

KINKASEKI MEMORIAL NEWSLETTER

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Official Newsletter of the KINKASEKI MEMORIAL COMMITTEE

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FROM THE KINKASEKI COMMITTEE.....

Warmest greetings to all the friends and supporters of the KINKASEKI POW MEMORIAL. A lot has been happening since late last year when the official dedication of the Kinkaseki Memorial was held in the village of Chinguashi.

First of all, we finished publication of the KINKASEKI POW MEMORIAL PROGRAMME, which tells the story of how the memorial came to be, with further information about the Kinkaseki mine and life in the POW camp, as well as comments from some of the survivors of Kinkaseki.

With this, it has been our desire to try to locate as many former ex-POWs as possible to let them know what has been done here in their honour, and that they and their comrades have not, and will not, be forgotten. The response to months of searching and mailing out packages to the survivors we had found has been heartwarming, as you will read further on in the article - "THE SURVIVORS SAY THANK YOU".

Work is progressing well on the information plaques at the site, and you can read more about this important ongoing project in our story "INFORMATION PLAQUES AT MEMORIAL SITE". There are a lot of other things in the works which we hope will be of interest to our readers, so without further adieu we'll get right to bringing you the latest in the news of the KINKASEKI MEMORIAL!

NEW FACES ON THE COMMITTEE

This past spring, a review of the Committee and its activities was undertaken, with the objective of defining where we were going in the future, and what our mandate would be with regards to the continuing activities with the memorial. It became known at that time that some of the original committee members would be leaving and replacements would be needed if we were going to continue to operate.

We were sad to see John Chandler leave us, but alas retirement beckoned, and a return to sunny Australia was too good a prospect to set aside. As a result Mr. Jeff Cox, General Manager of the ANZ Bank in Taipei was recruited to take John's place. Hugh Stephens, Director of the Canadian Trade Office in Taipei, who had been instrumental in formulating the idea for the Kinkaseki Weekend of Remembrance a year earlier, was also leaving and has since been replaced by Mr. David Mulroney, the new CTOT Director - welcome David.

Being that the Kinkaseki Project was entering a new phase, it was decided to juggle the troops a little, and pass the responsibility of chairman of the committee to someone new. Jeff Cox was chosen to lead the committee through the next stage. Later, Michael Boyden, our past chairman for phase 2, also retired from the board, and we certainly owe him a great deal of thanks for all his hard work in helping to get the memorial built last year.

So, on we go, and with lots on our agenda, there is plenty to do. We hope we will have the continued support of the Commonwealth and Allied community in the days to come as we have had in the past.

INFORMATION PLAQUES AT MEMORIAL SITE!

The third and final stage of construction on the site of the memorial is the erection of information plaques for visitors to Chinguashi. This will be accomplished with three plaques - one written in English and Chinese, located near the temple above the park - overlooking the memorial, and two more adjacent to the memorial itself in the park. One will be in English, the other in Chinese, and these will tell in greater detail the suffering the POWs endured there.

Lastly, we are hoping to place a memorial plaque on the one surviving gatepost of the camp, to identify it and the small portion of former prison wall adjoining it, as an historic site. The work on the construction of the plaques is going ahead at this time, and we anticipate having these all in place in time for the service of remembrance this November, if all goes well. The cost of the plaques and their installation will be about NT\$50,000, and we are now seeking for much-needed funds to complete the project. If you or your company, school, community group etc. would be willing to share with us in this final phase of remembering those men who sacrificed so much to give us our freedom today, then we would love to hear from you as soon as possible. You may send donations to us at the address above, and your donation will be gratefully acknowledged in our next newsletter.

"FRIENDS OF KINKASEKI" PROJECT LAUNCHED!

As a committee, we have identified many needs - mostly financial, as we continue to plan activities and carry out projects regarding the Kinkaseki Memorial. We have ongoing programs, such as our quest to find all the remaining Kinkaseki survivors and present them with a memorial programme and coin in recognition of their service in WWII. Then there is the annual service of remembrance every November at the site. In addition, the memorial will need some continuing maintenance, so with these facts in mind we have decided to establish a "Friends of Kinkaseki Memorial" group to aid in carrying out these projects.

"Friends of Kinkaseki" will receive a newsletter at least twice a year, with information regarding the memorial, and invitations to events being held. "Friends" will be given preference in bookings for events, particularly the annual service of remembrance each year in November, and the special POW fellowship banquet.

Letters have been sent out to those that we know are interested, but there may be others who have not yet heard of this opportunity. You have, by your involvement with our activities in the past, shown your support and interest in this great project, and we would invite you to become a member of the special group of supporters for this worthy cause.

To become a "Friend", simply fill in the registration form below and mail it with NT\$1000 to us at the above address and we will enroll you right away. If you wish any further information, do not hesitate to give us a call. We are looking forward to hearing from our many friends and supporters as soon as possible.

1ST ANNUAL SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE TO BE HELD THIS NOVEMBER!

Be sure to mark NOVEMBER 14 and 15 on your calendars now! This is the weekend of our 1st annual Kinkaseki Remembrance service and it will be held at the site of the memorial in the village of Chinguashi on Sunday, November 15 at 12:00 noon.

Once again this year we will have the honour and privilege to have some of the Kinkaseki survivors with us for this great event. To date we have five confirmed as coming - three from England, one from Australia, and of course Jack Edwards will be with us again from Hong Kong. There will be a bus chartered to take those interested in attending the service at NT\$500 per person. Seating is limited and on a first-come basis. To reserve a place on the bus please call ANNY at 2537-0767 before Wednesday, November 11. If after you have registered, you find you cannot attend for some reason, please kindly call ANNY back and take your name off the list to allow someone else to take your place as no-shows will be billed! We are extending a welcome for all those attending to bring a picnic lunch and join us for a time of fellowship in the park after the service.

Limited food and drinks can also be purchased near the temple.

- SATURDAY EVENING DINNER -

Saturday evening, November 14, we will once again hold a evening of fellowship to meet and honour those Kinkaseki survivors who will be with us on this memorable weekend. The location is the Banker's Club and the cost will be NT\$1000 and attendance is limited to the Friends of Kinkaseki. Reservations must be made no later than Wednesday, November 11, and the same deal applies to no-shows as for the bus - please be fair to give everyone who wants to participate a chance. Please call ANNY at 2537-0767 to make your reservation.

We sincerely hope that all who are interested will join with us for these very special weekend events - you won't want to miss them!

THE SURVIVORS SAY THANK YOU!

As mentioned earlier in the newsletter, beginning this past February we began sending out copies of the Kinkaseki Memorial Programme and a commemorative medallion to as many of the Kinkaseki survivors as we could locate. The response has been overwhelming, and we would like to share a few of the comments from the POWs themselves through letters they have written in appreciation of what has been done here in Taiwan in their memory. Please read on.....

From Mr. Ben Moule, England - POW #628 - "The package I received from you was one of the most welcome and nicest surprises I have had for many years. It is wonderful to know that there are so many nice people in this world who are willing to dedicate so much hard work and effort to remember someone who is completely unknown to them. Thank you for all the effort that went into the splendid remembrance you have created."

From George Angus, England - POW #9 - "I was very pleased to receive your letter with the brochure of the campsite and the medallion with the mine entrance. Thank you so much. The pleasing thing is that the lads who died have not been forgotten."

From Mr. E. Beeby, England - POW #565 - "Thank you very much for sending me the Kinkaseki Memorial medallion and programme. I had no idea that such a committee existed - I am overwhelmed that a memorial has been built in that god-forsaken place. I can only express my sincere thanks to everyone connected with the project for your hard work in making what has been a dream come true."

From Mr. Maurice Rooney, England - POW #766 - "The UK FEPOW world of ex-Kinkaseki men is all agog at the moment, for as you will now know, your packages have been arriving all over England during the last few days. Many of the recipients have telephoned me and their emotions were terribly stretched, and many confessed that they could hardly believe what they were reading. I share all these sentiments that they have expressed, and not only did your package bring joy to my heart, but also produced a lump in my throat, and my emotions took some controlling. Everything about the package is just so wonderful, and simply to say thank you seems totally inadequate. You have done us proud, and we owe you all a deep debt of gratitude."

Note: Maurice is our Kinkaseki Committee rep in the UK and one of the survivors who will be with us in November.

From Mrs. Mary Graham, England - daughter of Mr. Harold Brant - POW #884 - " On behalf of my father, I would like to thank you for the coin and memorial programme which you sent to him. It has always been my father's wish to return to the site of the camp and lay his ghosts to rest. This has been impossible, but you have in a way, brought the camp to him."

From Mr. John Emmett, Canada - POW #528 - "I cannot find the words to thank you enough, for your kind deed and thoughtfulness has gone right to the heart of a thankful old man. I will treasure the beautiful coin and the commemorative programme always. Sadly, I never received any medals for my service overseas during the war. This token of remembrance presented to me replaces all the medals, and the value of the Kinkaseki Memorial coin is far above any war medals I could have received."

I had no knowledge that this huge effort was going on to dedicate a Kinkaseki memorial to us ex-POWs. I can only say a simple thank you to the committee for this marvellous idea and for the completion of this memorial to the men of Kinkaseki. Thank you from the bottom of my heart."

From Mr. Sid Dodds, Australia - POW #959

- "The Kinkaseki memorial package was a very big surprise when I received it. I was unaware of the existence of the Kinkaseki Memorial Committee, but it made me very, very happy that at long last someone had taken an interest in the POWs and their trials and tribulations during WW2. I had long given up any hope of recognition of any sort for the POWs who passed through that gate to hell - Kinkaseki. Many thanks once again."

Note: Sid is also one of the survivors who will be with us in November.

From Mrs. Marie Latham, New Zealand - widow of Pte. Gordon Latham - POW #976 -

"On behalf of my family and myself, I would like to thank you so much for the medallion and programme which I have great pride in accepting for Gordon. My sadness is him not being here to see it - he died 15 months ago. Thank you to the committee for all the long hours and wonderful work you have done to honour our men."

From Mr. Dennis Ratcliffe, England - POW #639 - "Many thanks for the Kinkaseki coin and memorial programme, and thanks to the committee for their endeavours on behalf of our comrades who died, and the survivors -of which I am thankful to be one. I had always thought Kinkaseki had been forgotten. If I can help in any way please do not hesitate to ask."

(Ed. Note - Perhaps after reading these letters of gratitude, you would like to help too. You can by becoming a member of the "Friends of Kinkaseki" or by sending a contribution to the Memorial Fund. There will be more thank-you's in our next newsletter, but for now we will sign off with our continued good wishes to all and our thanks for your ongoing support.)

"Let us Not Forget!"