEMBER OF A FORMER FAR EAST PRISONER OF WAR?

If so, then there is an organization you should know about. COFEPOW (Children and Families of Far East Prisoners of War) was founded in November 1997, and is an association dedicated to bringing the children and families of former Far East POWs together, to remembering the men who were POWs in the Far East during World War II, and also to building a permanent memorial to those wonderful men who gave so much for our freedom. The Taiwan POW Camps Memorial Society supports COFEPOW, its aims and its work.

For more information on COFEPOW; how it may be of assistance to you as a FEPOW family member, and how you can have a part in its work, please contact: **Mrs. Carol Cooper, 20 Burgh Rd., Gorleston, Gt. Yarmouth, Norfolk NR31 8BE / Tel. 01493 664116 or visit their website at www.cofepow.org.uk**

Taiwan's Last and Only Remaining POW Building. . .

Several years ago we found the location of the former *Toroko POW Camp* in a school near the town of Touliou in the south-central part of the island. To our amazement one of the original buildings used by the POWs still remained from the earlier days.



The camp had been occupied by 294 Americans who were part of a group of POWs that had been brought ashore at Takao (Kaohsiung) after a horrifying sea voyage from Manila in the Philippines.

On October 3, 1944 POWs from several Philippine camps were loaded aboard a Hellship called the *Hokusen Maru*. The POWs had other names for it - such as Benjo (toilet) Maru and Horror Maru, because of the abominable conditions that they were subjected to. In trying to evade American submarines and attacks from allied aircraft, it took 39 days to make the voyage from Manila via Hong Kong to Takao Harbour on Taiwan, arriving there on November 10. During the voyage 39 of the POWs died!

The men were in such terrible condition that it was decided to off-load them for a time into camps on the island in order for them to get well and fit enough to make the journey on to Japan. Some were sent to Heito Camp, a few to Shirakawa and Inrin Temporary Camp and the rest went to Toroko. Here they were housed in two school buildings, reasonably well fed and cared for, and had little work to do. The camp commander treated them decently and most of the POWs later said that it was the best camp they were in and wished they could have stayed there for the rest of the war. Such was not to be, as in January they were sent back to Takao and boarded ships that took them on to Japan - to continue their slavery for the Emperor.

When we re-discovered the camp in September 2000, one of the old Japanese school buildings in which the POWs were billeted, still remained. It was being used as recreation hall for the students and there were ping-pong tables set up inside the large two-room structure. We were thrilled to find this building still intact and usable, and were assured by school staff that this building would be preserved "forever" as it was an important historical site in the village. We visited the site again early this past September - three years after our initial discovery of the camp, and the building was still there as promised.

Well "forever" in Taiwan can be a very short time. In November - just two months later, I had an email from a British teacher who lived in Touliou and had seen our website, asking where the camp was located. When I told him he emailed back that he was going to check it out that weekend. On the following Monday I received another email from him with the news that the old school building had just been torn down, and he sent me some photos of all that was left.

I felt like crying! Here was the last of the original POW camp buildings to remain on the island, a true historical relic in its own right - even as a traditional old Japanese school building, and now it had been torn down, and for what reason, no-one seemed to know or care. What a travesty, especially when we were told only two months earlier that teachers and visitors from Japan had often come to Touliou to see this old "colonial" school, and what a precious piece of heritage it was. I guess it wasn't *THAT* precious after all!

So now, there are no more buildings remaining on any of the former POW camps from the time that the POWs were here. There is only the old gatepost at Kinkaseki, a short piece of the wall and some footings, and also a bit of the old parade square at Tamazato Camp to remind us of those bygone days. From a historical point of view it is so sad to see these last vestiges of history disappear for ever, but I guess it is inevitable in our ever-changing world, where so many don't know what happened back then or choose to just forget because it was so long ago. Fortunately we are preserving the story of the Taiwan POWs in other ways, and through our work, have assured that the memory of these men and what they suffered *will* not be forgotten - *FOREVER!*



... is Gone!

Photos:
Above -TPCMS
At left - Courtesy of
Mark Wilkie

In Memoriam

*The following former Taiwan POWs have passed away since our last newsletter.
We extend our sincerest sympathy to the wives and families of these men and assure them
that although they are no longer with us, they will
Never Be Forgotten!*

JOHN KEITH
80TH ANTI-TANK REG'T. R.A.
DECEMBER 6, 2002

REV. FRED STALLARD
ROYAL ARMY CHAPLAIN CORPS
MARCH 11, 2003

W. E. BEANEY
5TH FIELD REG'T. R.A.
MARCH 15, 2003

ARTHUR PRYKE
80TH ANTI-TANK REG'T. R.A.
MARCH 2003

MAURICE ROONEY
ROYAL ENGINEERS
APRIL 2, 2003

CLIFFORD BECKWITH
U.S. ARMY
MAY 3, 2003

RAY GOODMAN
155TH FIELD REG'T. R.A.
MAY 28, 2003

LIONEL HAYLOR
ROYAL CORPS OF SIGNALS
MAY 29, 2003

JOSEPH VIA
59TH COAST ARTILLERY, US ARMY
JUNE 10, 2003

JACK ARCHER
148TH FIELD REG'T. R.A.
JULY 10, 2003

REG HOWARD
ROYAL ENGINEERS
JULY 24, 2003

AL BLAND
U.S. ARMY AIR CORPS
AUGUST 20, 2003

VITO MARASHIO
U.S. ARMY
SEPTEMBER 16, 2003

JOHN BOSWELL
U.S. 4TH MARINE CORPS
SEPTEMBER 23, 2003

JIM CRAIG
ROYAL CORPS OF SIGNALS
NOVEMBER 28, 2003

DR. JOHN BADGETT
ROYAL ARMY DENTAL CORPS
DECEMBER 29, 2003

BILL HAMMON
2/3RD MG BTN. AUST. IMP. FORCES
JANUARY 9, 2004

BRAVE MEN

No honours were they given, no glory did they find.
Though cruelty abounded, no heads were bent in shame.
Their bravery was unheralded, comradeship and loyalty never waned.
I am proud to say I knew them -
These men who were so brave.

by Jill Horn, November 2000 - for her father, L/Sgt. Ray Goodman 155th Field Reg't. R.A.

--- from the Director

Once again I must apologize for not getting this newsletter out sooner to our friends and supporters. This past year has been so incredibly busy - with research, travel, correspondence and other projects, so that we have had very little time to put a newsletter together. It has been an exciting and rewarding year though - full of surprises and discoveries, and warm, heartfelt moments as well.

For example, a while back I received a letter from a family member of one of the Taiwan POWs who died here during the war. In it she said...

"Thank you for all you have done - I would like to quote from that poem written in the First World War - In Flanders Fields -

*"To you from failing hands, we throw the torch,
Be yours to hold it high,
If ye break faith with those of us who die,
We shall not sleep..."*

I am glad I met a young Canadian who has held high the torch and who has kept faith with our countrymen."

This is why we do what we do, so the former Taiwan POWs can have some closure in their lives and the satisfaction at long last - after nearly 60 years, that what they and their comrades went through in those terrible camps here in Taiwan has not - and will not, ever be forgotten. Also, we want to help their families to know more about these wonderful men - many of whom never spoke of the suffering they had to endure. If we can have even a small part in all of this, then it is all worthwhile.

This year is going to be very full with many opportunities for the Society. As mentioned elsewhere in this issue, we are currently working on a number of projects that are ongoing in various stages, and we hope to see some of them completed this year. Some are longer range projects and may take another year or two to complete, but we are confident in seeing them through.

I would like to thank all those who have continued to support us and encourage us in our efforts. We have had some generous donations to help with funding for research and other projects, and are very grateful for those who have given so that the memory of the POWs will be remembered. There is still so much to do and we look forward to an exciting year ahead.

It means so much to have you behind us, helping us with your encouragement and your gifts. I am looking forward to doing even more in the days ahead so that the memory of the Taiwan POWs will "never be forgotten".

Sincerely,

Michael Hurst, MBE
Director, Taiwan POW Camps Memorial Society

KUKUTSU POW MEMORIAL TO BE RE-DEDICATED...



In November 1999 we dedicated the Kukutsu POW Memorial in the corner of the garden in the former POW camp. During the past two years the memorial stone had to be removed to make way for a construction project. It was recently remounted into a permanent cement base (shown above) located on government land set back just off the road at the site of the camp. The memorial stone will be re-dedicated on Sunday May 16, 2004 at 11:00am.

This permanent memorial, which was constructed with the approval and aid of the local county government, will be a lasting memorial to the men who suffered so much in that camp in the closing months of the war. Our thanks to all who have had a part in its reconstruction.

We will have a report with photos of the re-dedication ceremony in our next newsletter.

TAIWAN POW HONOUR ROLL INCREASING...

We estimate that there were around 3600 Allied POWs held in the various camps on Taiwan during WWII. During the past year we have found quite a few more new names of former Taiwan POWs, bringing the current total to over 3100 entries listed in our Honour Roll.

We still have a ways to go before we have all of the names, so if any of our readers know of anyone - of any nationality - who was a former Taiwan POW, please get in touch with us and give us the information.

We also want to hear from former POWs and their families - even if their name is listed, so that we can make a personal contact and learn more about that person.

Note: The POW Honour Roll can be found on our website in the section under "The Men".

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE TAIWAN POW CAMPS AND THE POWS?

If your club, school or organization would like to know more about the prisoners of war, the POW camps on Taiwan and the work of the TPCMS, we would be very pleased to come to a meeting of your group and give a talk and show pictures and artifacts from our research. It is one of our aims to share the POWs' story with as many as we can, so that more people in Taiwan will know the story and be able to better understand this part of their history.

For further information, please contact us at -

Tel. (02) 8660-8438 Fax. (02) 8660-8439 Email: society@powtaiwan.org