



Never Forgotten

Vol. 7, Number 1

SPRING – SUMMER 2006

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

Hellships Memorial Issue



*World War II Hellships Memorial – Subic Bay, Philippines
Dedicated January 22nd, 2006*

- TPCMS Photo



*Laying flowers on behalf of the Taiwan POWs and
the Taiwan POW Camps Memorial Society*

- B. Chester Photo



*Laying a wreath at Kaohsiung Harbour in memory of the
POWs who suffered and died on hellships in Taiwan waters.*

- J. Shively Photo



*Taiwan Hellships Memorial – Chijin Park Kaohsiung,
Dedicated January 26th, 2006*

- TPCMS Photo

REMEMBRANCE WEEK 2006

Be sure to mark the week of November 15 – 22 on your calendars and in your date books, and plan to be with us for this great annual event which features a POW banquet on November 18th and the Remembrance Day service at the Prisoner of War Memorial Park at Kinkaseki on the 19th. We hope that former POWs and their families will make an effort to come as we have a special program prepared for these guests. If you are interested, and for more information, please contact the Society by mail or email at the addresses shown on page 2 of this newsletter. Hope to see you in November!

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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 help with the organization of, and participate in, the Commonwealth and Allied memorial service for the Taiwan POWs at Kinkaseki every November.**
- * to help educate the people of Taiwan in a little-known part of their history.**
- * to provide information to researchers, scholars, museums and POW groups on the Taiwan POWs' story.**

TAIWAN POW CAMPS MEMORIAL SOCIETY ON THE 'NET !

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

Please visit our homepage at -

www.powtaiwan.org

Please give us your comments, questions and suggestions.

Our email address is -

society@powtaiwan.org

* * * * *

Thought . . .

“People may forget the things we say, but they remember that which we do, especially when it is done for others.”

FROM THE DIRECTOR. . .

This has been another very busy year so far and although we don't have any extra events planned like we carried out last year for the 60th Anniversary of the end of the war, it still seems that things keep piling up and there is always something new that needs to be done.

As you will see from the newsletter, the year started off with the completion of the building of the Taiwan Hellships Memorial, necessitating many trips down to the south of the island, and then there was the wonderful WWII Hellships Memorial Tour in the Philippines from January 17 – 24 and the return to Taiwan to dedicate the memorial here from January 25 – 27. (See the stories on pages 6, 7 and 8)

I have also been busily engaged with visits from overseas POW family members, continued work at the new POW Park, efforts to do more research on and update our POW Honour Roll, and also work with the gov't. on several projects for which they have requested my help. Then there are the day to day enquiries, continued research and cataloguing of material, the assembling of materials for my book – which is coming along ever so slowly, so it is easy to see why there is never a dull moment.

I love this work and it is so rewarding when I find new information and hear from new POW survivors or their family members. The thanks I get from those I try to help is very rewarding and it drives me to keep doing more.

Thanks to all of those who continue to give us help, support and encouragement. It is because of this great team effort that we will ensure that the story of the Taiwan POWs is told and that they are "never forgotten".

New Memorial for Toroku POW Camp

The former Toroku POW Camp was situated in a school a little south of the present day city of Toulou in south-central Taiwan. All of the POWs were Americans who came to Taiwan in November 1944 off the hellship *Hokusen Maru*. They stayed at Toroku until mid-January when they were put aboard another hellship and sent on to Japan where they finished out the war.

As we have reported in previous newsletter articles, we found the site several years ago and until November 2003 the last POW building on the island was still standing there. The old school room where the POWs stayed at the time was torn down, but through the continued promotion by TPCMS board member Mark Wilkie who lives nearby, interest is growing in erecting a POW memorial on the site of the former camp.

Negotiations are underway now, plans for the memorial are being drawn up and we hope to have the memorial in place for dedication in November this year. It is also hoped that perhaps one or two former Toroku POWs might return to Taiwan for the dedication ceremony. We'll keep you posted by email and on the website as we have more information and details.

HSINTIEN CITY GOVERNMENT - TU TAN DISTRICT HISTORICAL EXHIBITION

The Tu Tan District is a rural area on the outskirts of Hsintien City, south of Taipei, where the former "Kukutsu" POW Camp is located. In early December the Society was approached by the chairman of the district with a request for our assistance in setting up a display on the former POW camp as part of a special exhibition on the area sponsored by the Hsintien City Government.

For many years the District Chairman - Mr. Lai and his wife, have supported our work and have been a great help in preserving the site of the camp and making the story known to the local people in the area. It is our pleasure to work with them in this effort to make more of the story of Kukutsu Camp known.

The exhibition opened on December 15th and Society Director Michael Hurst gave a few words of thanks to those responsible for the exhibition and also urged all those present to remember the men and the sacrifices they gave for our freedom. The exhibition features the historical, cultural and ecological aspects of the district and will run until June 2006 at the Hsintien History and Culture Centre.



*View of the Kukutsu Camp Exhibit
- prepared by Mr. Chiang Hsiao-fang*



(l-r) Mrs. Lai, District Chairman's wife, Michael Hurst and two senior residents of the Kukutsu area.

In Memoriam

The following former Taiwan POWs and friends 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 - Never Be Forgotten!

ALFRED W. MOUNT

CPL., US MARINES
OCTOBER 3, 2005

AUBREY VIPOND

GNR., 125TH ANTI-TANK REG'T. R.A.
OCTOBER 13, 2005

PETER FARBON

BDR., 148TH FIELD REG'T. R.A.
DECEMBER 13, 2005

CHARLES M. FORRY

19TH BMB. GRP., US ARMY AIR CORPS
DECEMBER 20, 2005

JAMES S. STREET

CAPT., ROYAL ENGINEERS
JANUARY 6, 2006

also

CHARLES TOWNE

US ARMY, ENOURA MARU SURVIVOR
JANUARY 31, 2006

"We Will Remember Them"

DUANE HEISINGER

On May 1st our dear friend Duane Heisinger passed away peacefully, with his family members around him. His daughter Jennifer wrote to tell us, "He lived to the end with honor, courage, humor and goodwill. He was aware of and appreciated the many friends who remembered him with notes, gifts, and prayers."

It was Duane who had the vision several years ago to create a memorial for all those POWs and others who suffered and died on the Japanese hellships during WWII. This January that dream came true with the unveiling of the WWII Hellships Memorial in the Philippines (see pgs. 6 - 8).

Duane's father died aboard the hellship *Enoura Maru* when it was bombed in Kaohsiung Harbour, and he and his wife were among the guests who came to Taiwan in January for the dedication of the Taiwan Hellships Memorial. He will be missed, but he will not be forgotten!

POW HONOUR ROLL

The POW Honour Roll on our website now contains over 4200 names of the former 4344 Taiwan POWs. It is searchable, thus making it easier to find names and details of the former POWs. Click on the section entitled "THE MEN" to view the Honour Roll.

RARE WORLD WAR II UNIT BADGES OBTAINED . . .



9th Indian Div.

11th Indian Div.

18th British Div.

For the past almost six years I have been searching for the badges of the 9th and 11th Indian Divisions that took part in the Battle of Malaya, and the 18th British Division that was sent to re-enforce Singapore in the last days before it fell to the Japanese.

About two years ago one of our loyal supporters in the UK, Paul Morrell, supplied me with a set of 18th British Division patches that he purchased at a flea market. After further years of searching I was beginning to think that there were no badges from the 9th and 11th Indian Divisions still extant, when Paul emailed me in late December last year to let me know that there were complete sets of the 9th and 11th Indian Division - and also a set of the British 18th Division patches up for auction on Ebay.

I wasted no time in checking them out and on January 4th of this year I stayed up til 4 am and won all three auctions. It appears that the Ebay badge buyers did not know the historical significance of the 9th and 11th Indian Divisions and so no bids were offered other than mine. There was an advance bid on the British 18th Division patches but by being up at 4am when the auction closed, I was able to place the final winning bid.

I was overjoyed at obtaining these patches as they are extremely rare since most of the men in those units removed the patches from their uniforms when they were captured after the fall of Singapore so they would not be recognized by the Japanese as coming from the units that had killed so many of their men as they fought their way down the Malaya Peninsula.

The 9th and 11th Indian Divisions were sent to Malaya in the fall of 1941 to defend against the possible threat of an attack by the Japanese. The 9th Indian Division was the first unit in the Pacific War to face the Japanese when they attacked Khotah-Bahru on the morning of December 8th - one hour before the attack on Pearl harbour. The division battled the Japs all the way down the east side of the Malay Peninsula before crossing over to Singapore.

The 11th Indian Division was stationed in the north of Malaya on the western side and met the Japs when they first attacked at Jitra. They fought fiercely taking a great toll on the Japanese during the battle.

Many of the men who were later interned in the Taiwan POW camps - the 5th, 88th, 137th and 155th Field Reg'ts. R.A., and the 80th and 85th Anti-tank Reg'ts., as well as the Royal Signals and Royal Engineers, were included in these famous divisions.

We are so pleased to have their unit patches in our collection to further ensure that the men who served in them will "never be forgotten"!

LIST OF TAIWAN POW CAMPS. . . all found !

1. KINKASEKI #1 (Chinguashi)
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. KUKUTSU (Taipei)
10. OKA (Taipei)
11. TOROKU - (Touliu)
12. INRIN - (Yuanlin)
13. INRIN TEMP. (Yuanlin)
14. TAKAO (Kaohsiung)
15. CHURON (Taipei)

Welcome...

We are pleased to welcome Mr. Michael Reilly, the new Director-General of the British Trade and Cultural Office in Taipei as an ex-officio member of our board of directors as of January this year.

Michael replaces Derek Marsh who left Taiwan in December for a happy retirement. We want to express our appreciation for the interest and support that Derek and his wife Frances gave to our Society and we wish them well and look forward to working with Michael and the staff of the BTCO in the days ahead.

HELP WANTED...

Private Glyn Jones - # 2534703, 1st Battalion, D. Company, Manchester Reg't.

Mrs. Helen Carr has written from the UK asking for information on her father who was a POW in Taiwan. He never spoke of his time as a POW and the family would like to know more about him and his experiences as a POW. He was held at Heito and Taihoku Camp 6. He was very ill at the end of the war when evacuated, and was taken on the New Zealand hospital ship Maunganui to New Zealand for further medical care and treatment before returning home to England.

If there is anyone who knew Pte. Jones – from the Manchester Reg't., or from one or more of the camps, please get in touch with Mrs. Carr at email - helen.carr@merseymail.com.

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 draft/cashier's cheque - made payable to - J. CHEN.

CHINA MUSEUM DELEGATION VISITS TAIWAN

In mid-December 2005 the Society was pleased to play host for a day to a delegation of museum directors from Mainland China who had been invited to Taiwan to take part in a conference on Japanese atrocities in China and Taiwan during World War II.

Society Director, Michael Hurst acted as tour guide for the distinguished group which included Curator Wang Xin Hua of the Museum of the War of Chinese People's Resistance Against Japanese Aggression - which is located at the site of the famous Marco Polo Bridge near Beijing, Pres. Wang Peng and Mr. Yu De Ji of the Crime Evidence Exhibition Hall of the Japanese Imperial Army Unit 731 in Pingfang District, Harbin, and Ms. Hou Gui Hua Head of the Exhibition Hall of the former Fushun War Criminal Prison – where Emperor Pu-Yi was held after his capture at the end of WWII and “re-educated” along with other Japanese war criminals. The following photos depict the events of the day –



The group visited the ROC Armed Forces Museum to view the display on the 60th Anniversary of the end of World War II and the POW Society's special exhibition on the

Taiwan POW Camps during WWII.

This was followed by a visit to the new 'Prisoner of War Memorial Park' and the POW Memorial in Chinguashi where the group learned more about the Kinkaseki POW Camp and the other camps on the island as well.

The last stop of the day featured a visit to the Gold Museum at Chinguashi where museum staff member Wu Wei-Hsiu gave the group a tour of the facility.



Having met several of these museum directors on previous visits to China, it was an honour to be able to return their hospitality and to show them a little of what the Allied POWs suffered here in Taiwan during the war. They were all impressed with the work being done and promised their support and co-operation in the future.

PHILIPPINE BATTLEFIELDS AND POW CAMPS TOUR AND DEDICATION OF THE WW II HELLSHIPS MEMORIAL

- by Michael Hurst MBE

From early 1942, the Japanese moved POWs by sea out of all the areas they had conquered - Singapore, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Java, and other places, and sent them to Japan, Taiwan, Burma, the Dutch East Indies and other areas to be used as slave labor. Tens of thousands of prisoners were transported on dozens of Japanese "hellships", and many thousands perished from starvation, sickness, neglect and murder - or were killed when the unmarked transport ships were attacked by friendly forces.

To date, there has never been a memorial dedicated to those who suffered and died on the "hellships", but this all changed in January 2006 with the dedication of the World War II Hellships Memorial at Subic Bay in the Philippines.

The World War II Hellships Memorial came about after more than two years of planning and hard work by the Hellships Memorial Committee headed by Duane Heisinger, in the USA and Randy Anderson and Bob Chester in the Philippines. After much effort and fundraising, the date for the dedication was set as January 22nd 2006.

In conjunction with the dedication of the Hellships Memorial, Duane decided to organize a memorial tour to the Philippines to visit the sites of the battles of Bataan and Corregidor, trace the route of the infamous Death March and see the former POW camps where the men were interned after the fall of the Philippines in April and May 1942.

Duane chose Valor Tours Inc. in the USA to organize the tour and this was ably carried out by director Bob Reynolds who has been leading tours to former wartime sites for many years. On January 17th the main group of 60 people arrived in Manila and I flew down from Taipei and met the group at the Manila Hotel around 11:00am. So began the start of a wonderful and memorable experience for us all.

The first afternoon we toured the old Spanish walled city of Intramuros with all its old-world charm, and later had a lovely welcome dinner where everyone got to know each other better.

The next morning we went to the American War Cemetery to pay our respects with a ceremony to those brave men who gave their lives for their country.



Manila War Cemetery - photo Steve Kwiecinski

In the afternoon we visited the infamous Bilibid Prison in downtown Manila which is still operational today as the city's jail. Just like in former POW times, the inmates are kept in squalid and overcrowded conditions.



Bilibid Prison – unchanged little from 60 years ago - TPCMS

On the 19th we took a boat from Manila to the island fortress of Corregidor where Gen. Jonathan Wainwright and the remnants of the US Forces made their last stand before having to surrender to the Japanese forces in May 1942. We saw the former gun batteries, the bombed ruins of the barracks and other buildings, the famous Malinta Tunnels and the Pacific War Memorial and Museum.



One of the last big guns...



Battle damaged buildings



Bombed Mile Long Barracks



Pacific War Memorial



MacArthur's Dock



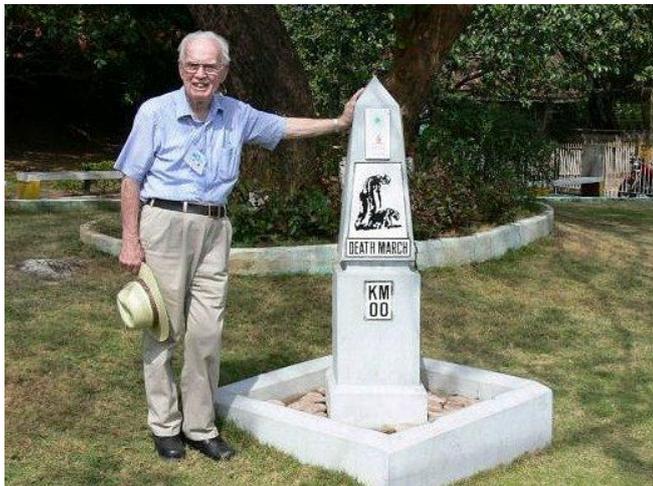
Malinta Tunnel Complex

It was exciting and sobering to see these well-known places and to visualize the battles and recall the suffering of the men who gallantly defended this island called "The Rock".

- con't. on page 7

PHILIPPINE BATTLEFIELDS AND POW CAMPS TOUR AND DEDICATION OF THE WW II HELLSHIPS MEMORIAL *con't.*

On January 20th we left Corregidor Island and sailed across the channel to Mariveles where we began to trace the steps of the route taken by the POWs who were captured at the fall of Bataan, and which ultimately became known as the infamous “Bataan Death March”.



Ex-POW Dick Francies who made the Death March, poses at the Km 00 marker at Mariveles – starting point of the march.

During that day and the next we drove up along the coast stopping at various kilometer markings and visiting places along the route of the march like Cabcaban, Limay, Pilar, Balanga – where Gen. King surrendered his troops on Bataan, Mt. Samat, Bagac – where the second stage of the Death March began, and then past the site of the Battle of the Pockets and on to Subic Bay.

Finally the big day had arrived – January 22nd, and early in the morning a group of about 24 people boarded a large Philippine “banca” boat and headed out onto the waters of Subic Bay to the place where one of the hellships – the *Oryoku Maru*, lies on the bottom in about 80 feet of water.

I was privileged to be a part of this group who were laying flowers on the water in memory of family members who had been lost on the hellships. It was a wonderful ceremony as we paid our respects to fathers, brothers, grandfathers and other relatives who had so needlessly died. Duane spoke and read out all the names of those who were being represented and following the laying of the flowers on the water, a group of six Filipino Firemen sang the hymn “How Great Thou Art” There was not a dry eye on that boat.



Sharing a prayer together for lost loved ones. - J. Shively Photo

Following the service on the boat and breakfast, everyone gathered at the site of the new World War II Hellships Memorial on the shore of Subic Bay for the dedication ceremony. There were four former POWs on this trip with us and they were the special guests on this day.

MC Randy Anderson told the story of the memorial, Father James Reuter, age 90 and himself a civilian prisoner of the Japanese, offered a prayer of remembrance and dedication, and Duane Heisinger gave the keynote address. Floral tributes were placed on the memorial by representatives of the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Norway, the Czech Republic, ADBC, BBB, the American Legion/VFW, the Taiwan POW Camps Memorial Society and Valor Tours. At last there is a memorial in honour of those of all nations who suffered on the hellships.



(l-r) Charles Towne, Everett Reamer, Malcolm Amos and Dick Francies in front of the new WWII Hellships Memorial.

The next day, January 23rd, we went from Subic to San Fernando, Pampanga and Km marker 102 – where the Death March prisoners ended the first part of their walk and were loaded on trains to continue their journey to Capas, Tarlac. We visited Fort Stotsenburg / Clark Field, and then on to Capas Railroad Station and museum. From there we traced the last ten kilometers of the Death March to the site of the former Camp O’Donnell where more than 1600 American POWs who died in that awful camp are remembered on a memorial erected by the Battling Bastards of Bataan.



(l) Camp O’Donnell Memorial / (r) Cabanatuan POW Camp

On the last day of our tour we visited the site of the infamous Cabanatuan POW Camp before returning to Manila where most of the group said goodbye to those who would go on the extension tours to Taiwan and Japan.

This memorial tour was an opportunity for many – including myself, to retrace the events of WW II history and to have a further part in assuring that the memory of those who gave so much for our freedom will never be forgotten.

The TAIWAN HELLSHIPS MEMORIAL DEDICATION

Taiwan played a significant role in the story of the hellships in World War II. Being a Japanese colony and secure base, it served as a haven for many hellships enroute to Japan, as well as a prime destination for POWs being used as slave labour here for the Japanese war effort.

Following the memorial service held in January 2005 by the Taiwan POW Camps Memorial Society to commemorate the bombing of the hellship Enoura Maru in Kaohsiung Harbour, it was suggested that a memorial be built in Taiwan to remember the men who were transported on the hellships that came to the Taiwan ports of Kaohsiung and Keelung, and those who suffered and died on them.

During the past year the Society kept in contact with the City of Kaohsiung in an effort to encourage the continuation of the project. Early last November a location for the memorial was decided upon and preparations began in earnest. The Society provided advice and ideas, as well as the design and the inscription for the memorial.

The memorial has been built within the boundaries of the new "War and Peace Park", a project of the Council of Cultural Affairs of the Taiwan National Government, and is located at Chijin Beach, Kaohsiung Harbour. The location is especially significant as the park lies just across the road from the site of the former mass grave where the men who died on the Enoura Maru were first buried. Later their remains were exhumed and re-interred in the Punchbowl National War Cemetery in Hawaii.

Construction work began late last December and the memorial was completed on January 21st this year - just in time for the visit of the group that came to Taiwan following the dedication of the WWII Hellships Memorial at Subic Bay in the Philippines.

Following the wonderful and very successful Hellships Memorial Tour in the Philippines, Society director Michael Hurst returned to Taiwan with five guests from the Philippine tour to take part in a special two-day program jointly organized by the POW Society and the City of Kaohsiung Cultural Affairs Bureau, and especially to dedicate the *Taiwan Hellships Memorial*.

The group, including Duane Heisinger – whose father died when the Enoura Maru was bombed, and his wife Judith, and Bill Cahill – whose father-in-law was on the Enoura Maru and survived but later died on the Brazil Maru just as that ship reached Japan, were the special guests on this segment of the tour. The group arrived in Kaohsiung on Wednesday January 25th.

On the morning of the 26th the group toured the harbour by boat to view the place where the Brazil Maru was docked

and where the Enoura Maru was moored when it was bombed. A wreath was laid on the water on that spot and this was followed by a prayer and a moment's silence.



(l) *The wreath on the water – they will not be forgotten!*

(r) *The pipes played softly for the ceremony at the burial site.*

- J. Shively photos

After lunch the group visited the site of the former mass grave where those who died on the Enoura and Brazil Marus were buried. Poppy crosses were "planted" in the sandy soil and a short prayer and a moment of silence were observed.

At 2:00pm the dedication of the *Taiwan Hellships Memorial* took place. Following an opening lament on the bagpipes by Piper George Boyle, master of ceremonies Jerome Keating of the POW Society welcomed everyone and Director Michael Hurst shared the history of the Taiwan hellships and the memorial with those present. Following this, messages were brought by Director-General Wang Chih-Cheng of the City of Kaohsiung Cultural Affairs Bureau, representatives of the US and British

Governments and the ROC Veterans Affairs Department. Duane

Heisinger spoke on behalf of the former POWs and their families, and then the poem "Dare We Forget" was read by Orville Humfleet, the Commander of the local VFW Post.

Following a short message and a prayer of remembrance and dedication by Rev. Randy Hsia, floral wreaths were laid on the newly built memorial. The very moving ceremony concluded with the playing of Taps, a moment's silence and the Reveille, and then the reciting of the "Ode of Remembrance" by everyone present.

The Society wishes to thank Director-General Wang, Section Chief Hsieh and especially Ms. Grace Lu of the Kaohsiung Cultural Affairs Bureau for their care and concern for the building of the memorial and the wonderful effort they put forth in arranging the boat trip on the harbour and the venue and facilities for the dedication ceremony.

Since Taiwan played such a key role in the saga of the hellships, it is only fitting that a memorial should be built here. It is intended that the *Taiwan Hellships Memorial* will compliment the one at Subic Bay; to draw more attention to the story of the hellships and the men who suffered and died on them - so that they will "never be forgotten".



The Taiwan Hellships Memorial, Kaohsiung

The Taiwan Prisoner of War Memorial Park

In the fall of 2005 the Taipei County Government decided to renovate and re-furbish the park surrounding the POW memorial on the site of the former Kinkaseki POW Camp at Chinguashi on Taiwan's northeast coast. The "Idea Design Co." architectural firm was awarded the contract to carry out the work, and early in the project Mr. Yang Kuo Hao, the director, decided to try to make the park into a place of reverence and memory for the Taiwan POWs. The Society was asked for input to help plan the new park and gladly offered assistance where we could. The park - although not completely finished at the time, was dedicated on Sunday November 20th 2005, during the annual Remembrance Week event hosted by the POW Society. The park was finally completed at the end of December last year and the following photos show the park as it is today.



The Prisoner of War Park is now a beautiful place of honour and tribute to the men of Kinkaseki and all the other camps on the island, and is dedicated to their memory.



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

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

Last year COFEPOW completed a major part of its program – the building and dedication of the FEPOW Museum at the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas, Staffordshire. This is the only museum in the UK solely dedicated to telling the story of the Far East POWs – who were held captive by the Japanese in every part of Asia.

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

Another "Hero" Passes On!

- by Michael Hurst MBE



We stood together arm-in-arm on the deck of the boat as we approached the island of Corregidor. It was January 19th 2006 and an old soldier was returning once again to his former place of battle. I photographed him getting off the boat - coming down the gangway, struggling with his two canes, but with his head held high.

For Charles "Chuck" Towne this was another part of a journey of memories that had brought him back to the Philippines once again, this time as a participant in the World War II Hellships Memorial Tour. There were memories of his days as a medic during the fierce bombardment of the island by the Japanese, and how he had rescued his fellow soldiers who had been wounded in the battles and carried them through enemy fire to the hospital in the Malinta Tunnel. We visited the batteries where his mates had died and also the Malinta Tunnel where he had worked so hard to save the men, and he shared many thoughts and memories with me.

As we continued the tour, the memories came back of his time as a prisoner of war, when after suffering for months in Cabanatuan POW Camp and Bilibid Prison, he was put aboard a Japanese "hellship" - the Oryoku Maru, with 1618 other men bound for Japan, and of the terrible conditions they suffered on board that ship. He remembered how the ship was bombed and finally sunk by American carrier aircraft, and how - as he struggled to swim to shore, he heard the cries of his fellow POWs who could not swim and "towed" several of them to safety. Then, with no regard for his own life, he jumped back in to rescue more. After several such trips he dropped exhausted on the beach by the sea wall. Many men owed their lives to this brave man on that day.

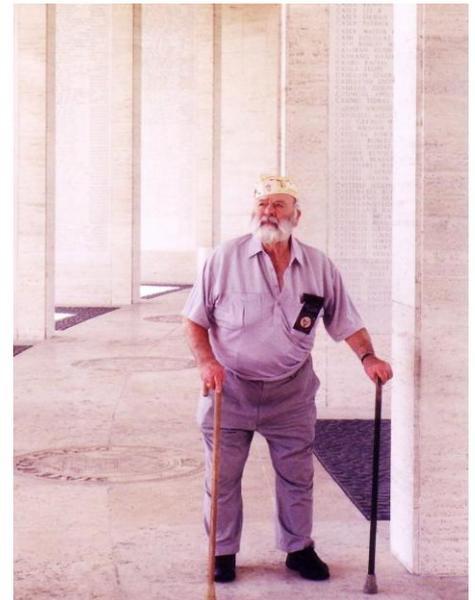
The horrors did not end, for the survivors were then put on another hellship - the Enoura Maru, which was bombed - again by US Navy aircraft, while on a layover in Takao (Kaohsiung) Harbour in Taiwan on January 9th 1945. More than 300 men were killed in the bombing and once again Chuck tried to do what he could to help his mates, although he was wounded himself. After several days the Japanese removed the bodies of those who had died in the bombing and buried them in a mass grave nearby. Then he and the other survivors were transferred to the Brazil Maru to continue the journey to Japan. Chuck was never a POW on Taiwan - he finished the war in a prison camp in Keijo, Korea and then returned to the States.

During our tour together in the Philippines we took part in the dedication of the World War II Hellships Memorial at Subic Bay and a visit to the American War Cemetery in Manila, and he continued to share the memories of his wartime experiences with me.

Last year in January Chuck flew to Taiwan to be with us at the 60th Anniversary service to commemorate the bombing of the Enoura Maru. That ceremony led to the building and dedication of the Taiwan Hellships Memorial at Kaohsiung Harbour on January 26th this year. We became great friends and kept in touch, and it was so wonderful to be able to be with him again this time in the Philippines. We had a wonderful time together and Chuck also wanted to come to Taiwan to take part in the dedication of our memorial but sadly wasn't able to.

He returned to the States on January 27th and on January 31st he passed away at his home. This came as a real shock to all of us who were on the tour with him as he seemed so spry and determined to take part in everything. Everyone on the tour enjoyed Chuck's presence. He contributed so much in the way of factual information and personal experience which was a real help to those family members whose relatives didn't come home. His sense of humour and his indomitable spirit was an inspiration to us all.

He is leaving many friends to mourn him - some who are unknown I'm sure, and perhaps even some who he rescued and saved those many years ago. Be assured that Chuck was a hero - even though he didn't like to be called one, and that he has left his mark on this world and made it a better place because of his presence here. Now the old soldier is with his former mates again and may he rest in peace at last.



At the Manila War Cemetery - remembering his former mates - now he is with them!

IMPORTANT - UPDATE OF MAILING LIST...

After many years of sending out the "Never Forgotten" newsletter, we feel that it is time to update our mailing list to ensure that we are sending copies to those who really want them. We hear from many of you on a regular basis, but some we have never heard from - or haven't heard from for several years. With costs of printing and postage rising, we feel that we need to make contact with all of you to see if you are still interested in receiving the newsletter and to make sure that we are sending it to the correct address.

Therefore we are sending this notice to everyone and asking that you please fill in the questions below, cut on the dotted line above and return this form to us as soon as possible. You may also FAX the form to us or email us with your response. If we do not hear from you by August 31, of this year then your name will be removed from the mailing list.

Name _____ Former POW POW Family Member Other

Mailing Address _____

I want to continue to receive "NEVER FORGOTTEN" Yes ___ No ___ Comments: _____

Thank you for your help and co-operation in this matter. We look forward to hearing from you soon.