

KINKASEKI MEMORIAL NEWSLETTER

Vol. 2, Number 1

SPRING 1999

Official Newsletter of the KINKASEKI MEMORIAL COMMITTEE
P.O. BOX 665, YUNG HO, TAIPEI 234, TAIWAN, R.O.C.
TEL. 886-2-8660-8438 FAX: 886-2-8660-8439 E-mail society@powtaiwan.org

NOVEMBER REMEMBRANCE WEEKEND A GREAT SUCCESS!

WE'VE MADE THIS SPECIAL JOURNEY
TO STAND UPON THE SOIL
WHERE ONCE WE WERE, SO DISTANT NOW,
AND MADE TO SWEAT AND TOIL.

THE CAMP WE KNEW HAS VANISHED,
AND WE'RE THRILLED TO SEE IN ITS PLACE
THIS BEAUTIFUL PARK AND MEMORIAL,
MAJESTIC IN ALL ITS GRACE.

WE'RE HERE THIS DAY TO HONOUR THOSE
OF OUR COMRADES NO LONGER MET,
THEIR MEMORY IS OURS TO CHERISH -
AND NONE OF US SHOULD FORGET!"

The words of this poem, specially penned for the occasion by ex-POW Maurice Rooney, reflected the feelings of all five former Prisoners of War who returned to Taiwan for the first annual service of remembrance, held at the site of the Kinkaseki POW Memorial on Sunday November 15, 1998.

Three of the five former POWs - Maurice Rooney, Ben Slack and Stan Vickerstaff, came from England; another, Sid Dodds, came from Australia, and as usual, Jack Edwards flew over from Hong Kong to join with us for this very special time.

Sunday, November 15 was a beautiful warm, sunny day and our activities started off with a Remembrance Day service at the Church of the Good Shepherd in Shilin. Following this a large convoy of vehicles made their way to Chinguashi for the Kinkaseki Remembrance Service.

Piper Robert Noakes led the procession down to the park where the service was held adjacent to the memorial. Following the opening remarks by Kinkaseki Committee Chairman Jeff Cox, and an address from the Commonwealth and Allied representatives by Mr. Sam Gerovich of the Australian Industry and Commerce Office in Taipei, each of the ex-POWs was featured at the ceremony. Sid Dodds gave an emotional reading of the poem "Gloomy Taiwan" as he remembered his mates and their time at Kinkaseki.

Stan Vickerstaff read the poem "Remembering", followed by Jack Edwards and Maurice Rooney telling of their remembrances of Kinkaseki. Ben Slack then read the poem "We Will Remember Them", and Rev. Graham Doyle offered a prayer for remembrance and peace.

After the very moving main service, poppy wreaths were laid by the POWs, the War Veterans, the Commonwealth and Allied representatives, and the Kinkaseki Memorial Committee. A minute's silence was observed and the ceremony concluded with the playing of "Amazing Grace" on the bagpipes.

As Chairman Jeff Cox so aptly put it, *"I don't think there was a Remembrance Day ceremony anywhere in the world this year that could have been more meaningful than this one."*



"Ex-POW's (L-R) Jack Edwards, Stan Vickerstaff, Sid Dodds, Ben Slack and Maurice Rooney in front of the Kinkaseki Memorial"

We want to specially thank Cathay Pacific Airways; Stanley Yen, Cathy McBeath and the staff of the Grand Hotel; The Canadian Trade Office in Taipei; Anny Tsao - ANZ Bank; Lee Ting; Reverend Graham Doyle and Piper Robert Noakes for their generosity and kind assistance in making our remembrance weekend possible.

The men were thrilled to see the memorial and the information plaques erected in honour of all the former POWs of Kinkaseki, and all expressed their gratitude - and that of many ex-POWs and their families back in England, to the members of the Taiwan expat community - and the local people as well, for what has been done here. We can only say that they are very welcome and so deserving of any honour we could bestow on them.

LAST POST

We are sad to announce the passing of several Kinkaseki men during the past year - our deepest sympathies go out to their families and friends, with the assurance that they have not - and will not, be forgotten.

ANDREW CAMERON	- Sgt., 2ND. Btn., Gordon Highlanders - February 1998
ALBERT LAWTON	- Spr., Royal Engineers - April 3, 1998
ARTHUR WALKER	- Gnr., 155TH Field Reg't., R.A. - May 8, 1998
MICHAEL ROWLANDS	- Tpr., 18TH Btn. Recon. Corps. - November 7, 1998
BILL CHAMBERS	- Gnr., 148TH Field Reg't., R.A. - December 1998
JACK TURNER	- Gnr., 80TH Anti-Tank Reg't., R.A. - January 1, 1999
JOHN WAUGH	- Sgt., 155TH Field Reg't., R.A. - January 22, 1999
GEORGE ANGUS	- Bdr., 80TH Anti-Tank Reg't., R.A. - January 23, 1999

"Let us Not Forget Them!"

THE KINKASEKI MEMORIAL CONSTRUCTION PROJECT IS FINALLY COMPLETED . . .

With the installation of the three memorial plaques which we spoke of in our last newsletter, the placing of a historical plaque on the old gatepost, and the construction of a low wall along one side of the monument, the Kinkaseki POW Memorial in Chinguashi is now finally complete.

The plaques are made of stainless steel with the characters and letters engraved and filled with enamel. These plaques are beautifully done and should withstand years of weather. We decided to go with this material and format as that is what the local government has used for their tourism information signs in the area.

With these plaques, visitors to the area will get a clear and concise account of the Kinkaseki POW Camp, and also learn of the sufferings of the POWs more than fifty years ago. The plaque on the gatepost serves to identify it as a historical site, which will hopefully ensure its survival.

We want to thank all those who supported this project by becoming "Friends of Kinkaseki", and for those who gave in other ways. Your contributions helped to push this last phase of the memorial project over the top to completion.

IN CONCLUSION..... FOR THE FUTURE

It has now been decided that with the completion of the POW memorial, information plaques and wall at the site, the Kinkaseki Memorial Committee has concluded the work it was formed to do and therefore will be stood down.

A new society, called the TAIWAN POW CAMPS MEMORIAL SOCIETY has recently been formed to further the work begun by the Kinkaseki Memorial Committee. The aim of the society is to do research on all the former POW camps on Taiwan, and to try to locate those camps and the POWs who were interned in them. Most importantly, the new committee wants to ensure that the survivors of these camps know that they and their mates have not been forgotten.

The director of the Taiwan POW Camps Memorial Society is Michael Hurst, the founder and first chairman of the Kinkaseki Memorial Committee. The directors and advisors are made up of members of the British, Canadian, Australia/New Zealand and American communities in Taipei.

The society will send newsletters to all "Friends", and will participate in activities pertaining to the memorial and the annual remembrance service held in November each year.

For information on the Kinkaseki Memorial and the other POW camps on Taiwan, you may contact the TAIWAN POW CAMPS MEMORIAL SOCIETY at the above address and phone/fax numbers.

INSCRIPTION ON THE POW MEMORIAL

One of the POWs wrote in after receiving our last newsletter and asked if we might put the exact text that is on the memorial in our next newsletter. In answer to that request, here is the text on the monument -

IN MEMORY OF
THE MORE THAN 1000 GALLANT MEN
OF THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH
AND ALLIED FORCES, WHO SUFFERED
BRUTAL AND SAVAGE TREATMENT
HERE AND IN THE NEARBY
COPPER MINE, AND OTHER PLACES IN
TAIWAN, AS PRISONERS OF WAR OF
THE JAPANESE, FROM 1942 TO 1945.
THEIR SOULS REMAIN HERE FOREVER.

"NONE OF US SHOULD FORGET"
DEDICATED 23 NOVEMBER 1997

THE SURVIVORS SAY THANK YOU!

As mentioned in our last issue, we want to bring you a few more excerpts from the letters we have received from ex-POWs who have received our Kinkaseki Memorial commemorative package. Although the Committee is often mentioned, these thank-you's go to all of our supporters as well, for without you, we would not have this beautiful memorial in what was once such a desolate and horrible place. We can all be proud of what we have achieved here in Taiwan and for the remembrance it creates for the long-forgotten POWs of the Japanese in WWII.

From Frank Buttifant, England - POW #76 - "A big thank you to all the members of your magnificent committee, and all the Commonwealth and Allied community in Taiwan, by whose hard work and labour of love, has finally brought to fruition this most wonderful Kinkaseki Memorial. I'm sure these comments are echoed by all living ex-Kinkaseki POWs and also their families. My grateful thanks to everyone who had a part in the building of this memorial, sited in the very place where so much pain and hardship was endured."

From Stan Vickerstaff, England - POW #1146 - "I was surprised and delighted to receive your package and quite overwhelmed by its contents. It is hard for old POWs like myself to realise that there are persons who were not themselves involved in the war who will go to such trouble (and expense) to honour the men who were unfortunate enough to be sent to Kinkaseki and to create such an impressive memorial to their memory. I do believe that apart from what has already been written, those who survived the clutches of Kinkaseki thought that we had been forgotten. Our heartfelt thanks are due to all those who have contributed to its creation."

Note: Stan was one of the survivors who was with us in November.

From Jack Butterworth, England - POW #1027 - "I did not realise that there was such an organization behind the project. It is wonderful and deeply moving that people should think about those who spent time in that copper mine. Thank you for what you have done to perpetuate the memory of the men at Kinkaseki."

From George Harrison, England - POW #608 - "My sincere thanks to you and your committee for the Kinkaseki Memorial commemorative programme and for the medallion, which I will treasure. On behalf of those who suffered and died, and also us who survived and feel the effects of that experience still, you have done a great deed."

From Fred Holdsworth, England - POW #242 - "First may I say a very big thank you to your committee for sending the brochure and coin. God bless the people of Taiwan, especially the committee and the residents of Taipei for this wonderful memorial. I shall not forget that hell-hole as the end of my ring finger is buried down there! Thank you all again for your interest in the survivors of Kinkaseki."

From Mrs. Margaret Hooks, England - widow of Bombardier David Hooks - POW #246 - "I appreciate very much what you are doing so that others who have never heard of Kinkaseki might learn and appreciate just what these men suffered during that time. It is nice to know that there is a Kinkaseki memorial to these men and to those who died there."

From Dick Middleton, Scotland - POW #983 - "Thank you so much for the Kinkaseki medallion - it really was a great thrill - the moment I took it from its case, I met all my old friends again. Thank you for what you have done for me - you have lifted a great cloud from my body."

FROM THE KINKASEKI COMMITTEE....

This will be our last official newsletter as the Kinkaseki Memorial Committee.

On behalf of our past three chairmen - Michael Hurst, Michael Boyden and Jeff Cox; fellow committee members - John Chandler, Dawson Kwauk and Al Hauske; and advisors - Alan Collins, Hugh Stephens, Sam Gerovich and David Mulroney - we want to thank all those who have supported these endeavours to build this wonderful memorial to the men who suffered and died, in the awful POW camp at Kinkaseki - and in other places in Taiwan. We have really appreciated all the enthusiasm and support of our many friends over these past two years, and we hope that this wonderful project has been as meaningful for you as it was for us.

In the words of Jack Edwards -
"NONE OF US SHOULD FORGET",
- and thanks to this memorial -
none of us ever will!