Sharing the story of the Taiwan POWs and their suffering with school groups . . .

(Above) By one of the old ore carts the POWs had to fill each day or they would suffer a beating.
(Right) In the Gold Museum telling about the camp and the prisoners’ life and hardships.

“We get so caught up in our life and so busy living that we just don’t remember to remember. It’s sad and tragic.” . . . Rev. David Homer

Coming to FEPOW Day- August 15

Garden in the old Taipei Prison grounds

Taipei Prison Memorial Event
(Above: An aerial photo of the old prison and photos of some of the slain airmen. (Left: Deryk Walker of Taipei Re-enactors Group dressed in period uniform.

REMEMBRANCE WEEK 2015

Be sure to mark the week of November 11 – 18 on your calendars and in your date books, and plan to be with us for another wonderful annual event which will feature visits to the POW camps and the Remembrance Day service at the Prisoner of War Memorial Park at Kinkaseki on the 15th. 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 Email or mail at the address shown on page 2 of the newsletter. We look forward to having you with us in November!
LIST OF TAIWAN POW CAMPS... all found!

1. KINKASEKI #1 (Jinguashi)
2. TAICHU #2 (Taichung)
3. HEITO #3 (PingTung)
4. SHIRAKAWA #4 (Chiayi)
5. TAIHOKU #5 MOSAK (Taipei)
6. TAIHOKU #6 (Taipei)
7. KARENKO (Hualien)
8. TAMAZATO (Yuli)
9. INRIN (Yuanlin)
10. INRIN TEMP. (Yuanlin)
11. TOROKU (Touliu)
12. TAKAO (Kaohsiung)
13. KUKUTSU (Taipei)
14. OKA (Taipei)
15. CHURON Evacuation Camp (Taipei)
16. MARUYAMA Evacuation Camp (Taipei)

THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE TAIWAN POW CAMPS MEMORIAL SOCIETY...

* to continue the search for survivors of the Taiwan POW camps from 1942 – 45.
* to search for the locations of the former Japanese POW camps on the island of Taiwan. [completed]
* to ensure the memory of the Taiwan POWs is not forgotten. [ongoing]
* to help with the organization of, and participate in, the memorial service for the Taiwan POWs at Jinguashi every November. [ongoing]
* to help educate the people of Taiwan in a little-known part of their history.
* to provide information to researchers, scholars, museums and POW groups on the Taiwan POWs’ story. [ongoing]

LOGO of the TAIWAN POW CAMPS MEMORIAL SOCIETY

Our logo - a poppy cross superimposed on a map of Taiwan - was chosen because the poppy and the poppy cross are recognised worldwide as symbols of remembrance to war veterans, and in the fall of 1998 the returning POWs laid poppy crosses at all the former campsites they visited.

Thought...

“Every accomplishment begins with the decision to TRY!”
UPCOMING EVENT

FEPOW DAY – AUGUST 15, 2015

This year will be the eighth time that FEPOW Day is celebrated here in Taiwan. Once again we will meet at the Spot Theatre – #18, Chungsan North Road Sec. 2 in downtown Taipei on Saturday evening August 15th. There will be a display of WWII POW and military artifacts; we will have a short memorial service to honour the FEPOWs and then the movie “Unbroken” will be shown.

This much-acclaimed film directed by Angelina Jolie tells the story of former POW Louis Zamperini and his experiences and triumphs as a prisoner of the Japanese in WWII. It is based on his true life story from the award-winning book by Laura Hillenbrand.

Louis Zamperini started out his life as a rebellious youth, but then realized his goal was to become an Olympic runner. At 19 he took part in the 1936 Berlin Olympics, shattering a world track record which resulted in a meeting with Adolf Hitler.

With the outbreak of war Zamperini joined the US Army Air Corps and was involved in several bombing raids over Japanese-held islands in the Pacific. On a search and rescue mission his B-24 was forced to ditch in the ocean, and he and the pilot spent 47 days adrift at sea in a rubber raft surrounded by sharks before being captured by the Japanese. He was first sent to the Ofuna POW Camp and later the infamous Omori Camp, and finally to Naoetsu Camp – one of the worst POW camps in Japan, where he was tormented and tortured by prison guard Mutsuhiro Watanabe, nicknamed “The Bird”, who was later featured on the list of the 40 most-wanted war criminals in Japan. This is a story of Zamperini’s struggle for survival, resilience and triumph over oppression by the Japanese.

Following the feature movie a short documentary on the life of Louis Zamperini will also be shown.

Everyone is invited to our event, but space is limited to a maximum of 70 persons, so please kindly let us know by email if you’re planning to attend so we can reserve a seat for you. We hope and expect to have a large turnout and so reservations are a must.

The deadline for reservations is set at 5 pm Wednesday August 12th. Doors open at 5:30 pm and the program will begin promptly at 6:00.

There is no charge for this event, and coffee and fruit drinks will be available.

NOTE: This film is not suitable for young children and there are no Chinese sub-titles on the film.

FROM THE DIRECTOR. . .

The year started off a bit quieter in January and February, so I was able to get quite a lot done on the book, and much time was also spent on researching and gathering materials together from our massive archives for the upcoming chapters. This book project has been ongoing for almost 20 years from the time when I first decided to write it. It has taken almost 18 years to come to the point where I had enough material to tell the Taiwan POWs’ story properly and it could finally be written.

I am still coming across new information as I do more research, and just recently several family members of former POWs have also shared some wonderful material with me which can now be added to the book.

For example, with very little information available about what happened to the POWs after they were evacuated from Taiwan in September 1945, and especially of their time in the Philippines being given medical care and treatment before returning home, there was a void of material that needed to be added. Thanks to one FEPOW’s daughter who was rummaging through her parents attic this spring, material and records were found that tell more of this story. So it is never too late to gather information, and if anyone has anything that could add to the Taiwan POWs’ story – a diary, a notebook, sketches or drawings, artifacts or ephemera, please get in touch so these things can be added to our archives and the POWs’ account.

Our POW camp tours are doing well and have really increased this spring. We have had a number of overseas guests – several POW family members, as well as a number of individuals, not related to the POWs. Our school tour program has increased as well with more students learning about and experiencing what life was like for the POWs here in Taiwan. (See pages 5 & 6)

The special 70th Anniversary Remembrance Service for the American Airmen who were held in the Taipei Prison and the 14 who were needlessly executed, was a huge success and provided more opportunity to share the POWs’ story. Slowly and surely their story is becoming better known in Taiwan as well. (See pages 7 & 8)

We are looking forward to a fantastic FEPOW Day in August, with the showing of the movie “Unbroken”, and also to Remembrance Week in November. We already have several guests lined up and we are planning for a wonderful event.

This year is the 70th Anniversary of the end of WWII and I hope that everyone will take some time to reflect on the suffering and sacrifice that all the veterans - including many thousands of FEPOWs, have made for our freedom - “Freedom Isn’t Free!”

Sincerely,  
Michael Hurst  
MBE
In Memoriam
The following former Taiwan POWs have passed away since our last newsletter. We extend our sincerest sympathy to the families of these men and assure them that although they are no longer with us, they will not be forgotten!

WILLIAM J. BODELL
L/CPL., ROYAL ENGINEERS
2005 (Not reported previously)

JOHN R. (JACK) MARSHALL
GNR., 125TH ANTI-TANK REG'T. R.A.
2010 (Not reported previously)

FRANK BUTTIFANT
SGMN., ROYAL CORPS OF SIGNALS
MAY 10, 2012 (Not reported previously)

JOSIAH (JOSH / TOMMO) THOMPSON
PTE., ROYAL ARMY MEDICAL CORPS
JUNE, 2012 (Not reported previously)

THOMAS W. GREENE
BDR., 5TH FIELD REG'T. R.A.
NOVEMBER, 2014

JOHN FORD
L/SGT., 155TH FIELD REG'T. R.A.
DECEMBER 1, 2014

JACK TAYLOR
GNR., 80TH ANTI-TANK REG'T. R.A.
DECEMBER 1, 2014

JOHN GIBSON
L/BDR., 5TH FIELD REG'T. R.A.
FEBRUARY, 2015

CHARLES K.W. HOLLEY
DVR., 9/11TH INDIAN DIVISION SIGNALS
MARCH 15, 2015

“In the morning and at the going down of the sun . . .
We Will Remember Them”

MORE FRIENDS GONE!
THE LAST MUSKETEER . . .

On December 1st last year the last of four very close POW friends from Yorkshire passed away. Jack Taylor was the last of a group I affectionately called the 4 Musketeers of the Halifax FEPOW Club. The others - in order of their passing, were Fred Moorehouse, Fred Holdsworth and Walter Kirkby - who came to Taiwan in 2008.

These men who were all in the 80th Anti-tank Reg't. R.A. and also together in the Kinkaseki Camp, met with other FEPOWs at their regular meetings every month. I was privileged to meet all but Jack at the first Kinkaseki reunion held in Lowestoft back in 1999 and we all kept in touch for years.

Holdsworth and Kirkby were in Kinkaseki and later sent to Japan, Moorehouse was in Kinkaseki and Kukutsu, while Jack was moved around to several camps on the island. He was first in Kinkaseki, then was sent to Taihoku Camp with a thin-man party. When he got better he was sent to Heito to slave in the sugar cane fields, and after that camp was bombed in February 1945, he was returned to Taihoku again. Finally in the summer of 1945 he was part of the ill-fated group sent to the Oka Camp and he nearly died. Out of 150 men sent to Oka, only 38 were able to walk out of the camp at the end and Jack was one of them. If the atomic bombs had not been dropped when they were and the war had not ended when it did, none of the Oka camp POWs would have survived.

These four men were all life-long friends and with their passing an era ends. They were always so cheerful and such an encouragement to me in my work. They shared their stories and mementoes with me and I am honoured to say they were my friends. I believe they are all together again now, enjoying that same fellowship they had in their old club in Yorkshire.

A word regarding donations to the Society:
Due to some recent banking changes we are now able to accept donations in British Pounds, Canadian dollars, and Australian dollars as well as US dollars. So if making a donation to the Society, please send the funds preferably in a bank wire / transfer to our account here and please contact us in advance for the pertinent account information. Thank you for your continued support.


They have all left us now, like so many of the former Taiwan POWs, but they will never be forgotten!
This spring has seen a marked increase in our POW Camp tours, providing more opportunities for POW family members and those interested in the Taiwan POWs’ to learn more of their story.

In addition, more local schools are getting involved in our programs and in some cases tours are being run for the younger Grade 5 children as well as the usual ones for the Grade 9’s that we do every year.

We are receiving visitors who fly into Taiwan specifically to spend some time visiting the sites where their loved one was and learning more about their time as a POW. We have guests arriving on cruise ships at Keelung who want to spend a day or two touring the camps, as well as people on business trips and visiting journalists, researchers and historians.

The following series of photos and captions will help to illustrate the range of guests, and we hope it will encourage others to take advantage of our tours and to “follow in the footsteps of their loved ones”.

Mike and Julie Adcock from the UK came to Keelung as part of a cruise and we were privileged to take them on a tour of Kinkaseki and also to Taihoku Camp #6 where his father was held as a POW to view the Memorial.

On a very foggy day in March, US War Veteran Alan Horst and his wife - who were visiting family in Taiwan for the Chinese New Year holiday, took a tour of the Gold Ecological Park and the POW sites.

The Adcock’s Cruise ship docked at Keelung Harbour.

Grade 9 Students of Morrison Academy, Taipei Bethany Campus on their annual tour of the Gold Ecological Park consisting of the Mining Museum which contains the Taiwan POW Memorial Society exhibit on the POW camp, the old mining tunnel, and the POW Memorial Park with the Taiwan POW Memorial, POW Sculpture and POW Wall.

Richard Lawson, an English teacher living and working in Korea, and grandson of former POW Gnr. George Lawson of the 80th Anti-tank Reg’t. R.A., points to his grandfather’s name as he visits the POW Memorial Wall.
Military enthusiast and historian Kevin Neufeld from Canada takes a tour of the WWII sites of Kinkaseki.

Visiting the schools to teach the students about World War II in the Pacific and the story of the Taiwan POWs.

Students gather by the POW Memorial Wall to look for men with their same family names. They also hear stories about the POWs from the Society Director who has known so many of the men personally. Finally they pay their respect to the 363 men whose names adorn the wall.

...and finally from Taipei European School

Taipei European School

Year 9 Visit to Prisoner of War Memorial

Ian Stewart, Head of History - from the Taipei European School May Newsletter

Year 9 students who have chosen to study History at IGCSE recently visited the Jinguashi Gold Park Museum where prisoners worked during World War Two. We took learning beyond the classroom and brought History to life by visiting the Prisoner of War Memorial, Kinkaseki and the Jinguashi Gold Ecological Park Museum and mine. Mr Michael Hurst MBE, founder of the Prisoner of War Society Taiwan accompanied us on this tour and also visited TES to talk to all of Year 9 about World War Two in Asia and the story of World War Two in Taiwan. He is a fascinating public speaker and a passionate historian ‘at work’ in our community and a supporter of TES. We were very fortunate to be able to give students the opportunity to learn from his expertise.

We are pleased to conduct tours for individuals, families, school and community groups, veterans’ organizations, researchers and historians, visiting government officials and anyone interested in learning more about the story of the Taiwan POWs. We hope this will inspire and encourage others to join us as we explore history and follow in the footsteps of those who’ve gone before. For further information and to arrange a tour, please email us and we will be pleased to assist you or your organization.
Early on the morning of June 19, 1945 – 14 young American airmen were led out of their cells in the infamous Taihoku Prison and ushered into a small courtyard. There, they were lined up against a wall and shot to death by a Japanese Army firing squad.

These young men - ranging in ages from 19 – 24, were US Army Air Force and US Navy fighter pilots and bomber crews involved in missions to defeat the Japanese forces in the Pacific. They had been captured while making bombing and strafing attacks on Taiwan in the fall of 1944 and the spring of 1945.

In all there were 25 airmen held in the prison at the time. Other downed airmen had earlier been sent on to the Ofuna POW Camp in Tokyo for “interrogation” by the Kempeitai (secret police).

On May 29th - 14 of these young men had been brought before a Japanese military Tribunal and tried as “war criminals”. With charges trumped up against them and having no defense, they were found guilty of “indiscriminate bombing” and sentenced to death by firing squad.

These killings, carried out less than two months before the war ended, were senseless as the Japanese knew they were losing the war. Those responsible were later brought to trial and given lengthy prison sentences, but that would not bring back the lives of these precious young men.

This story lay buried in military files and archives until the year 2000 when Charles Parker of Florida USA, the brother of one of the murdered airmen, brought it to our attention. Much research was done, the walls of the old Taihoku Prison were located and on June 19th 2005 – 60 years to the day after the executions took place, a memorial service was held at the old wall by the POW Society to honour and remember the slain airmen.

Charles and two of his four sons flew to Taiwan to take part in the service and what a memorable and moving event it was. There was hardly a dry eye as Charles and others spoke and poems of tribute were read. 14 poppy crosses lay along the wall, each with one of the men’s names on it, wreaths were laid, the Last Post and Reveille were rendered along with Amazing Grace being played on the bagpipes.

Following the service it was decided that some kind of memorial plaque should be placed on the old prison wall to remember the men who gave their lives for our freedom. Over the next four years with support from the American Institute in Taiwan and assistance from the Taipei City Gov’t. Cultural Affairs Dep’t. a suitable plaque was produced and mounted on the wall. On June 20th 2009 another service was held to dedicate the memorial plaque.

In early 2014 the actual location of the execution site was confirmed by the Society Director with the co-operation of Chunghwa Telecom Co. whose facility now occupies the former prison grounds. A lovely little garden - cared for by the company, now stands there as a place of peace in memory of all those killed in the Taihoku Prison during the Japanese occupation period in Taiwan.

(Cont’d on page 8)
This year, being the 70th anniversary of the executions, and also of the end of World War II, we decided to hold another service to commemorate this tragic event and to remember all of the men who had been incarcerated in the prison, including the 11 other men who were freed at war’s end and returned to their homes and families again.

On a lovely sunny June 20th morning, more than 50 people gathered by the old wall to await the start of the ceremonies. At about 10:45 - with the permission and co-operation of Chunghwa Telecom, the group entered the compound and proceeded to the site where the murders of the young airmen took place. The Society director explained how the location was found and a bit of the history of the prison. Then Amazing Grace was played on the bagpipes and everyone paused to reflect on what had taken place in this spot 70 years ago.

Following this Mal Turner our piper, led the group back to the wall and the memorial service began. POW Society Director Michael Hurst began by telling the story of the airmen and their needless execution, and then AIT Acting Director Brent Christensen shared a tribute from the US govt. He said, “Let us not take one day of freedom for granted, let us honor these airmen and all the others who died in that great struggle defending these freedoms”.

Rebecca Day read the moving poem written by the sister of one of the airmen entitled “Miss Me, But Let Me Go”, followed by an address from Chunghwa Telecom Vice President of Public Affairs Ho, Hsu-Hui who said, “I would like to express my respect to these airmen who sacrificed in this place, and to give my consolation to their relatives”.

Emcee Jerome Keating then read messages from the John Parker family, and also the granddaughter and niece of Ralph Hartley, and this was followed by the reading of the poem “Remember Us” by Tony Hu.

Rev. David Homer of Grace Christian Church gave a poignant message on remembrance saying, “We never want to forget what these men did for us. If we forget, we shamefully trample underfoot their precious blood; we make their life meaningless and their death senseless. If we fail to remember we do not deserve the freedom they paid for so dearly”.

Poppy wreaths were laid alongside the 14 poppy crosses with the names of the slain airmen that lined the wall. Last Post and Reveille were played by trumpeter Joseph Chuang and a minute’s silence was observed. Finally Lt. Col. Jennifer Groves of the Salvation Army led the group in the FEPOW Prayer to bring the service to a close.

It was a wonderful service and celebration of the lives of the 14 airmen who died, as well as all those who were held in the prison 70 years ago. To re-echo the words of Rev. Homer – we must never forget them!

Our thanks to Chunghwa Telecom for their kind assistance, and to all those who took part.

Event Photos courtesy William Wang, TPCMS

Photos - clockwise from top left: Piper Mal Turner leads the procession to the wall; Brent Christensen speaks on behalf of AIT; Vice President Ho, Hsu-Hui bringing greetings from Chunghwa Telecom; Jerome Keating reads messages from the families of the slain airmen; Rev. David Homer gives a challenging message; Deryk Walker lays the wreath for the airmen; Joseph Chuang plays Last Post & Reveille; photos of some of the executed airmen, and the official party poses after the ceremony.

Note: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs Protocol Dept., and the ROC Air Force were also present at the service to pay their respect.
Thanks to the encouragement and assistance from members of Taiwan’s military re-enactment groups, we have recently obtained a beautiful promotional banner that will be used at displays and shows to let people know more about the Taiwan POWs’ story.

The new banner (at lower left) was unveiled for the first time at a recent military show in Taipei. The re-enactors groups took part as well, and the event was a great success.

Our thanks to Perry Lang (shown at left in the uniform of the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders Reg’t, which fought in Malaya & S’pore) for the idea and inspiration, and Eric Chu of A-Plus Studios, for donating the design work.

Both are members of the “Taiwan Military Living History Group”, an organization devoted to portraying military history accurately and as truthfully as possible given the resources available to them. They and the “Taiwan Re-enactors Group” are very supportive of our work to remember and honour the former Taiwan POWs, and we are grateful to both of them.

Manning the display at the military show - dressed as a Major in the Royal Artillery in Malaya & S’pore in 1941 at the outbreak of the war.
Another great source for FREE worldwide War Grave & Memorial photos . . .

This spring we learned of another excellent organization offering thousands of FREE war grave and memorial photos worldwide. British War Graves - War Graves Photographs, founded and operated for over 10 years by Mick McCann in the UK, provides free photos for almost all the world’s war cemeteries and more. With over 200 volunteers worldwide contributing photos to the collection, this is truly the place to look first to find a war grave or memorial photo – FREE!

Mick says, “If the photos are seen, then the men whose graves are in the photograph are remembered.”

Although the organization and site says ‘British’ War Graves, they have so much more, and include all the men of all Commonwealth nations in cemeteries all over the globe – from Europe, the Middle East, the Americas, Africa and Asia – truly a one-stop shop for your war grave and memorial photo needs. The quality of the photos is excellent, the response to requests is prompt, the service is great - and it's FREE!

We can’t recommend BWG highly enough – for more information on free war grave and memorial photos visit their website at: www.britishwargraves.co.uk

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ATTENTION – ASIA WAR GRAVES PHOTOS AVAILABLE

In June 2012 * the ASIA WAR GRAVES PHOTO GROUP (AWGPG) was launched with the aim of providing good quality photos of war graves and the names on the various memorials from the war cemeteries located all across Asia FREE OF CHARGE to POWs, family members, relatives, researchers and historians – with the sole aim of keeping the memory of the veterans and POWs alive, so present and future generations will not forget the sacrifices they have made so far from home. We want to help ensure that they are not forgotten.

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

THAILAND - Kanchanaburi and Chung Kai
BURMA - Thanbyuzayat, Rangoon, Taukkyan
MALAYSIA - Taiping, Cheras Road, Terendak, Malacca, Labuan-Borneo
SINGAPORE - Kranji + pre/post WW2 sites
HONG KONG - Sai Wan, Stanley, Happy Valley - 12 cemeteries in total
INDONESIA - Jakarta, Ambon, ANCOL Netherlands Field of Honour
JAPAN - Yokohama
PAPUA NEW GUINEA: Port Moresby (Bomana), Lae and Rabaul (Pika Pata)
INDIA - Kohima and both cemeteries at Imphal
SRI LANKA: Colombo, Kandy and Trincomalee

In addition, grave photos of the AMERICAN POWs who died in Taiwan are available from the POW Society.

We have all 25,000 names on the SINGAPORE / KRANJI MEMORIAL, all 27,000 names on the TAUKKYAN / RANGOON MEMORIAL, as well as all the other memorials such as SAI WAN, LABUAN and YOKOHAMA.

* Since the launch of the Asia War Graves Photo Group we have given out over 12,300 FREE photos.

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

Taiwan POW Camps Memorial Society - society (at) powtaiwan.org
Thai-Burma Railway Centre - admin (at) tbrconline.com
Tony Banham - Hong Kong War Diary - tony (at) hongkongwardiary.com
Tony Beck - All Asia Cemeteries & Memorials - nt872b (at) Hotmail.com

Please help us to spread the word about the Asia War Graves Photo Group around the FEPOW Community and we hope that many will avail themselves of our services.