



Never Forgotten

The Official Newsletter of the TAIWAN P.O.W. CAMPS MEMORIAL SOCIETY
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FALL 1999

POW NEWS!!



TOGETHER AGAIN - Twenty eight former Kinkaseki POWs gathered this summer for a long overdue reunion. - for some, the first time in more than fifty years.

UK KINKASEKI REUNION A GREAT SUCCESS!!!

SITE OF FORMER HEITO POW CAMP DISCOVERED BY TPCMS TEAM



On September 11, 1999 members of the TPCMS team stand on the site of the former HEITO POW Camp

TAIWAN POW CAMPS MEMORIAL SOCIETY

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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 participate with the Commonwealth and Allied community each year in a memorial service for the Taiwan POWs at Kinkaseki
- 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!'

The former Kinkaseki Memorial website has been enlarged and the Taiwan POW Camps Memorial Society has become the "umbrella" site for all the POW camps on Taiwan. The address has been changed from the previous Kinkaseki site.

Please visit our homepage at -

[http://www.powtaiwan.org/](http://www.powtaiwan.org)

Please sign our guestbook and give us your comments and if there is anything you would like to see added.

Our email address is - society@powtaiwan.org

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Thought...

"It's the people who challenge the impossible who change the world! "

UK KINKASEKI REUNION - A HUGE SUCCESS

by Michael Hurst

This summer, for the first time since the end of World War II, the survivors of the infamous Kinkaseki POW Camp at Chinguashi, got together for a Kinkaseki POW reunion.

It was principally organized by ex-POW Maurice Rooney, who had visited Taiwan last year for the annual remembrance service, along with Stan Vickerstaff, Ben Slack and Jack Butterworth - a FEPOW newsletter editor in the UK.

My wife and I had the privilege to travel to the UK to join in the reunion, which was held at the holiday resort of Gunton Hall in Suffolk on the east coast of England. I was also hoping to meet other ex-Kinkaseki men on my travels throughout the UK after the reunion, and to learn more of the POWs' story. We arrived in London on July 5 and had three pleasant days of sightseeing. On the evening of July 7 a small group of ex-POWs gathered at the Union Jack Club for a dinner and get-together. These men, principally from the London FEPOW Club, were unable to attend the larger reunion but had wanted to meet us to say thank you for the memorial which was built here in Taiwan in their honour and memory. We had a great time of fellowship and the evening turned out to be too short for all that we wanted to do.



After dinner at the London reunion

Then it was up to Gunton Hall for what turned out to be a most wonderful weekend for everyone. POWs who had not met, or seen each other for 40 – 50 years had an emotional time as they recounted stories from those past days. Some of the men had been in the same regiment but had never known what happened to their mates. Others had kept in contact over the years, and it was so great to seem them having a good time together all weekend.

Altogether there were 28 former Kinkaseki men, a number of their wives, several widows, and sons and daughters of the POWs in attendance – totaling over 65 people.

Every evening rousing sing-songs were held around the piano in the lounge, and despite the age of the participants (most of them around 80 years old), these often lasted until the “wee hours” of the morning. Everyone had a great time reminiscing and singing together.

Before going to the UK we had made considerable preparations for the reunion. My wife and I had produced four videos on Kinkaseki and the building and dedication of the memorial, which we showed in the afternoon sessions. We were pleased that one particular video, entitled “Kinkaseki –

Then and Now” sparked everyone’s interest as it showed what Kinkaseki looks like now compared with 55 years ago. I was able to interview many of the FEPOWs and learned much more about their experiences at Kinkaseki and the other POW camps on Taiwan. It was truly a moving and heartwarming experience for us to meet so many of the Kinkaseki survivors and their families, and to see their deep appreciation for what we as a Commonwealth community have done here in Taiwan for their memory.

As I talked with so many of them one central message kept coming through. It was that they hoped that they and their comrades - some of whom had died here in Taiwan, would never be forgotten – that is all they really want. I was so proud to show them that because of the Kinkaseki POW Memorial and the care and concern of the Commonwealth community here – that this would never happen - they would always be remembered!



The evening sing-a-longs were a lot of fun for all.

After the reunion we were privileged to stay with a number of the FEPOWs. We were guests at the home of Maurice and Barbara Rooney in Norfolk, Ben Slack in Lincolnshire and Stan Vickerstaff in Nottinghamshire. While staying with these wonderful people we had the opportunity to visit with several more on our travels through the UK. Altogether we saw 42 of the 85 UK ex-Kinkaseki men whom we have contacted so far, 12 of the 32 widows and next of kin, and a number of other POWs who had been interned in Taiwan but not at the Kinkaseki Camp. Many of these latter contacts provided much-needed information that will surely help in locating some of the other Taiwan camps. It was wonderful trip – and one of the most meaningful and rewarding experiences I have had since undertaking all this POW memorial work more than 2 1/2 years ago.



The survivors of the Jungle Camp are happier now!

The Discovery of Taiwan Camp #3 - HEITO

by Michael Hurst



The old narrow-gauge rail-line can still be found beside the former Heito Camp #3

After more than a year of study, research and investigation into old WWII POW camp reports and records, and after a considerable amount of correspondence with ex-POWs, a team from the Taiwan POW Camps Memorial Society was finally ready to try to locate the site of the former Taiwan POW Camp #3 at Heito - the old Japanese name for Ping Tung.

Since some of the POWs worked in the sugar factory at PingTung during their captivity, we had contacted the historical and public relations departments of Taiwan Sugar Co. to see what information could be gleaned. We were also given the name of a local Taiwanese historian in the Ping Tung area who knew of a former camp guard who might be able to help us.

There were four members on the team. and as we set out for Ping Tung City on Friday September 10 our hopes ran high. Stuart Saunders, Gerry Norris and I spent most of the day driving in Stuart's car, and finally arrived in PingTung around 3:30pm. We found the old Taiwan Sugar Co. factory and interviewed Mr. Huang from the PR Dep't. there, who showed us around and let us take photos of the old plant. It has been closed for many years but there is still a lot to be seen. The POWs worked there during the sugar harvest season and some were in the factory when the Americans bombed Heito camp in February 1945.

That night we picked up our fourth member, Jack Geddes, who had flown down late in the afternoon after work. We made our final preparations, and hoped that everything would go according to plan for the next day. Early the next morning we met the local historian, Miss Huang, who had arranged for us to meet with the former POW camp guard who was going to show us where the camp was located. She had made contact with his family earlier that week.

As we drove through the countryside and came upon the fields of sugar cane, the whole scenario began to unfold in my mind - it was just like some of the POWs had described it from those many years ago.

We arrived at the home of Mr. Lin, the former camp guard. He was working in his back garden and as we approached, gave us a friendly wave.

I had a lot of questions prepared for him and the interview went well. I was a bit nervous at first, because of the stories I had heard from the POWs about some of the Formosan guards and how they treated the POWs in those days. I wanted to find out his role and was pleasantly surprised to learn that he was conscripted as a "perimeter guard" - that is, one of the guards who patrolled outside the camp in case the POWs tried to escape. The POWs had to bow to him on their way to work or in the fields if he came round - like they did every other guard, but he never really came in contact with the prisoners and was never instructed to hit or abuse them.

It turned out that he is - and was then - a Christian, and he felt very sorry for the plight of the POWs. He said he often tried to cheer them with a smile and sometimes gave them cigarettes if he could get some. He was most co-operative in telling us many things about the Japanese and the "inside" guards.

He told us of Tamaki, the camp commandant and how ruthless and cruel he was. There was also Sgt. Chiba who he said was a real animal and even the Formosan guards didn't like him.

I asked about the camp cemetery and he knew right where that was too. He said the Japanese used to take the bodies there, along with several of the POWs who formed the burial party. Later, after finishing the interview, we piled into several cars and headed off for the site of the former camp and cemetery.

The old camp is now a military base so we were denied access, but we were permitted to look around the outside. There is nothing inside the base now from those former times, so nothing was lost. There are now groves of tall palm trees all around the site of the former camp - whereas in the old days there was nothing - just open fields and blistering sun.

The area around the site of the former camp hasn't changed much since wartime. In front of the camp there are still sprawling fields of sugar cane, and others still covered with rocks and stones. The old narrow-gauge railway lines criss-cross the area and can easily be identified from the maps and sketches supplied by some of the ex-POWs whom I have interviewed.



A scene from the past - fields of stones and sugar cane, unchanged from POW days!

We walked along some of the old rail lines and talked to one of the older neighbours who remembered the POWs and their time there.

The former POW cemetery is situated just off the main rail line about 6 km. from the camp. It was part of a larger Chinese cemetery, which still exists, although the former POW burial ground is no longer there.

The bodies were all removed by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission in 1946 and re-buried at Sai-Wan Bay POW Cemetery in Hong Kong, along with the men from Kinkaseki and the other POW camps on Taiwan. The site is now a large grassy area amidst a grove of palms.

It was an exciting experience to be walking the pages of history once again, and to find real evidence of that former time and place. That makes six of the former POW camps that have been found to date, and we have been greatly encouraged by this trip to carry on in our search for the rest.

We are thankful to all those who helped us with our quest - those POWs who supplied information and leads, Mr. Huang and Mr. Ou Yang from Taiwan Sugar, Miss Huang and her assistants in Ping Tung, and especially to Mr. Lin and his family for their help and co-operation and understanding.

We are thankful too, for our many friends who continually encourage us. Thank you for your interest and your support, and stay with us as we'll have more news for you in the months to come!

WELCOME !

We want to welcome two new members to our organization. Jack Hsu, who works for the Taipei City Gov't., has joined the board because of his interest in local history and the POWs' story. He has been very keen to help in the past year and will be a valuable addition to the team.

Also, we now have a representative in New Zealand for the TPCMS. Mr. Lawrie Philpott, ex-NZ Navy ret. and WWII veteran, has been involved with us right from the start. He was aboard the HMS Bermuda when it came into Keelung harbour in September 1945 to rescue the POWs. He is now trying to help us locate former Taiwan POWs living in New Zealand.

UPDATE ON POW CAMP. . .

In the last issue of NEVER FORGOTTEN, we mentioned that the "Taihoku-Mosak" POW camp was still a mystery, as we had no confirmation of the existence of such a camp.

Since then, through more research and the information received from one of the former POWs, we have now established that this was in fact one of the camps, and have formally added it to our list of camps to search for.

The camp was only a temporary facility - used to house the very senior officers and civilian governors, while they were in transit from Taiwan to Japan. There was a total of 32 persons interned in this camp - somewhere in the hills near Taihoku (Taipei). If any of our readers can help with information regarding this camp, please contact us.

LIST OF TAIWAN POW CAMPS. . .

1. KINKASEKI (CHINGUASHI) - found
2. TAICHU (TAICHUNG) - found
3. HEITO (PINGTUNG) - found
4. SHIRAKAWA (CHIAYI)
5. TAIHOKU #1/5 ? (TAIPEI)
6. TAIHOKU #6 (TAIPEI)
7. KARENKO (HUALIEN) - found
8. TAMAZATO (YULI) - found
9. KUKUTSU (TAIPEI) - found
10. TAIHOKU - OKA (TAIPEI)
11. TAIHOKU - MOSAK (TAIPEI)

ALICE'S STORY. . .

I received a letter from a dear lady in the UK just two days before we left for the south of Taiwan to try to locate the site of the former Heito POW Camp. Her name is Alice Myerscough, and her story is a very heart-warming one.

It seems Alice's fiancée, L/Sgt. Alan T. Bowman of the 125th Anti-tank Reg't. R.A., died as a POW while at Heito Camp and was buried in the local POW cemetery there.

Alice never married - such was her love for her former fiancée. She has lived all her life with her memories of him and their brief time together before the war.

For many years she has wanted so much to come to Taiwan to see the place where her dearest friend had spent the last years of his life, and the place where he had been buried. However, she knew no-one in Taiwan and didn't know where to begin to look for the Heito Camp and former cemetery.

She knew that Alan's body had been removed from the old cemetery in Taiwan by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and had been re-buried at Sai-Wan Bay POW Cemetery in Hong Kong, but she wanted to see where he had been buried the first time and the camp where he worked.

Repeated attempts to gain information from various sources including the Royal British Legion, the War Graves Commission, the Imperial War Museum and finally, the Taiwan government, turned up nothing. Then she heard of the Taiwan POW Camps Memorial Society through a friend in the UK and contacted our UK rep, Maurice Rooney. Maurice suggested she write to us, and "the rest is history" as they say.

When I called her later on the same day as I had received her letter, and told her we were about to leave for Heito, she was thrilled.

Since she had brought up the part about wanting to see the cemetery where her fiancée was temporarily buried, that gave us another objective, so I rushed out and got another topographical map, as the War Graves Commission had given map references for a completely different area than what we had for Heito Camp. We re-plotted everything and added the cemetery to our itinerary at the last moment.

ALICE'S STORY con't

When we returned from our great weekend at Heito, I phoned Alice again with the news of our discoveries. She was so pleased that now she could finally make the trip to Taiwan. As I expected, she is making plans to come out this year for a visit. I told her about our annual remembrance service and we hope she will be able to join us for this event.

REMEMBRANCE DAY 1999

The Commonwealth Remembrance Committee is the new organization responsible for the Remembrance Day ceremonies to be held in Taipei each year in November. This year, Canada will be responsible for organising the events, working in conjunction with Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the respective local community organizations.

The date for this year's events is November 20 - 21, and like last year, the weekend will have various activities relating to Remembrance Day, and in particular to the former Taiwan POWs.

This year we are honoured to have four former Kinkaseki POWs with us - Jack Edwards from Hong Kong, and Ben Gough, Jim Scott and John Marshall who will be coming from the UK..

The Banker's Club will once again be the venue for the annual POW Banquet to be held on Saturday evening, November 20.

Following this, on Sunday November 21st, the annual Remembrance Service will take place at the Kinkaseki POW Memorial in the village of Chinguashi at 2:00 pm.

Because of difficulties in past years with getting everyone out to Chinguashi on time for the service, this year a bus will be chartered to take everyone to the site. In order to make the bus viable, everyone's co-operation is needed in reserving their place as soon as possible so a tally can be taken of all those going and the required space provided. The bus will depart from the Canadian Trade Office - 365 Fushing N. Rd., Taipei at 11:30 am.

The cost for these events will be NT\$1000 for the dinner on Saturday evening, and NT\$300 for the bus on Sunday.

Reservations for both these events are required. Seating for the POW Banquet is limited to 40 persons, so be sure to get your reservation in early. Reservations for both the dinner and the bus can be made by calling Josh Hodgson at the Canadian Trade Office in Taipei at 2547-9555. The deadline for reservations is 5:00pm November 12, 1999.

We hope that all those who are interested - including the former "Friends of Kinkaseki" will come out and participate in this important ceremony to remember those who sacrificed so much for us.

PLEASE NOTE: The Remembrance Day church service will be held at the Church of the Good Shepherd in Shilin, on Sunday November 14 this year.

POPPIES - will be on sale from November 1st at the British Trade and Cultural Office, the Canadian Trade Office, BCCT, the Canadian Society, the British School, and the Church of the Good Shepherd in Shilin. Please buy and wear a poppy in remembrance of our veterans.

NEW MEMORIALS !!!

--- "TAIWAN POW CAMPS MEMORIAL SOCIETY" IS HOPING TO PLACE MEMORIALS AT TWO MORE POW CAMPS.

The TPCMS has recently been negotiating with government officials and local residents in both Taichung County and Taipei County in the hopes of placing a POW Memorial stone at both the former POW camps of Taichu near Wufeng, and Kukutsu, near Taipei.

The Kukutsu Camp was located in the spring of 1997, when former Canadian Trade Office Director, Hugh Stephens, Michael Hurst and Jack and Polly Edwards made a trip to the countryside south of Taipei city in search of the camp.

The Taichu POW Camp was located in October 1998 by Michael and Tina Hurst after months of research and with the aid of notes and sketches provided by the POWs, most notably Sid Dodds.

These two camps are quite significant to the Kinkaseki story as well, for many of the men who slaved at the mine came from the camp at Taichu. Among them were former POWs Sid Dodds, Maurice Rooney and Ben Slack - who were with us last November for the 1998 Remembrance Service.

Many also know the story of the Kinkaseki survivors who went to the Kukutsu Camp after the mine closed down in the spring of 1945. Jack Edwards, Maurice Rooney and Stan Vickerstaff - who were with us previously, and three of the POWs coming to this year's Remembrance Weekend were at the Kukutsu Camp.

Negotiations are going well and it is hoped that the memorial stones can be in place by this November.

The Society has selected two pieces of green Hualien marble, and the cost - including engraving, runs around NT\$10,500.00 each. The Memorial stones measure approximately three feet wide by two feet high and will be placed in a small garden at each location.

We are sending out an appeal to all former "Friends of Kinkaseki" and others who are interested in helping to remember and honour the former POWs with these two memorial stones. If just 21 people donate NT\$1000 each, then the job can be completed. The TPCMS is looking after the transportation and installation of the stones, but we would like to give the Commonwealth community a chance to share in their cost. Donations may be sent to the Society c/o our mailing address - please send by registered mail.

For further information please contact us by phone, fax or email. Thank you for your care and consideration.

UPDATE -

On Saturday October 23, we received permission to erect the POW Memorial stone on the site of the former Kukutsu Camp in Taipei County! Work is now underway and it is expected the stone will be in place in time for a dedication ceremony in November. We are anticipating getting the go ahead for the one at Taichu, in about two weeks time.

THE TRAIL OF THE AUSTRALIANS

- AN UPDATE - From Sid Dodds

Sid writes . . . "I have contacted the Veterans Affairs newsletter and so far it has produced one more Kinkaseki survivor. Please send him one of the memorial packages as he is anxious to see what has been done there in our memory. (Ed. Done and letter of thanks has been received already).

I also received a telephone call from a chap who worked on the "Railway", and I have been contacted by two widows of former Australian POWs who worked in the mines in Japan, so you see, the word is getting around.

I've been in touch with the former wife (living in Australia) of one of the Kinkaseki men who died at Heito Camp in 1944. Her details are as follows - can you please send her a memorial package? (Ed. - Done)

I have three more names of ex-Kinkaseki men in the UK and I hope you can make a contact and that they are still around. (Ed. - contact made and three memorial packages sent out to these men.)

I have given the list of names you sent to the Veteran Affairs newsletter and I expect it to be published in their next quarterly paper, as we just missed the last issue. Hopefully it will lead to us finding some of the former Aussie Taiwan POWs.

I'm afraid that's all the news there is for now, so until next time, take care of yourselves and God bless." Sid

* * * * *

JUST IN TIME. . .

This summer, while at the POW reunion in England, I was given the name of a former Kinkaseki man by one of the other POWs. Upon returning to Taiwan I immediately sent this man - Tom Watson of Dumfries Scotland, a memorial package. I received a letter from his wife a few days before we went to press with this issue. She writes, " Thank you so much for the letter and the enclosed material. Sadly, Tom died on the 23rd September, but he had the pleasure of knowing that he and his colleagues had not been forgotten.

He never spoke a great deal about his experiences, but every now and again he would recall incidents and the people around him then. He kept his courage through everything and humour was the answer to any situation. Thank you again for writing to Tom."

Sincerely, Mrs. N. Watson

(Ed. I have had several similar experiences as I have corresponded with the POWs and their families over the past two years. Some we have reached "just in time", while for several others it has been "just a little too late". This shows the urgent need to get the message of Kinkaseki and the other former Taiwan POW camps out while we still have time.)

"COFEPOW"

- An Organization Everyone Should Know About

It all began with the story of a lost POW diary, and has resulted in the formation of one of the most useful organizations for the POWs since the war!

In 1994, a Norfolk lady - Carol Cooper, read an article in a local newspaper about a man who had purchased an old POW diary at an auction. When she found out that the diary had belonged to her father, she contacted the man but he refused to sell it to her. After some months of effort she was able to obtain the diary with help from a producer at the BBC. The BBC then took her to Thailand to retrace the steps her father had taken as a POW before his death in Burma. They also made a film about her story..

During her trip Carol saw the places where the POWs slaved and learned about their terrible ordeal. On her return home, and after the film was released, she received many calls from other children of POWs, and so in the fall of 1997 decided to form an organization for them.

"COFEPOW" - the Children and Families of Far East Prisoners of War - is an organization dedicated to ensuring that the memory of the fathers, uncles, brothers, and cousins who gave so much for their country will never be forgotten, and to the building of a memorial for all the FEPOWs.

Since 1945 there has been no official National Memorial from the British Government - at home or abroad, in memory of their own men who died, or depicting the courage of those who survived.

Carol says, "They were British servicemen, our fathers and brothers, and they deserve to be honoured, not forgotten. The ordinary men and women of this country can preserve their memory and fate - a fate that the government wants buried and forgotten. If we, their children and families do not act now to build a lasting Memorial, their memory will be lost to future generations."

COFEPOW is now a registered charitable organization in the UK, and has more than doubled its membership each year since it was formed. They have a new website on the internet and will keep adding to it in the days ahead. The website address is -

www.rjt.co.uk/cofepow/index.htm

If you are a son, daughter or other family member of a Far East Prisoner of War, or wish more information on how you can help, you can contact **COFEPOW at - 20 BURGH ROAD, GORLESTON, GT. YARMOUTH, NORFOLK, NR31 8BE ENGLAND**

- email - maitto:carol.cooper@rjt.co.uk

“SEEKING PRIVATE BROWNING. . .”

A few weeks ago we received the following email from Mr. Russell Brooke of Atlanta Georgia, USA . . .

“I am looking for information on Harry R. Browning, a Private in the US Army Medical Corps during WW2. He was captured on Bataan in 1942 and was a POW at Bataan, Cabanatuan, and Bilibid, in the Philippines. Then he was transferred to Formosa and a POW camp there. In the spring of 1945 he was transferred to Camp Hoten in Mukden, Manchuria. In August 1945, he was liberated from Camp Hoten and returned to the US. His service number was 6287686 and his Mukden camp number was 1837. His address as listed on the Camp Hoten roster was Pupeio, Arkansas. I would like very much to get in touch with him or his family if possible. The reason? About 30 years ago I found an old canteen in the North Carolina/Tennessee mountains that H. R. Browning had used during WW2, and etched on the side of the canteen were the names of the various Japanese POW camps where he had been interned. I would like to find him and return it, and this quest has been going on for 30 years. Until your web site and memorial, I did not know how to look for H.R. Browning on Formosa. I think what you are doing is great and would like to encourage you and offer help from this end. All the best, “

Russell Brooke, Atlanta, GA

Mr. Brooke and I have continued our correspondence, and from the research that we have done thus far, and with help from some other American ex-POWs, we have been able to piece together more of the story of Pte. Browning.

Harry R. Browning, a young Arkansas lad of between 18 and 22 years, was captured at the fall of Bataan in 1942. Along with thousands of other Americans he could have been involved in the infamous Bataan Death March and was later interned as a POW at Camp O'Donnell, Cabanatuan and Bilibid in the Philippines. Many of the Americans stayed at Bilibid Camp for a good part of their captivity, but from records studied, it appears that Browning did not stay there long. His name was not found on the list of long-term POWs there, so we are guessing he was just there for a short time. We know he was only in Mukden for three/four months, at most, so our guess would be, he spent most of his time in Taiwan.

We know that there were quite a number who went from the Philippines to Taiwan for various periods of time. Some were there only a short while, awaiting re-shipment to Japan, while others - it seems Pte. Browning was among them, stayed for longer periods.

Being a private he would not have been at one of the senior officers' camps, so it is likely that he could have only been at one or two others.

Most of the American POWs went to the camp in the very south of Taiwan, called HEITO - which was also listed as Taiwan POW Camp #3. Later, some of these, particularly the junior officers, were moved north to another camp called Shirakawa, or Taiwan POW Camp #4.

This was a camp where officers from Britain, USA, and Holland were interned, but there were also some “other ranks” there as well. Some of these officers and men were later transferred to Japan and Mukden, while others finished out the war in Taiwan. Being in the medical corps, it is likely that Pte. Browning could have worked in the camp “hospital” at one of either of these two camps. That could explain his length of stay in Taiwan. There were no real “hospitals” - only POW huts that were used as medical treatment centers. However, that too was a joke as the Japanese provided no medicines or medical equipment for the care of the POWs.

Occasionally the doctors or orderlies had a few things they had managed to carry and which were not confiscated in the many searches. These provided some crude tools for caring for the POWs, but as a rule in every camp there was almost nothing to work with!

If, as often happened, the Japanese did not recognize Pte. Browning's medical talents, he may have just been put on a work party. At Heito - the most likely place a private would have been interned, that would be picking rocks to clear old river valley land for the planting of sugar cane. The POWs did this job for the better part of three years until the camp was bombed by American planes in February of 1945. Then the camp was evacuated and the POWs were moved to the north to Taihoku (Taipei), or sent on to Japan.

Either of these scenarios could explain why Pte. Browning remained in Taiwan until the spring of 1945. I would rather suspect that he was with the group that moved from Heito to Shirakawa, as his name can be found on a listing of other POWs who were probably in both those camps before being moved to Japan in the spring of '45.

Since this newsletter also appears on our website, it is hoped that we might find “someone out there” who might have known Pte. Harry Browning during their time together as POWs, or someone who might have known him after the war back in the States. If anyone has any more information with regards to Pte. Browning, please contact us as soon as possible. We want this story to have a positive ending, and we hope you will help us as we are. . .

SEEKING PRIVATE BROWNING !!

FOLLOW UP ON THE LIST OF AMERICAN EX-POWS -

by Jerome Keating

As mentioned in the last issue, the American Ex-Prisoner of War Association supplied us with a list of names of the Americans who spent time in the Taiwan POW Camps. We have begun contacting them to fill in another part of the history of POWs on Taiwan.

From what we have learned thus far, it appears that the majority of Americans came from the Philippines and spent only a brief time in Taiwan before being moved on to camps in Japan. Their usual landing point was Kaohsiung Harbor.

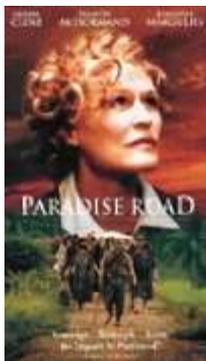
David Brenzel (Oregon, WI) passed on a copy of "Shakedown" a lengthy piece detailing POW experiences in Taiwan. It is too long to put in detail now but one humorous incident is included on language and communications. It seems that the Japanese interpreter, "Boris," liked to practice his English by often quizzing the POWs with "Why did you join the Army?" One day, Balconis, a native of the Bronx, was ready for the question and replied. "I signed up to beat the rap for swiping a dozen jalopies." Even Boris's dictionary was of little help here, so he burst out with "What did he say? He speaks broken English!"

Thomas Gage (Tulsa, OK) who edits the "Philippine Notebook" and keeps in touch with those of the 34th Pursuit Squadron is going to put something in their newsletter to help us gain more information. Tom spent a brief time in Kaohsiung on board a Japanese troop ship heading to Moji, Japan.

Nicholas Harkaway (Bordentown, NJ) is one of the few who spent his full prisoner time in Taiwan. With others, he had tried to take a native banka from Palawan in the Philippines to Mainland China and was picked up by a Japanese destroyer. He recalls being in camps with 12 Dutch merchant marines as well as British and Australian prisoners.

Each has many stories to tell and we will include them in the future as space allows. At present we just want to share with our readers that we are getting information from this sector as well. Please contact us if you have additional knowledge that you can share

- A MOVIE YOU MUST SEE!!



"PARADISE ROAD"

- A TRUE POW STORY...

- Released in late 1996, this poignant film by Australian filmmaker, Martin Meader, tells the story of a group of women POWs who managed to survive 3 1/2 years of brutal and cruel captivity at the hands of the Japanese in World War Two.

The key to their survival and to keeping their spirits high through those terrible times, was the formation of a choir by one of the captured nurses.

At the fall of Singapore, many of the civilian women and children were put onto ships and sent away from the colony, only to be torpedoed and attacked by the Japanese navy and air force. In one of the greatest wartime atrocities, many of the ships were sunk with their innocent victims. Those who did escape drowning and managed to get to nearby land, were either machine-gunned down as they staggered onto the beaches, or taken captive by the Japanese. What followed for these women and children was three years of unspeakable horror and fear. Many died - but some survived to tell this true story of courage and defiance against all odds.

Martin Meader heard a recital of the songs that were composed and sung by the unique POW choir, and was so captivated by the story that he decided to make a film to share it with the world. The movie, starring renowned actresses Glenn Close and Frances McDormand and directed by Bruce Beresford (Driving Miss Daisy), cost \$26 million to make, and when first released drew rave reviews. It is based on the true story of the women and children and the choir they formed in defiance of the Japanese order that they could not associate in groups.

They secretly practised each evening, and if caught, they were beaten and their already meagre food rations cut. Because of the many different nationalities in the group, there were no words to the songs they performed - they only hummed the tunes, but the sound was so beautiful, some say it may have been divinely inspired.

The sad thing about this movie is that it was pulled from the theatres after showing for only one week. The reason - according to the studio that released it - was "that it was not doing well" and would be re-released later on video.

The truth of the matter - as has been discovered since, is that the major JAPANESE COMPANY who owns the studio, saw the success the film was having and ordered it pulled! After all, how they could they possibly allow such a true movie to go on being shown, and is anyone really surprised by this action?

The other startling truth is - that wherever the movie has been shown it has precipitated great interest once again in the story of the atrocities committed by the Japanese against military and civilian POWs in WW II.

I have been trying to obtain a copy of this film for more than a year - currently it is available only as a rental. This past summer when I questioned one of the largest video rental companies in N. America about the video, they told me it has been very well rented, and that it is "supposed" to come out for general sale "sometime" in the year 2000. However, they could not say for sure, or exactly when it might be available. My guess is that the Japanese company behind this popular studio will either cancel or postpone its release for as long as possible, and who would blame them - for what the movie portrays, they - and all Japanese, should be deeply ashamed.

Get a copy of this movie any way you can and see for yourself - a very well portrayed film of what really happened!

In Memoriam

Albert J. Hausske, a long-time Taipei resident and friend to all the POWs passed away August 21, 1999.

"Al", as he was affectionately known, spent most of his life in the Orient. Born in Chicago of missionary parents, he moved with them to Shansi province of China in 1920 when he was only 4 years old. He had a colorful and exciting life and was always happy to tell his stories to those who were interested in hearing them.

Fluent in Chinese, Al served as a language officer in the U.S. Marines during WW II. He learned Japanese and was part of the 2nd Marine Division that landed on Saipan. His task was to persuade the people of Saipan not to commit suicide, as they had been instructed to do by the Japanese. He was right at the front and faced great dangers in his attempts to save the lives of the local people. While many did die, Al was instrumental in saving hundreds, and was later awarded the Medal of Honor for his role. At war's end he was sent to Kyushu, Japan as commander of four battalions of liberated Chinese POWs. It was his task to get them successfully repatriated home again - which he did.

Al also took part in the Korean War and later worked on behalf of refugees from Communist China in Hong Kong, and for Hungarian Revolution refugees in Yugoslavia.

Al came to Taiwan for the first time in 1954, and from then on divided his time generally between here and Hong Kong. He operated a successful computer business for many years until his retirement. He lived on in Taiwan with his Taiwanese wife Hsiao-mi, who predeceased him in 1997.

I first met Al in the spring of 1997, when I accompanied Jack Edwards on a visit to his home. Al was instrumental in helping to find the site of the Kinkaseki POW Camp back in 1990, and shared a vital interest with us all in seeing some kind of memorial to the POWs built there. Al served on the former Kinkaseki Memorial Committee from its inception and provided much help and guidance during the whole project.

Later Al and I became great friends and we shared many good times discussing his life and the history of WW II. He was a great man, who loved Taiwan and its people, and he will be sadly missed by all who knew him.

- Michael Hurst



Al Hausske (l) with Michael Hurst and Jack Edwards at the Kinkaseki Memorial Weekend in May 1997. (Photo-Polly Edwards)

WORLD POW NEWS. . . .

JUDGMENT AGAINST JAPAN -

CALIFORNIA - Resolution AJR27 which states that Japan was guilty of wartime atrocities and as such should be made to apologize and pay compensation to all those victims - both military and civilian, who were interned during WW II, was passed by the California Assembly, The Rules Committee and the Senate with an overwhelming majority on August 23.

It was a Japanese-American assemblyman, Mike Honda who brought the bill forward and the only opposition came from another Japanese-American assemblyman who represented a strong Japanese business and government lobby.

The bill which spotlights a growing U.S. movement seeking restitution for Japan's wartime atrocities, is now being introduced in a number of other states.

"It's a way to educate the public about the issues," Honda told Reuters. "The pan-Asian communities and ex-POWs have been waiting a long time to see this happen."

The California resolution, was sent to Japan's diplomatic representatives in the United States, and Congress has been asked to pass a similar official demand for reparations and the president to "take all appropriate action" to secure a formal apology from Japan and compensation for war victims.

Honda's resolution opens a new front in a global push to force Tokyo to atone for what many see as wartime crimes.

--- from the Director

The TPCMS has been very busy since our last newsletter in the spring, as you have seen from the articles in this issue. A fantastic POW tour in the UK this summer, the discovery trip to the former Heito POW Camp, the POW Memorial stone project for the Taichu and Kukutsu camps, sending out commemorative packages to ex-POWs we have located in various parts of the world - all this done for the memory and honour of the former POWs!

But there is still so much to do. We need to raise the funds for the two POW stones, and the research and planning goes on as we seek to find the remainder of the other POW camps and document their histories.

Hopefully we will be able to get the Memorial stones in place at the Taichu and Kukutsu Camps by this November, and we are anticipating a wonderful Remembrance weekend again with our four guest POWs.

Hopefully our many friends and those interested in the POWs' story will join and help us to achieve these goals. We hope to see many out to the remembrance service at Kinkaseki on November 21 and hope that your lives will be enriched as well by the story the POWs have to tell.

Time is running out, so let us do what we can - while we can, to help ensure that the memory of these men is "never forgotten".

Let Us Never Forget!

