



Never Forgotten

Vol. 13, Number 1

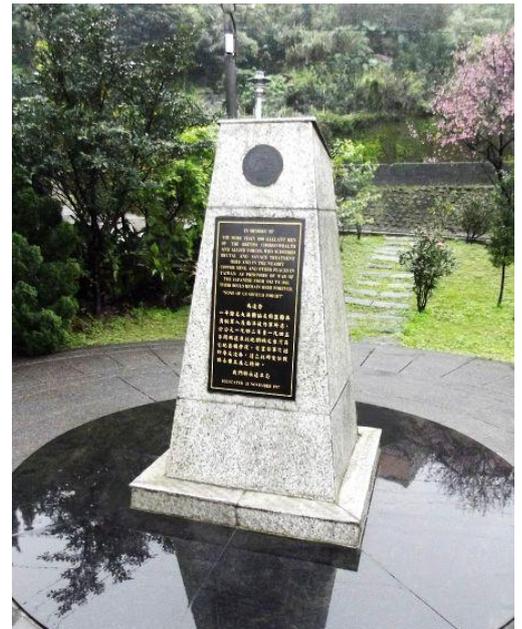
SPRING – SUMMER 2012

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

15th anniversary of the Taiwan POW Memorial



Celebrating Memorial Day at the old Taipei Prison



Taiwan POW Memorial in the spring



Down the Mine Bonnie Laddies, Down the Mine . . . A. Glynn



Taihoku Camp 6 POW Memorial

Please join us for FEPOW Day Sat. Aug. 11th

REMEMBRANCE WEEK 2012

Be sure to mark the week of November 7 – 14 on your calendars and in your date books, and plan to be with us for another wonderful annual event which will feature a POW banquet on November 10th and the Remembrance Day service at the Prisoner of War Memorial Park at Kinkaseki on the 11th. This year is the 15th anniversary of the building and dedication of the Taiwan POW Memorial. 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. We look forward to having you with us here in November!

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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. [*completed*]
- * to ensure the memory of the Taiwan POWs is not forgotten. [*ongoing*]
- * to help with the organization of, and participate in, the memorial service for the Taiwan POWs at Jinguashi every November. [*ongoing*]
- * 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. [*ongoing*]

LIST OF TAIWAN POW CAMPS. . . all found !

1. KINKASEKI #1 (Jinguashi)
2. TAICHU #2 (Taichung)
3. HEITO #3 (PingTung)
4. SHIRAKAWA #4 (Chiayi)
5. TAIHOKU #5 MOSAK (Taipei)
6. TAIHOKU #6 (Taipei)
7. KARENKO (Hualien)
8. TAMAZATO (Yuli)
9. INRIN (Yuanlin)
10. INRIN TEMP. (Yuanlin)
11. TOROKU (Touliu)
12. TAKAO (Kaohsiung)
13. KUKUTSU (Taipei)
14. OKA (Taipei)
15. CHURON Evacuation Camp (Taipei)
16. MARUYAMA Evacuation Camp (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 and the poppy cross are recognised worldwide as symbols of remembrance to war veterans.

Thought . . .

**Today's accomplishments
were yesterday's
impossibilities!**

UPCOMING EVENTS

FEPOW DAY – AUGUST 11, 2012

This year will be the fifth time that **FEPOW Day** is celebrated here in Taiwan. Once again we will meet at the Spot Theatre – 18, Chungshan North Road Sec. 2 in downtown Taipei on Saturday evening August 11th at 6 pm. There will be a display of POW and military artifacts, we will have a short memorial service to remember the POWs and then the POW documentary “**The True Story of the Bridge on the River Kwai**” will be featured.

This year we are happy to welcome our first ever overseas FEPOW Day guests - Bob and Joann Officer whose father Pte. John G. Hayes of the 5th Beds & Herts Reg't was a POW in Heito and Shirakawa Camps.

Everyone is invited, but space is limited to around 75 persons, so please kindly let us know if you're planning to attend so we can reserve a seat for you. We hope to have a good turnout again this year.

An email will be sent out locally as a reminder prior to the event and we look forward to seeing many of our friends and supporters once again. We invite you to come and learn more of the story of the Far East POWs.

A word regarding donations to the Society:

Banks in Taiwan are reluctant to accept anything other than US dollars, so if making a donation to the Society please send the funds in **US\$** - preferably in a bank wire / transfer to our account here. Please contact us for the pertinent account information. Thank you.

PLEASE HELP US - NOW!

In the past few months we have received a number of first time emails from people telling us that their father, grandfather, uncle etc. has just passed away. It is always sad when we hear of a POW's passing, but in response I write to them and ask “Why didn't you write to us sooner and tell us about your relative while he was still alive?” “We want to hear from them, and about them, so we can learn more of the POWs' stories to further insure that they are recorded and that the men are not forgotten.”

So **PLEASE** - if you have a loved one who was a Taiwan POW and who is still living, please send us a letter or an email and tell us about him -

BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE.

FROM THE DIRECTOR. . .

We have had a very busy spring season with a number of projects completed and visits from several overseas guests as well as local school groups.

Perhaps one of the biggest endeavours this spring was the completion of the Taiwan POW War Graves Photo Project (see story on pages 6-7) and the formation of the new **Asian War Graves Photo Group** – a joint effort with a number of other organizations and individuals to provide free war graves and memorial photos from the cemeteries in Asia (see page 10 for more info).

As in previous years ANZAC Day was celebrated with our Australian and New Zealand friends and once again a wreath was laid in honour of the ANZAC POWs who were here on Taiwan.

Our new and expanded website has brought a lot of rave reviews and we are pleased that people are finding more information and making better use of it. Please be sure to check it out.

Our second annual Memorial Day event was held on May 28th with an increased turnout and a good time of fellowship was had by all who attended.

We are looking forward to a great second half of the year with more tours to the camps being planned, visits by overseas guests from the USA and UK, and our annual FEPOW Day in August. This year we will have our first ever overseas guests from the UK joining us for the event.

Remembrance Week this November promises to be another outstanding event. This year is the 15th anniversary of the building and dedication of the Kinkaseki / Taiwan POW Memorial. It all came about as a result of the memorial service held in May of 1997 to remember the men who slaved in the notorious Kinkaseki prisoner of war camp in the village of Jinguashi, Taiwan. The Kinkaseki / Taiwan POW Memorial was dedicated on the site of the former POW camp on November 23, 1997.

So much has happened since those early days. Following the dedication of the memorial an effort was begun to find and contact all of the former Kinkaseki and Taiwan POWs and their families to let them know what had been done here in their honour, and the work has been ongoing now for the past 15 years. We have succeeded in contacting more than 400 and also in researching and sharing the story of the Taiwan POWs and the camps with the world.

At present we are working on erecting another POW Memorial on the site of the former Karenko senior officers' camp at Hualien which will hopefully be ready for dedication in November as well.

In closing I want to thank all those who have given so generously toward our work of remembering the POWs and erecting memorials in their honour. Together we are making certain that they will never be forgotten.

Sincerely,

Michael Hurst MBE

In Memoriam

The following former Taiwan POWs have passed away since our last newsletter.

We extend our sincerest sympathy to the families of these men and assure them that although they are no longer with us, they will not be forgotten!

ERNEST WALTER HUNT

L/BDR., 148TH FIELD REGIMENT, R.A.
NOVEMBER 6, 2011

BILL DUNN

PTE., 148TH FIELD REG'T. R.A.
DECEMBER 14, 2011

JAMES MOWATT

PTE., 2ND BTN. GORDON HIGHLANDERS.
DECEMBER 16, 2011

CLIFFORD REDDISH

SGMN., 11TH INDIAN DIV. SIGNALS
DECEMBER 23, 2011

ERNIE AGASS

L/CPL., ROYAL ARMY ORDNANCE CORPS
JANUARY 27, 2012

THORVALD A. KIBSGAARD

CAPT., NORWEGIAN MERCHANT MARINE
MARCH 13, 2012

JACK A. WRAGG

GUN., 148TH FIELD REG'T. R.A.
MARCH 14, 2012

GEORGE W. READ

GUN., 155TH FIELD REG'T. R.A.
APRIL 21, 2012

"We Will Remember Them"

Please let us know if you hear of the passing of any former Taiwan POW and send us the information as we want to make sure they are remembered.

REMEMBERING A GREAT FEPOW FRIEND. . .

ERNEST WALTER HUNT

L/BDR., 148TH FIELD REGIMENT, R.A.

Ernie came to Taiwan in November 1942 on the *Dainichi Maru* and went to Taichu Camp. Later he was transferred to Kinkaseki and in February 1945 was put on the hellship *Taiko Maru* and taken to Kyushu, Japan where he spent the last 5 months of the war.

I first met Ernie at the POW reunion held at Gunton Hall in Lowestoft in 1999. We became friends there and our parting after the reunion was an emotional one. Every year since then we kept in touch. We exchanged Christmas cards every year and letters from time to time. He was a wonderful man – gentle and kind, and so supportive of our work. I will miss him and am honoured to have had him as my friend.

BELATED TRIBUTES . . .

*The following are former American POWs who were in Taiwan and have passed away in the past several years and whose deaths were not reported earlier or were previously missed. They were members of the 200th / 515th Coast Artillery Company, US Army and their names were obtained from the Bataan/Corregidor Memorial Foundation of New Mexico. Most of these men came to Taiwan on the hellship *Hokusen Maru* and were interned in either Inrin Temporary Camp or Toroku Camp until moved to Japan in January 1945. We wish to honour and remember them at this time.*

May they rest in peace!

IRVIN R. BUTLER

PFC., 200TH COAST ARTILLERY, US ARMY
DECEMBER 25, 2010

FELIX M. SALAS

SGT., 515TH COAST ARTILLERY, US ARMY
JULY 12, 2009

HEINZ L. RHEE

PFC., 200TH COAST ARTILLERY, US ARMY
FEBRUARY 8, 2009

DAVID JOHNS

SGT., 515TH COAST ARTILLERY, US ARMY
JUNE 25, 2008

DONALD M. DANSBY

S/SGT., 200TH COAST ARTILLERY, US ARMY
APRIL 23, 2008

PRAGEDIS M. SORA

PFC., 200TH COAST ARTILLERY, US ARMY
JANUARY 18, 2008

PEDRO ESPINOSA

T/SGT., 200TH COAST ARTILLERY, US ARMY
OCTOBER 25, 2007

VALENTINE SANTILLANES

PVT., 200TH COAST ARTILLERY, US ARMY
OCTOBER 17, 2007

EDUARDO SANDOVAL

PVT., 200TH COAST ARTILLERY, US ARMY
OCTOBER 15, 2007

ROBERT J. WELCH

SGT., 200TH COAST ARTILLERY, US ARMY
MARCH 07, 2007

JOE L. SANCHEZ

PFC., 200TH COAST ARTILLERY, US ARMY
JANUARY 25, 2007

WILLIAM E. JENSEN

PFC., 60TH COAST ARTILLERY, US ARMY
SEPTEMBER 19, 2006

JAMES F. SCHIFFNER

S/SGT., 200TH COAST ARTILLERY, US ARMY
JULY 14, 2006

POW RESEARCH NETWORK JAPAN GROUP VISITS TAIWAN

For five wonderful days from March 25 – 29, we were privileged to have a team from the POW Research Network Japan Group visiting with us here in Taiwan. Their leader Mr. Toru Fukubayashi contacted me earlier in the year requesting assistance for a visit so they could do some research and learn more about the story of the Taiwan POWs and the camps.

Mr. Fukubayashi and the other members of the group - Mrs. Taeko Sasamoto, Mrs. Yoshiko Tamura, Mrs. Noriko Murata, Mrs. Fujie Nakamura and Mrs. Mine Takada arrived on Saturday and Sunday and once together we first visited the site of the old Taipei Prison where the American airmen were held in 1945.

Monday morning saw an early departure to visit two of the former POW camps in the central part of the island. First stop was the site of the Taichu Camp. We did a walk around tour of the camp area and talked about the life of the prisoners and the work they were required to do. Next we visited the river where the POWs dug a flood diversion channel from 1942-44. A short memorial service was held by the memorial as we remembered and paid tribute to the men who suffered and those who died in that camp.

Next we headed south again and this time to the Chiayi area where we called on our friend and former Taiwan POW camp guard Mr. Hou. Our Japanese friends wanted to do an interview with him and his family kindly invited us for lunch as well. After a lovely home-made Taiwanese meal we sat down to do the interview which was very rewarding for all concerned.



With the Hou family after the interview

Then we were off to the site of the former Shirakawa Camp near Bai He. We arrived at the school which stands adjacent to the camp and where we could have a good view of the former camp area inside the current military base. We talked with the school principal and one of the teachers and some of local neighbours, and as always, had an interesting and informative time. Before we left we held another short service to remember the men before returning to Taipei after a very full day.



Memorial service at Shirakawa

Tuesday we spent all day on a visit to Jinguashi and Keelung. We first visited the Gold Ecological Museum and then the # 5 mine tunnel. Much time was spent in the POW Park looking at the memorial, the wall and the other features and discussing the life of the POWs.

After holding a memorial service we made our way to the port of Keelung. We stopped at the docks and



viewed the area where the POWs came to and later were evacuated from.

Viewing the POW Memorial Wall

When we arrived back at the city we stopped off for a look at the new Taihoku Camp 6 POW Memorial. We were met at the site by several officers from the Ministry of Defense who wanted to meet our guests and welcome us. We shared together in a few words of remembrance for the men of the camp and expressed our gratitude once again for the assistance of the MND. The evening finished with a great Mongolian BBQ dinner and some wonderful fellowship.

On Wednesday morning we made a trip to Kukutsu camp and stopped en route at Hsintien to view the suspension bridge. We spent time at the camp and the memorial and once again paid tribute to the men who suffered there.



With MND at Taihoku Camp 6

We returned to the city to have lunch at the majestic Grand Hotel and then the afternoon was spent with a visit to the National Palace Museum and then to see some of the old colonial Japanese pre-war buildings.

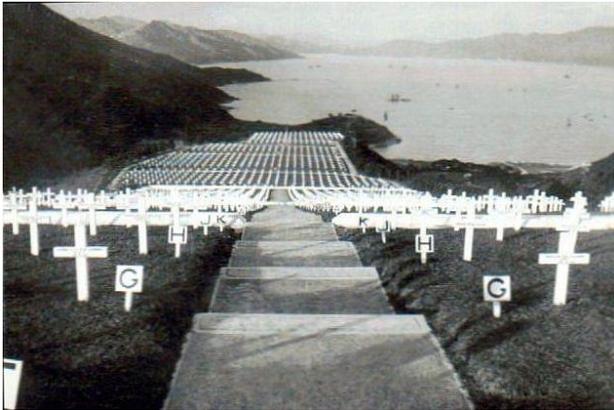
Thursday morning we took a tour of the Chungshan Hall where the surrender of the Japanese forces on Taiwan took place on October 25, 1945 and had a look at the old Taipei North gate and main Post Office. After a stop for lunch the group made its way back to the hotel to get ready for their departure to Japan.

We all had a wonderful time together during those 5 days discussing the POWs' story and learning more from each other. We have pledged to work even closer in the days to come so more of the story can be told.

THE TAIWAN WAR GRAVES PHOTO PROJECT

For many years I have wanted to obtain photos of the graves of all the former POWs who died in the camps here in Taiwan. On different trips to Hong Kong over the years I had taken quite a number of photos at the Sai Wan War Cemetery, but in the spring of 2010 I decided to make a special trip there to photograph all the graves of the former Taiwan POWs.

As I did some further research about the cemetery and the Taiwan POWs who were buried there, I found some photos of the cemetery over the years, and one can see how much Hong Kong has changed since the POWs were first laid to rest.



Sai Wan Bay War Cemetery - 1949



Sai Wan Bay War Cemetery - 1959



Sai Wan War Cemetery - 2010

The cemetery is now known as "Sai Wan War Cemetery" – since one can no longer see the bay, that part of the name has been dropped!

During the four days I spent in Hong Kong I photographed the graves of all the British, Australian and Dutch POWs who had died in Taiwan, plus a number of others who had died later, and also those British POWs from the Railway who died in Manila in the fall of 1944 off the hellship Hofuku Maru. In all I took over 2000 photos – at least 3 – 4 of each grave.

So that left the American ex-POWs and this was a problem as the Americans had a different policy for their deceased than the British & Commonwealth which declared that their deceased should be buried near to where they died. The Americans allowed for remains to be repatriated home if the family so desired, and thus many of the Americans were buried in cemeteries scattered all across the USA. Some were buried in the war cemeteries in Manila and Hawaii, some in national cemeteries in the States and many in private municipal graveyards.

The project had lain dormant for the past year as I had no way – so I thought, to obtain photos of the deceased Americans. Then last spring Kent Mathieu, an American from Hawaii who spends part of his time each year in Taiwan, joined our Society. Last summer Kent was back home and visited the Punchbowl Cemetery in Honolulu on our behalf to inquire about the possibility of placing a memorial stone on the Walk of Remembrance in the cemetery to honour the men who died when the Enoura Maru was bombed in Kaohsiung Harbour and who rest there today in unmarked graves. That project is ongoing at this time. (See page 8)



Punchbowl War Cemetery – Honolulu, Hawaii

In December Kent returned home once more and this time I gave him a list of all the graves of former Taiwan POWs in the cemetery and he willingly agreed to take the photos for me. In early February I received the photos and uploaded them to the new Honour Roll section we created on our website.

I also received help from my good friend Steve Kwiecinski who lives in Corregidor and his colleagues in Manila, for photos of the graves there.

About this same time while searching for graves in the National War Cemeteries in the US which are administered by the Dep't of Veterans Affairs, I came into contact with a dear lady – Mrs. Debbie Gibson from Quincy Illinois. (Con't next page. . .)

TAIWAN WAR GRAVES PHOTO PROJECT *Cont'd*

While searching for a photo of a grave in Quincy National Cemetery, I came across Debbie's website offering to share grave photos on request, and so I contacted her. Although she didn't have the photo I wanted at hand, she promptly went out to the cemetery and took several for me. I found out that she has had an interest in this area for several years and that she wanted to honour the veterans in this way. I also found out that she was very familiar with the *Find-a-grave* website, which I had tried to make use of with little success. She offered to help me try to locate the graves of those American POWs that I had not so far been able to track down and within a couple of days she had found and sent me information on nine of the 22 graves I needed the details for, including a number of their photos.

Debbie immediately put the word out on *Find-a-grave* and a number of good people in that network responded with photos. I also received photos of two graves in San Diego courtesy of my friend Bill MacInnes who lives there. Fellow researcher Jim Opolony was a great help as well. The photos have now all been uploaded to the Honour Roll in the "Men" section of our website.

At this point we are down to only two graves that we need the location for and altogether we need just 8 more actual grave photos to complete the project.

We still need information regarding the grave locations for the following former Taiwan POWs –

Frank H. Leroy, Sgt. US Army – Ariz. / New York
Adam Pliska, T/Sgt. US Army - Missouri

If any of our readers can help please contact us.

It is wonderful to know that there are people out there who really care about this aspect of remembrance, and we certainly couldn't have completed this project the way we have without their help. Thanks so much to you all.

Doing this war graves photo project is just another way in which the Taiwan POW Camps Memorial Society is helping to preserve the memory of those who suffered and died in the POW camps here on Taiwan. May they rest in peace – and may we never forget their sacrifice for us!

NOTE: *Families or researchers who would like a higher resolution copy of any grave photo, may request same by contacting the Society. A copy will be sent at no charge in honour of the POW.*

UPDATE:

Through further research carried out this spring, we have discovered the mis-handling of several graves during the recovery process by the American War Graves Recovery Team in May of 1946 from the Taihoku Camp # 6 Cemetery. This resulted in the remains of POW George R. Retchless, PFC, US Army Air Corps not being properly recorded and

thus he was not re-buried in an individual grave as the other men from that camp were, but rather he is only commemorated on the *Wall of the Missing* at the Punchbowl Cemetery in Hawaii.

So what did happen to PFC. Retchless' actual remains? As with all of the American POW remains recovered from all of the former Taiwan POW camp cemeteries, George's remains would have been sent to Shanghai for initial processing. It seems that somewhere in the process his remains became separated from the records, resulting in his later incomplete re-burial.

Later the remains of the 57 Americans who died in the Taiwan camps, plus a large group of approximately 350 retrieved from the mass grave in Takao of those men who had died in the bombing of the Enoura Maru in January 1945, were sent to Honolulu for further processing. Among the remains which arrived in Hawaii there were 400 "unknowns" and being that further identification of those men was not possible, all of those men were buried together in 20 communal graves in Section Q of the cemetery. I firmly believe that PFC. Retchless' remains are included in this group of burials.

Most of the Americans who died in Taiwan were buried in individual graves at the Punchbowl and Retchless should have been too, had it not been for the carelessness of the graves recovery team. ALL of the graves in all of the Taiwan POW camp cemeteries were clearly marked, and often a map of the camp cemetery was also available for the graves recovery teams to consult. The Imperial War Graves Recovery Team (now the CWGC) successfully exhumed and re-buried every British, Australian and Dutch POW who died in Taiwan in the Sai Wan War Cemetery in Hong Kong using these same resources, so it appears that the American Team was lax and careless in their handling of the burials from the Taihoku # 6 Camp cemetery.

Now of further note – the only other two men whose grave locations we have no record of after months of work – Frank Leroy and Adam Pliska, were also from Taihoku Camp # 6 and their graves would have been cleared at the same time as Retchless' grave. In my opinion these two were also mis-handled, not only preventing them from having an actual re-burial, but also resulting in them not even having their names commemorated anywhere. They are not listed anywhere in the American Battle Monuments Group of cemeteries or records, they are not listed with the Veterans' Administration in any of the National Cemeteries, and we have been unable to track them down anywhere in any private cemeteries in the US. Hopefully we may yet do this.

I believe their remains as well are likely buried in the communal graves at the Punchbowl. This is a great travesty and such a shame that these men who died alongside their mates in Taiwan those many years ago will never be remembered officially anywhere by their government. Thankfully they are and will be remembered by our Society on our website – and we will never forget them!

A MEMORIAL FOR POWS FROM TAIWAN IN HAWAII

Over the past several months we have been working very hard towards placing a stone on the Memorial Walk at the Punchbowl War Cemetery in Hawaii in honour of the men who died when the hellship Enoura Maru was bombed in Kaohsiung Harbour on January 9, 1945. We want to let people know who those men are in the 20 unmarked graves which contain the remains of the men who died and were first interred here in Taiwan so long ago.

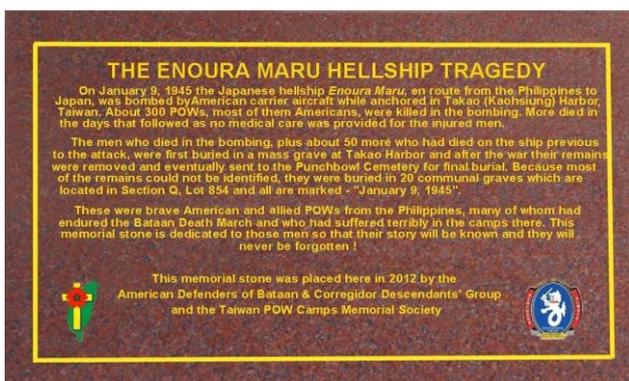
The American Defenders of Bataan & Corregidor Descendants Group in the States are co-sponsoring this effort and will be assisting with the fund-raising campaign to gather the necessary funds to pay for the stone and shipping it to Hawaii. In due course we will be putting announcements on our websites and doing whatever we can to spread the word of this project.

Because a lot of the ADBC-DG members and others across the USA had fathers and other loved ones who were lost in the bombing of the Enoura Maru, we anticipate that the contributions will come in quite quickly and in a short time the money can be raised so that we can begin construction of the memorial stone.

Last December 3rd the formal application and paperwork were sent to the cemetery to obtain approval for the memorial stone to be placed there. Society member Kent Mathieu who is a resident of Hawaii and spends part of his year there, has been a driving force during his visits back to Honolulu in our efforts to get permission for the laying of the stone.

As of now (June) we are still awaiting approval of the project from the Punchbowl War Cemetery staff who seem to be hung up over the use of the word "Hellship" on the memorial stone as being offensive to the Japanese tourists who visit there. We have complied with every other requirement and had hoped to have the approval this spring, but so far it has not been forthcoming. We want to tell the true story on the memorial stone and not have it watered down.

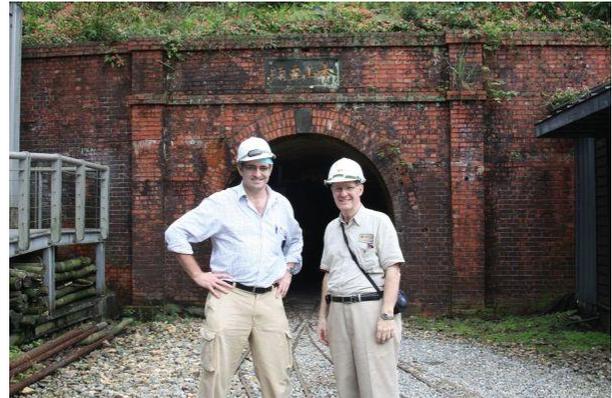
So we are continuing in our efforts to have the inscription accepted as is, and are hoping that the approval will come through soon. We hope to have some kind of announcement in the near future and then notices and emails will be sent out with more info and details. We just want to ensure that the men of the Enoura Maru will never be forgotten.



Mockup of the Enoura Maru Memorial stone

SHARING THE STORY . . .

MR. ANDREW GLYNN – BANGKOK



With Andrew at the Kinkaseki mine

During the week of April 15th I had the pleasure of hosting Andrew Glynn, an Australian who lives and works in Bangkok, and although not having any immediate family members who were POWs, is vitally interested in the FEPOW story.

We spent a delightful day exploring Kinkaseki together with the family of one of his customers here. He even stumbled upon an old medicine bottle from the Japanese time which is now in our collection. It is great to meet and make new friends, and I know I'll be seeing him here in Taiwan again.

TAIPEI EUROPEAN SCHOOL GRADE 5s INTERESTED IN THE FEPOW STORY

On March 13th I was invited to share the POWs' story with a group of Grade 5 students at the Taipei European Elementary School.

I was just a bit uncertain as to how to approach kids this young as previously I had only worked with high school and university level ages. However I soon found that these students were some of the most interested and interactive that I've ever had the pleasure of working with. They listened with rapt attention and asked very deep, intelligent and sincere questions at the end of my talk.

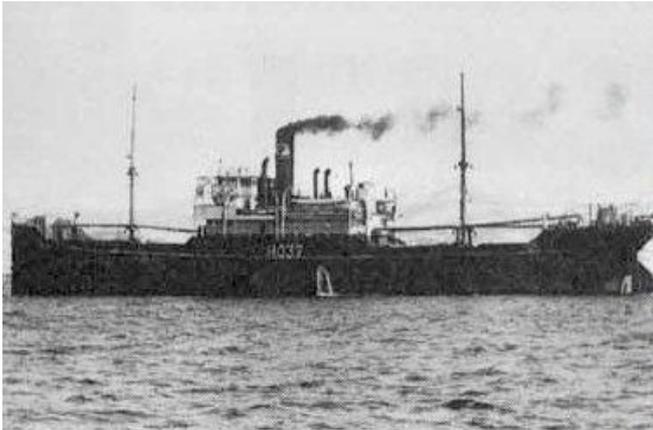
Then on March 20th I guided them on a visit to Jinguashi and was able to further show them what the POWs experienced in World War II. I am really looking forward to teaching next year's grade 5 class already.

The children lay roses on the Memorial as others read poems of remembrance.



The story of the HOKUSEN (*alias HARO / BENJO*) MARU

Built in Montreal Canada as the *War Wombat*, the *HOKUSEN MARU* had a gross tonnage of 2272 tons, was 252 feet in length with a beam of 43.6 feet. It was completed in October 1920 and given the name *Hokusen Maru* in 1935.



The real name of this ship was little known by the POWs at the time. It was more popularly called the *HARO MARU* and also by many the *BENJO MARU* (benjo means toilet) due to the awful conditions on board, but these were nicknames only. We now know that its actual name was the *HOKUSEN MARU*.

The *Hokusen Maru* was a coal freighter, and among the trips it took as it plied the waters of the orient, one stands out as being incredibly cruel. On October 1, 1944 - 1100 POWs from the Philippines were put aboard - destination Japan. The ship stayed two more days in Manila Harbour before sailing, and before it got underway many of the men were already beginning to get sick. Just out of Manila the convoy was attacked by American submarines, but the *Hokusen Maru* was undamaged and made a run for Hong Kong. They stayed 11 days in Hong Kong Harbour - battered down, with little food or water.

While there the US 14th Air Force launched a major air attack on the harbour but luckily the *Hokusen Maru* was not hit. As one former POW told me, "the *Hokusen Maru* was such a small, dumpy, old ship that the Americans probably didn't think it was worth a bomb!"



Air raid over Hong Kong Oct. 16, 1944 while the ship was in port.

The ship left Hong Kong and headed for Formosa. On November 8, 1944 it arrived in Takao Harbour and because the POWs were in such bad shape at this point, the Japs figured they had better put them ashore for a while to get fit again before going on to Japan. So on November 9 - 39 days after they had boarded the *Hokusen Maru* in Manila Harbour, the POWs came ashore at Takao. During the trip 36 men had died.

The group was split up - some going to Heito Camp near Takao, while two other groups went to camps at Toroku and Inrin respectively. Many of the officers went to Shirakawa Camp. Then in mid-January the survivors were gathered up and moved either to Takao in southern Formosa where they boarded the *Melbourne Maru*, or to the northern port of Keelung where they boarded the *Enoshima Maru* for the voyage on to Japan. Both ships arrived safely at Moji Japan in late January and early February 1945.

The *Hokusen Maru* was one of the few hellships that did not get sunk. It survived the war and continued to sail Asian waters til it was finally scrapped in 1960.

One of the usual analogies about the *Hokusen Maru* is that it sailed for 39 days and that during that time 39 men died. This is an error that has been perpetuated for many years simply because no-one has really bothered to check the records and the facts. In a recent detailed study and with aid of fellow researchers, the facts can finally be told.

There were in fact only 36 men who died during those 39 days. Yeoman First Class Hubert D. Hough USN, who was later interned at Toroku Camp, kept an ongoing record of the deaths on the ship, and having checked that list with NARA and other records, we can now provide an accurate account of those 36 men who died on the *Hokusen Maru* - as follows:

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------|
| ADLEMAN MAX | HURELLE WALTER E. |
| ALLEN HENRY G. | KOLEKOFSKI DONALD C. |
| ANDERSON GEORGE L. | LAURENCE JOHN B. |
| BARNETT JESSE D. | MALDONADO MIRAMON |
| BERNARD LAWRENCE P. | MC CALLA CHARLES B. |
| BOWRA WILLIAM G. | MC VAY WILLIAM A. |
| CHAPPELL CURTIS E. | MURRAY REVILLO A. |
| CICHOCKI HENRY A. | OLEN LEO J. |
| CLARKE RICHARD S. | PARSON JAMES O. |
| COTTEN JOHN C. | POULIMENOS IJANETO |
| DALIAN FRED R. | SABIN HOWARD Q. |
| DE BACA BENEDICTO C. | SANCHEZ FRANK J. |
| DEEMER CARL E. | SHARP GERALD W. |
| GARLAND FLOYD W. | STRAND CLARENCE J. |
| GREGORY CHARLES R. | TAMULEVICH TONY R. |
| HALVERSON LLOYD H. | THENELL NORMAN P. |
| HAYES PHILIP R. (British) | VAN PELT ARTHUR G. |
| HNIDAK JOHN S. | WOODWARD PAUL W. |

It is these men and all the other POWs who suffered on this hellship to whom we pay tribute for their courage and strength and their sacrifice for our freedom. Many of the survivors have already passed on, but none of them will ever be forgotten.

ANNOUNCING – ASIAN WAR GRAVES PHOTOS AVAILABLE

Last year it was announced on the Taiwan POW Society website that photos of the graves of the former Taiwan POWs who are buried at Sai Wan War Cemetery in Hong Kong were available from the Society to POWs, family members, historians etc. – **FREE of CHARGE**. At the same time it was mentioned that photos of other war graves in the cemeteries in Hong Kong were available from Tony Banham, and that the Thai-Burma Railway Centre (TBRC) in Thailand would also pass on photos from the cemeteries at Kanchanaburi, Chungkai and Thanbyuzayat, Burma - all at no cost as well.

Recently another member living here in Asia - Tony Beck, who has photographed literally thousands of war graves and memorials throughout the region, has joined with us and it has now been decided to form the

ASIAN WAR GRAVES PHOTO GROUP (AWGPG)

The purpose of the group is to distribute good quality photos of war graves and names on the various memorials from the war cemeteries located all across Asia **FREE OF CHARGE** to POWs, family members, relatives, researchers and historians – with the sole aim of keeping the memory of the veterans and POWs alive, so present and future generations will not forget the sacrifices they have made so far from home. We want to help ensure that they are not forgotten.

We offer **FREE photos** of **ALL the graves** and **ALL the names on the memorials** from the following Asian cemeteries:

THAILAND - Kanchanaburi and Chung Kai

BURMA - Thanbyuzayat, Rangoon, Taukkyan

MALAYSIA - Taiping, Cheras Road, Terendak, Malacca, Labuan-Borneo

SINGAPORE - Kranji + pre/post WW2 sites

HONG KONG - Sai Wan, Stanley, Happy Valley - 12 cemeteries in total

INDONESIA - Jakarta, Ambon, ANCOL Netherlands Field of Honour

JAPAN - Yokohama

INDIA - Kohima and both cemeteries at Imphal

ISRAEL - Ramlah and Khayat Beach

In addition, the graves of the **AMERICAN POWs who died in Taiwan** and are buried and commemorated in the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific at the Punchbowl Hawaii, the Manila American Cemetery and private sites in the USA, **are available from the POW Society**.

Our Group specializes in photos of the names on the many **memorials** – we have all 25,000 names on the SINGAPORE / KRANJI MEMORIAL, all 27,000 names on the TAUKKYAN / RANGOON MEMORIAL, as well as other major memorials such as SAI WAN, LABUAN and YOKOHAMA. We are finding that over 60% of requests are for names on memorials and we are happy to be able to supply them – **FREE of CHARGE** on request.

Please kindly supply the location / panel number when requesting photos of names on memorials.

For photos of graves and names on memorials in these respective areas, please contact:

Taiwan POW Camps Memorial Society - society@powtaiwan.org

Thai-Burma Railway Centre - admin@tbrconline.com

Tony Banham - Hong Kong War Diary - tony@hongkongwardiary.com

Tony Beck - All Asia Cemeteries & Memorials - nt872b@hotmail.com

**“AT THE GOING DOWN OF THE SUN AND IN THE MORNING,
WE WILL REMEMBER THEM!”**

NOTE: As more cemeteries and memorials become available we will endeavour to keep you informed. Please watch our websites for update information.