



Never Forgotten

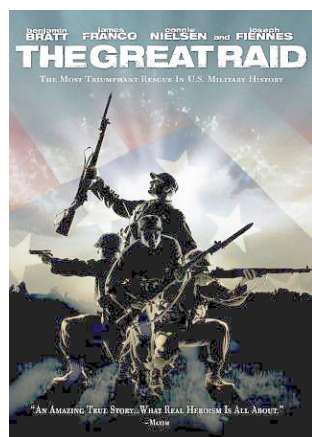
Vol. 26, Number 1

SPRING-SUMMER 2025

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



*Jack Cobon's Grave
Normandy – see pg6.*



*Please join us for the
18th FEPOW Day on
Saturday August 16th.
The movie 'The Great
Raid' will be shown.*



Memorial Day Service - May 25th.



*The second printing of
'NEVER
FORGOTTEN' is now
available to order
from the Society.*



Some of the group attending the American Airmen's Memorial Service

TAIWAN REMEMBRANCE WEEK – NOVEMBER 5th - 12th, 2025

As we celebrate the 80th Anniversary of the end of the Second World War, we invite the family members of former Taiwan POWs to join with us for the week of November 5th – 12th as we celebrate the 28th annual Remembrance Week event in Taiwan. Featured are visits to the former POW camps, memorial services, local sightseeing and a very special Remembrance Day service in the Prisoner of War Memorial Park located on the site of the former Kinkaseki POW Camp on Sunday the 9th. We have a special program prepared for our guests and offer assistance in arranging your visit. For more information, please visit our website at www.powtaiwan.org and contact the Society by email or mail at the address shown on page 2 of the newsletter to register. Be sure to book early and we hope to have you with us in November!

**TAIWAN POW CAMPS
MEMORIAL SOCIETY**
P.O. BOX 665, YUNG HO DISTRICT
NEW TAIPEI CITY, 234, TAIWAN, R.O.C.

E-MAIL society@powtaiwan.org

Please visit our website at:
www.powtaiwan.org

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SOCIETY - BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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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 the poppy and the
poppy cross are recognised worldwide as symbols
of remembrance to war veterans. Over the years
the returning POWs and their families laid poppy
crosses at all the former campsites they visited.

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

- * to search for the locations of all the
former Japanese POW camps on the
island of Taiwan. [*completed*]
- * to search for the survivors of the
1942 – 45 Taiwan POW camps.
- * to ensure that the story of the Taiwan
POWs is told and they are not forgotten.
- * to help with the organization of and
participate in the memorial service for
the Taiwan POWs at Jinguashi every
November on Remembrance Day.
- * 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.

**LIST OF TAIWAN POW
CAMPS. . . all found !**

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

Thought . . .

**“Those who have long enjoyed
such privileges as we enjoy,
forget in time that men have died
to win them.” FDR**

FROM THE DIRECTOR. . .

First of all some good news. The reprint of the 2nd edition of the book 'Never Forgotten' has been completed and is now available for sale again. Orders are currently being filled for those who had reserved copies and shortly the announcement and details will be uploaded to the website. You can find a description of the book and how to obtain one from 'THE BOOK' page of the website.

Now some not so good news. The publishing of the Chinese edition has been stalled once again. The original publisher had initially wanted to do it as they knew it would sell well, but unfortunately they were booked up until late next year and we didn't want to wait that long. So we began to look for another publisher and just last month were introduced to one and they are very interested in doing the book. Meetings are ongoing at this time and from what they have said initially, it looks like this time it might be 'a go'. We are keeping fingers crossed!

We are also still interested in finding a publisher in the UK and maybe the USA, for the English book, so again, any help, recommendation and advice is requested and welcome.

Things are certainly different now that the last of the Taiwan POWs has passed away. Somehow as the saying goes "Some of the wind has gone out of our sails". It is just not the same now that we have no POWs to interact with and many of those families who we knew well and always kept in touch have now moved on; we don't hear much from them anymore. Just a few continue to write.

Another good thing is that every week – even after 28 years, I am still getting 2 – 3 emails from new people asking for help in knowing more about their POW relative who never talked about his experiences. They had found our website or were searching for info on the internet when their relative's name came up through the site. It is incredible and wonderful that we are still being able to help more families in their quest. When they inquire, I always prepare a synopsis and as many details as I can of their POWs time in Taiwan. I hope this part of our work will never end as I love hearing from these folks and helping them.

Our events of this spring have all gone well with increased attendance, and we are looking forward to our 18th FEPOW Day event being held on August 16th and also Remembrance Week in November.

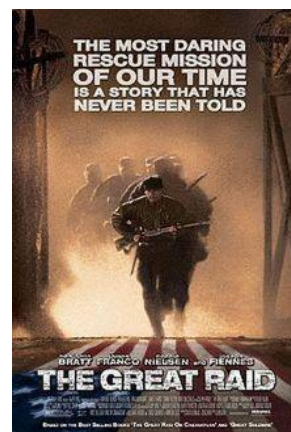
Our POW camp tours have increased this spring, and we hope the trend will continue. We hope to have a good turnout for 80th Anniversary Remembrance Week in November.

Warmest wishes, *Michael Hurst* MBE

UPCOMING EVENT

FEPOW DAY – AUGUST 16, 2025

This year will be the 18th time that FEPOW Day is celebrated here in Taiwan. Once again we will meet at the **Spot Theatre – #18, Chungshan North Road Sec. 2** in downtown Taipei on Saturday evening August 10th. 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 **"The Great Raid"** will be shown.



The film tells the story of the rescue of the POWs in the notorious Cabanatuan POW Camp in northern Philippines in January 1945. It is based on the true story.

After the Americans landed in the Philippines in early 1945 word was received about the massacre of POWs at Palawan and so it was decided to try to rescue and free the POWs who were being held in the various Japanese POW camps as soon as possible in order to keep the same thing from happening again.

Under the command of Lt. Colonel Henry Mucci and Captain Robert Prince, the 6th Ranger Battalion along with Filipino guerillas, undertook a daring rescue mission against all odds. Traveling thirty miles behind enemy lines, they planned to liberate over 500 American soldiers from the Cabanatuan Japanese POW camp in the raid that many say was the most daring rescue of WW II - and the most successful rescue in US military history.

Following the feature movie, a short film titled "THE GHOSTS OF BATAAN" will also be shown. So we will once again have a 'double-feature' film night

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 Thursday August 14th. Doors open at 5:30 pm and the program will begin promptly at 6:00.

There is no charge for this event, and please note that this film is not suitable for young children. Also there are no Chinese sub-titles on the film.

Note: If you reserve and then find that you are unable to attend, please inform us so that we can give your seat to someone else. Thank you.

ANZAC VETERANS HONOURED IN TAIWAN

On Friday April 25th the annual ANZAC Day event was held at the usual venue, the Taiwan Contemporary Culture Lab on Jenai Road in Taipei.

This year the New Zealand Commerce and Industry Office with assistance from the Australian Office jointly hosted the memorial service to honour and remember those brave Australians and New Zealanders who so gallantly fought and died in the attempted invasion of the Gallipoli Peninsula in Turkey in World War I and those of their militaries that subsequently fought and died in all the wars since.

There were 57 Australians and two New Zealanders held as prisoners of war in Taiwan, and three of the Australians died all at Heito Camp.

It is these men who the Taiwan POW camps memorial Society especially slute on this day.



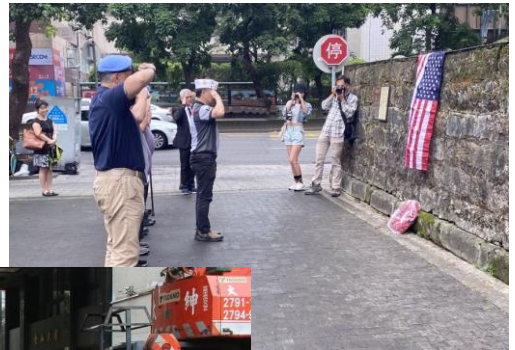
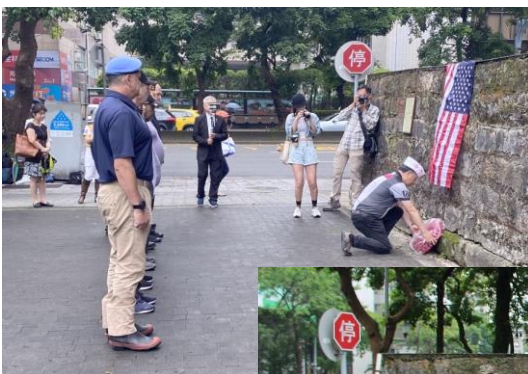
POW Society members gather at the memorial display.

MEMORIAL DAY CELEBRATED IN TAIWAN

The 2025 Memorial Day event, sponsored by the Taiwan VFW Post #9957, was held at the site of the American Airmen's Memorial on Jinshan South Road downtown Taipei on Sunday May 25th at 11:00 am.

All those Americans who gave their lives for their country, and also the 57 American prisoners of war who died in a number of the former POW camps on Taiwan during World War II were remembered through readings and tributes.

Thanks to all those who came out and joined in remembering those brave Americans who fought and those who died for the freedom we enjoy. Lest We Forget! Here are a few photos of the event:



TRIBUTE TO THE AMERICAN AIRMEN AT TAIPEI PRISON

This year is the 20th anniversary of the first ceremony held in 2005 to unveil the little-known story of the fate of the American airmen who were shot down during missions over Taiwan in WWII. The event took place on June 19th, exactly 50 years to the day that 14 young American airmen were murdered by a Japanese firing squad only 58 days before the end of the war – a needless tragedy!

Present with us for that ceremony was Charles 'Buddy' Parker, the brother of slain airman John R. Parker and his two sons from Florida USA shown in the photo at right. It was Charles who had drawn our attention to this story some months earlier. As a result of the moving ceremony, it was decided to erect a memorial plaque on the prison wall to honour and remember the men, and to let Taiwanese know the story. In 2009 a memorial plaque was placed on the wall as a tribute.



In most of the years since then, a ceremony has been held by the old north wall of the former Taihoku (Taipei) prison to honour and remember the 25 airmen held there from October 1944 until September 1945.

This year on a very sunny and hot Sunday June 15th morning, nearly 40 people turned out for the ceremony. Emcee Mark Wilkie welcomed the crowd and following that, the Society director shared the story of the Allied airmen and their fate. Society board member Bernie Moore then read the names of the men held in the prison and the 14 who were murdered there. We were honoured this year to have the director of the American Institute in Taiwan, Mr. Raymond Greene, to share words of tribute to the airmen with a very meaningful address.

Another tribute was rendered by Col. Felix Wang (ret.) of the ROC Veteran Affairs Council, followed by the reading of the poem "Remember Us" by Robert Collinson. Cammi Chih, Director of the Community Services Center read the poem written by John Parker's sister entitled "Miss Me But Let Me Go". Lt. Col. Scott Ellinger (ret.) from VFW Post #9957 then shared a message and prayer of remembrance. Wreaths were laid by the wall, 'Taps' was played by Eric Hsu followed by a minute's silence and then Jason Chen read for us "The Ode of Remembrance". The (recorded) American National Anthem was played to conclude the service. Afterward some of the group had photos taken by the wall, ending another great day.



A STORY OF GRATITUDE

As a rule I don't usually like to write about myself in our newsletters and publications because many of the successes that have been achieved here in Taiwan to tell the story and honour and remember the former Taiwan POWs and the camps, has been due to the help of our friends and supporters over many years. It has been a team effort and for this I am eternally grateful - and this article is about 'gratitude'.

The story begins on D-Day, June 6th 1944 with the invasion of Normandy by more than 150,000 Allied troops to the shores of France in an attempt to liberate France and eventually all of Europe from Nazi tyranny. One of those men who landed on the beaches that day was my distant uncle Cpl. Jack Cobon from Blakeney Norfolk. He was a member of the 1st Btn. Royal Norfolk Reg't., which was part of the 185th Brigade, British 3rd Division that landed on Sword Beach, in the second wave of the attack. He died later that same day.

His unit landed about 10:00 am and after getting off the beaches, made its way to Colleville. The 185th Brigade was to be the spearhead of the division's attack inland; it was to advance with all speed and if possible capture the city of Caen and the ground immediately south of it that day.



On their way to the objective, they passed through a corn field near the Hillman Bunker - a strong German defensive position. The bunker overlooked the cornfield, and seeing the advancing British troops, the Germans opened fire and about 150 casualties were sustained, among them Jack Cobon, who was only 27 years old. Up to that point on June 6th the unit histories do not mention any of the 1st Norfolks being killed; there were no more Norfolks killed after the skirmish at Hillman Bunker that day, so I think it is very safe to say that he died at Hillman Bunker. Jack's final resting place is at La Delivrande War Cemetery which is not far away from where he fell, and many of the men buried in this cemetery were casualties from June 6th 1944.

Over many years I often thought of Jack, especially around June 6th and on Remembrance Day. I always had a wish to visit his grave and take some photos, but up to this point in time I had never had the chance.

Fast forward to 2024 – new friends and supporters come and go from Taiwan as their lives unfold and one new friend is Frederic Delort, the representative of the French War Graves association, formerly known as 'LE SOUVENIR FRANCAIS'. Soon after moving to Taiwan he contacted me to learn more about our work and to see if we could co-operate in remembering those who died – including some French soldiers who died in Taiwan in 1875 during the French-Chinese battles near Keelung. We have been good friends and Frederic has attended most of our events.

Last summer Frederic went back to France on holiday and while there he made a special trip from Paris all the way to Normandy to visit my uncle's grave. Much to my surprise he sent me a lot of wonderful photos of the grave and the war cemetery, and also placed an association flag and a lighted candle on the gravestone in honour and memory of my uncle's sacrifice. Frederic brought that same candle to our FEPOW Day service and it was used in our candle-lighting ceremony. This selfless attitude and effort by Frederic really touched me and I was full of gratitude for all his efforts and what he did. He had done for me what I was never able to do.

Now this month after the Memorial Day service, Frederic got up to speak and I was shocked again. He had been back in France and had told the association about our work and also my uncle's sacrifice, and out of gratitude they honoured me with a medallion commemorating the allied effort to liberate Europe and for all those who gave their lives on French soil. He said that he hoped it would be a symbol of gratitude to my family in our loss. I was pretty well speechless and humbly full of gratitude for what he and the association had done.



Corporal Jack Cobon.

So as you have read, 'gratitude' is mentioned a number of times in many ways throughout this story. I have so many things to be thankful for with regards to my work with the POWs and the wonderful people I have met and the experiences I have had. I am so grateful for all of you who have helped me along the way.



Frederic by my uncle's grave.

WHAT TOOK PLACE IN TAIWAN 80 YEARS AGO AT VJ DAY

With the surrender of Japan by Emperor Hirohito on August 15th – VJ DAY, there were approximately 1,300 prisoners of war still remaining in Taiwan. They were being held in three camps – the main camp in *Taihoku* at *Camp #6*, about 350 men at the *Kukutsu Camp* in the mountains south of Taipei, and a third group captive at *Shirakawa Camp #4* near Chiayi.

Given the extremely poor condition the men were in - suffering from starvation, sickness and disease, it was imperative that these men be evacuated as soon as possible and taken to the joint Allied-run repatriation centre near Manila in the Philippines for medical care and treatment before starting out on their final homeward journeys.

So to facilitate this, the prisoners needed to be assembled in one location to best affect relief efforts. The former Kinkaseki men from Kukutsu were moved back into Taihoku and housed in an old abandoned 2-story factory building not far from the Matsuyama (today's Sungshan) Airport, which they called the *Churon Evacuation Camp*. Today that is the site of the Minsheng Junior High School. Finally, the group at Shirakawa Camp were moved north by train to Taihoku on August 27th and temporarily housed in the abandoned former Japanese military convalescent hospital where the old Taipei Soccer Stadium stands today. It was known as the *Maruyama Evacuation Camp*. The hospital had been bombed by the Americans, but there were still enough habitable buildings left to house the POWs.

The location of the Taiwan camps in Taihoku was known to the Allies and so on August 28th some of the first POW relief drops made, took place on the camps here. B-29s from the 73rd Bomb Wing in Saipan dropped on all three camps that afternoon. Sadly though, at *Churon Camp* some of the canisters being dropped broke loose from their harnesses and crashed into the 2-story building being used to house the sickest men. Three men were killed and quite a number injured. At *Taihoku Camp #6*, two men were killed and several were injured when containers crashed through the roof of the camp hospital hut. There were no casualties at the *Maruyama Camp*.



Air Supply Drops

The men began a feeding frenzy, gorging themselves on food from the drops that they had only dreamed of for the past 3 1/2 years. Further relief came a week later on September 5th and 6th with the arrival of the US and British navies entry to Keelung Harbour to take the men off the island and to freedom. The ex-Kinkaseki men at *Churon Camp* were evacuated by two American DEs (destroyer escorts) and taken to two awaiting American carriers, the *USS Block Island* and *USS Santee* which were anchored about 30 miles east of the harbour. The next day, the 6th, the rest of the men from Camps 4 and 6 were taken by four DEs to the carriers with some being retained on the DEs for the journey to Manila. There were a number of POWs who were too sick and weak to be taken, so the worst of the hospital cases were evacuated on the New Zealand Hospital ship *HMNZS Maunganui*.



POWs leaving the camp



DEs at the docks with POWs



USS Santee CVE-29

In Manila the men received excellent care and treatment, and then as soon as suitable transportation could be found they were loaded aboard Allied troop transports, aircraft carriers, hospital ships and other transports for the journey home. A large number were taken across the Pacific to Canada and the USA and from there went across the continent to Halifax or New York and from there back to the UK again. The American POWs went home from there. Some of the men went back to the UK sailing by way of Singapore and points west.

In many of the camps conditions were so bad as the war neared its end that men began to despair of ever surviving, and it is certain that for many of the men if the war had not ended when it did that they all would have perished. Thanks to all those Allies who did so much to aid in the evacuation and repatriation of the POWs.

It is to their credit - their courage and strength against all odds, that they survived their ordeal in the prison camps to return home to their families again. So many did not, and they and all those who survived are still remembered and will continue to be remembered 80 years

on.

LEST WE FORGET!

POW CAMP TOURS

(See the comments the Society has received from others who have taken our tours - at the bottom of the POW Camp Tours page on the website.)

Community Services Center – April 24th

Eight friends from the community took part in the annual Community Services Center POW tour to Jinguashi on Thursday April 24th, and for once we had a nice day with no rain.

It is wonderful the interest being shown in the POWs' story as we get new people coming every time. Some have even come on more than one occasion. We are grateful to the Community Services Center for their support in helping tell and promote the POWs' story as part of the tour program they offer. We are looking forward to next spring as well.



Ellingham Tour – April 27 & 28

The sun was also shining brilliantly the following week when we hosted Kirk Ellingham and his partner Monika on a 2-day visit to Taiwan. The first day was spent in visiting some of the WWII historic sites in Taipei and the second was the all-day trip to Jinguashi. Kirk is the grandson of former POW Spr. Gordon McAlpine of the Royal Engineers who spent all of his time as a POW in Taiwan. Kirk wanted so much in years past to 'walk in his grandfather's footsteps' and now he finally had the chance. We spent a wonderful couple of days exploring and learning and paying tribute to a long-loved granddad, who I also had known.



Davies Tour – May 1



Andrew Davies from Wales spent over a month traveling around Taiwan, taking in many of the top attractions the island has to offer. During that time he took one day to visit Jinguashji where his grandfather Gnr. Douglas Davies of the 80th Anti-Tank Reg't. RA spent all his time in Kinkaseki and Kukutsu camps and suffered under extremely harsh conditions.

Andrew had studied the story of the Taiwan POWs and many others relating to WWII in the Pacific and was thrilled to be able to be in the places where his granddad had been. Seeing his granddad's name on the wall was a particularly moving experience and he spent much time by the wall. He covered a lot during his visit, but told me the day we spent at Kinkaseki was the best part of the trip.



UPDATE ON 'NEVER FORGOTTEN'



The second print run of our book '**NEVER FORGOTTEN**' has been completed and the book is now available for purchase through the website and by direct email to the Society. Requests for the book can be made from the 'CONTACT US' page in the menu, or by email directly to society@powtaiwan.org.

A detailed description of the book and its contents can be found on **THE BOOK** page listed in the menu column. There are also a number of reviews and many comments from folks who have bought the book thus far.

For those wanting to know more about a POW relative and the camp(s) he was in and his time as a POW, or anyone wanting to know about the story of the Japanese POW camps in Taiwan in World War II, this should be an excellent reference. It is the only book ever written that tells the complete story of the camps and the men. We hope that many will be helped by the reading of it.