

The National Ex-Prisoner of War Association

Spring 2001 Newsletter

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FOREWORD BY HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH.

To be taken prisoner in war must be a devastating experience. The wonder is that the morale of British servicemen in Prisoner of War camps reached and maintained such heights. The stories of hardships and frustration are outshone by the discipline, self-control and generous collaboration, which helped so many to survive and to keep alive the determination never to give in. It was also thanks to that comradeship in adversity that there were so many attempts to escape. Prisoners had a very hard time, but the life of a prison guard was never allowed to be easy.

For those of us who were fortunate enough to avoid capture, it is almost impossible to imagine what it must have been like. We can read about it and watch films about it, but it is only others with that experience, who can begin to understand what it meant to be caged in a Prisoner of War camp. It seems to me that one of the great values of the National Ex-Prisoner of War Association must be its unique ability to fully comprehend the problems and the needs of its members. The knowledge that there is an organisation 'out there' which can offer the right kind of help at the right time as they get older and more vulnerable must be a great comfort for its members.

The Association deserves generous support.

His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh. 2nd February 2001.

APPEAL FOR DONATIONS.

The following appeal has now been included on our website .

The National Ex-Prisoner of War Association has in its ranks men of Labour, Liberal, Conservative or other political persuasions. Their religious beliefs encompass Church of England, Roman Catholic or many other varied church denominations. In the prime of their lives they stood firm in the face of enemies of your way of life. Now, in the twilight of their lives age is proving to be a heavy burden to their physical and mental activity. Memories of comrades in arms continue to be an inspiration, but age tends to dim memories, which is why we publish a quarterly newsletter. Reaching out to those who live far away or who are on their own, the newsletter has proven to be a boost to the morale and memory of most of our members.

The newsletter may soon cease publication due to lack of funds. In the past we have submitted three applications for a Camelot Lottery Grant, but all have been rejected. Each issue of the quarterly newsletter costs £500 to print and £200 for postage and is only partially covered by members subscriptions. However, it is a very worthwhile welfare project that we would rather not terminate. **Are any kind sponsors out there?**

The Association is registered with the Charity Commissioners as Charity Number 292804 and annual audited accounts are submitted for approval. Our officers and associated helpers are all dedicated unpaid volunteers, thus ensuring that every penny donated goes to the welfare of ex-prisoners of war, the majority of whom are now in their 70s, 80s and 90s.

Germany has put together a financial package to compensate those who were subjected to slave labour under the Nazi regime. However, ex-prisoners of war are excluded, with the full approval of the Ministry of Defence. Far East prisoners of war, who were in the hands of the Japanese, have recently been awarded compensation by our government. Sadly, many of our members who were prisoners of the Nazis will not be receiving such compensation because the government considers that their treatment was not bad enough. In reality the vast majority of prisoners of war held by Germany from 1940 to 1945 were forced into slave labour in coal, copper or salt mines or worked in sugar beet factories for twelve hours a day, or eighteen hours when changing from day to night shift. These were the men of the rearguard who held the Dunkirk perimeter line while their comrades were evacuated by sea, the men who fought Rommels Afrika Korps in the Western Desert, or who parachuted into Arnhem or fought their way ashore at Normandy.

Crimes against the prisoners of war held in Germany were endless, but for political expediency a conspiracy of silence has been the policy of the UK. ("The wrongs it is sought to right are largely illusory" Clement Atlee, House of Commons November 1944). To date not one UK POW held by the Nazis has been compensated. Not one!

Due to increasing welfare requests for help and because of this conspiracy of silence our financial reserves are now exhausted. The media report daily on the kindness of wealthy people giving huge sums of money to various political parties. The National Ex-Prisoner of War Association is non-political, dedicated to helping prisoners of war in need, regardless of political persuasion. They responded in your hour of need, so I respectfully ask you to respond in their hour of need. We believe the majority of the British public will agree when I say "Do not thank the politicians for your freedom – thank instead the war veterans." All donations will be gratefully received. **Leslie Allan, AM(inst)BE, Honorary General Secretary, Knight of the Order of Leopold II. Address: 99 Parlaunt Road, Langley, Berkshire SL3 8BE. Telephone/Fax 01753-818308.**

We had an excellent response to our Christmas Raffle and sold almost a thousand tickets. We eventually received 28 books kindly donated by a number of authors and publishers such as The Book Guild, Airline of Shrewsbury and Pen and Sword in South Yorkshire. My thanks to all who donated books and purchased tickets. The winning tickets were drawn by our Treasurer Colonel Tom Jagger and the books have been sent to the winners. The winning names are as follows.

Mrs Veronica Taylor x 2, Mrs R S Barma, Mr Charles F Hirst, Mr Alan W Clarke, Mr W G Jeal, Mr Harold Welch, Mr Charles Dick, Mr Keith Killby, Mr J Johnson,

Mr G Martin x 2, Mr K Fuller, Mr M H White, Mrs C Lawrance, Mr L A Ellwood, Mr E J Haines, Mr G Martin, Mr C Hoare, Mr S J H Morse, Mr Ivor Gordon, Mr W Milne, Mr R Hall, Mr Barry Hammond, Mrs D L Wildish, Mr L A Ellwood, Mr H Warnke, Mr R A Beck.

RECRUITING DRIVE.

We would like to begin a recruiting drive to increase our membership and thus extend the life of the association in general and our newsletter in particular. We would like to ask every member to see if they can recruit one former prisoner of war to the association. We estimate that for every one ex-POW who is a member, there are 15 to 20 who are not. The men are out there somewhere. Ask around your local British Legion Club or at your regimental association meetings. Our association is open to anyone who has served in the British Armed Forces in any war and has been taken prisoner, plus family members.

WEB SITE.

We are pleased to report that our web site on the internet is coming along nicely. We now receive half a dozen emails each day, from people requiring information or assistance on prisoner of war matters. Visitors to the web site can read shortened versions of our Newsletters and we have a book review section as well. Information about the annual reunion is also listed, as are the web site addresses for other similar organisations such as the American Ex-POW Association and in return they are listing our address on their own sites. If you have access to a computer connected to 'the net' our web site address is www.prisonerofwar.org.uk Many thanks are due to our 'web-mistress' Michelle McCulley for her hard work in establishing the web site and Malcolm Bamford our site editor.

USEFUL ADDRESSES.

The War Pensions Agency, Tomlinson House, Norcross, Blackpool FY5 3WP. Freephone Helpline 0800-169-2277. They are handling all claims for compensation for ex-prisoners of the Japanese. If you ask them nicely they will also supply you with a copy of your Prisoner of War Record Card.

The **Ministry of Defence** Records Office, Dept CS(RM)2B, at Bourne Avenue, Hayes, Middlesex UB3 1RF hold your service records. They will provide copies free of charge.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS.

Many thanks to all who have renewed and included donations or purchased raffle tickets. Thank you for your support. To those who have yet to renew their annual subscriptions, we would be pleased to hear from you again. By the way, does anyone have any contacts in the **printing trade**?

WILLS.

No we don't mean the eldest son of the Prince of Wales, we mean the piece of paper that we put away somewhere safe for the inevitable day when we leave to join those who have gone before us. A WILL is a legal document that allows you to leave your worldly possessions to family and relatives to waste and squander as they wish. Now you can do something useful with some of it. Phil Chinnery and Les Allan plan to review their own wills and to include a provision for £1,000 to be left to the Association. How about you considering the idea as well? Any bequests would be used by the Association for welfare projects and to allow us to better respond to the many requests we receive for help. If you have yet to make a will, the forms can be purchased for a couple of quid from any W H Smith shop or your solicitor or local citizens advice office can assist.

Congratulations

to Mr Kenneth Lockwood, the Secretary of the Colditz Association. He was awarded the MBE in the New Years Honours List. A Captain in the Queens Royal Regiment (West Surrey), he was captured in May 1940 and was one of the earliest arrivals at Colditz. His nickname was 'Lockout' because of his knack in picking the locks.

ANNUAL REUNION REMINDER.

The Association will hold its annual reunion between 5th and 8th October 2001 at Warners Lakeside Holiday Village, Hayling Island. Members, family and friends are all welcome. Estimated cost is £103 per person for three nights. Reserve your place now with Mr Charlie Jago on 01722-333599.

VOLUNTEERS WANTED FOR FLAG DAY IN SLOUGH, BERKSHIRE.

We would like to hold a Flag Day in Slough on Saturday 19th May to raise funds for the newsletter and the association. If you live within reasonable travelling distance of Slough and would like to help out for the day, or even just a few hours, we would like to hear from you. We can possibly supply

transport. Please give Les a ring on 01753-818308 for more details. We have all learnt not to volunteer for anything, but in this case it is a worthwhile cause!

SEPTEMBER PILGRIMAGE.

The itinerary has yet to be finalised, but a brief description of the proposed Association annual pilgrimage to Ypres is as follows: Departing for Belgium by Ferry 9th September 2001. The Standard of our Association will parade at Menin Gate, Ypres to pay homage and to lay a wreath. Prior to the ceremony of the Menin Gate 'Last Post' there will be a church service in St Georges Memorial Church and an association wreath will be laid at the base of the arch of honour where in September 1999 a Memorial Plaque dedicated to the memory of Allied ex-prisoners of war was installed and consecrated. At the invitation of the Veterans of the Belgian Secret Army our Standard will be presented at Oostduinkierke Communal Cemetery wherein lie 9 members of the Belgian Secret Army who, acting on orders from the Belgian Government in Exile to help open the line for the Canadian advance on Ostend, were captured and executed in the middle of the town. As in the last four previous pilgrimages 9 ladies of our party will be invited by Mrs Doris Allan to place a RBL wooden cross on each of the 9 graves at the same time as our Association wreath is laid.

Also interned in the same cemetery are soldiers killed in the action from the 1940 Dunkirk Perimeter Line and 9 RAF personnel, killed between 1940-42. A National Ex-Prisoner of War Association wreath will be place on the Cross of Sacrifice. The Standard will then be taken to the church to join the Memorial Service and the Parade through the town to take part in the laying of wreaths on the spot where the 9 martyrs were executed. The Standard will be presented at The Cemetery of the Executed in Leopoldsburg where 217 people were murdered by the Gestapo and secretly buried, including 2 RAF and 1 US officer. From there the Standard will proceed to the Mausoleum of the Unknown Prisoner of War.

This pilgrimage is modelled on our previous visits, with two important exceptions; 1) On previous visits the Belgian MOD allowed us spare barrack room accommodation in local artillery and air force bases, but they are now being used to house asylum seekers and are unavailable. Accommodation is being investigated at Hotels Sol-Cress, 100 yards from the beach and Hotel Phillip adjacent to Koksijde High Street. 2) For the first time a parade is being organised to march through the main street of Koksijde and our Standard is expected to play a prominent part in the parade. **We do need the services of a bagpiper and a Union Flag bearer though.** Would anyone like to volunteer? Also in the pipeline is an invitation to visit an active Air Sea Rescue base and a visit to a working windmill restored by a veteran Secret Army Major. If you would like to come with us, or meet us there, please ring Les Allan on 01753-818308.

NEW MEMBERS.

We would like to welcome the following new members to the association **Mr Alan Hicks** of the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry, captured at Anzio. **Mr G J Duffree**, R.A.S.C. taken prisoner at Gazala, Libya and a former resident of E715 Auschwitz. **Mr John Green**, **Mr Norman Burn** and **Mr Denis Avey**, also former residents of E715. **Mr H R Gingell** of the Durham Light Infantry, a former resident of Stalag 7A Moosburg. **Mr John Stark** who often trod the boards of the Empire Theatre, Stalag 4B. **Mr Kenneth Wood** and **Mr W J Baird**, both former RAF residents of Stalag Luft 6 and 4. **Mr John Lees**, who spent three and a half years in prison camps in Java, Sumatra and Singapore. **Mr Peter Liddle** formerly of 460 Squadron RAF and a resident of Stalag 4B. **Mrs J Wellard**, **Mr Mike Lewis**, **Mr John Janes**, **Mrs Kate Burns**, **Mr John Parker**, all Associate Members, together with **Mr Geoffrey Staves**, son of Henry Staves of 151 Maintenance Unit, RAF; **Mr Geoff Walker**, son-in-law of L/Cpl Eric Walker RASC, ex Camp 65 and 66 and Stalag 8B; **Mr Robert Fennell**, son-in-law of RAF W/O James McCall; **Mr R Owen**, son of Reginald Owen, REME, captured at Tobruk and a former resident of Campo 54, Lamsdorf and Auschwitz; **Mr R J Waterton**, whose father was at Stalag 344; **Mr David Garnett**, son of Frank Garnett of the Royal Artillery, a resident at Stalag 20A.

DONATION LIST.

We would like to thank the following for their kind donations to the Association. No sum is too little and no amount is too great. Mrs V Taylor £12, Mr C Stevens £5, Mrs R S Barma £5, Mr T Jones £5, Mr L Parsons £5, Mr S Murdo £5, Mr T W Wetten £5, Mr D Lock £2, Mr W Pearce £5, Mr G Duffree £3, Mr M E Jones £15, Mr T Carpenter £5, Mr J Harrison £14, Mr S J H Morse £3, Mr F Stapleton £5, Mr J A Sawyer, Mr J Wort, Mr R H Monk £3, Mr G S Cook £15, Mr J Watson, Mr M Morecroft £10, Mr M Hobbs, Mr John Stark/Livia Russell £40, Mr J Banfield £5, Mr G Robb £20, Mr B Keeble £9, Mr S Johnson £2, Mr W Jeal £150, Mr F C Harding £6, Mr G Chrisp £15, Mrs S Gammon £26, Mrs B Holden £5, Mr F Ruse £5, Mr C G Smith £5. Many thanks to you all.

OBITUARIES.

We regret to report the passing away of Mr Tom Cheeseman of the Royal West Kent Regiment who died November 2000.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY ~ In the midst of half truths make sure you have the right half.

ROYAL AIR FORCE REPORT.

On 17th October 1942 Stirling R9312 of **15 Squadron** took off from Bourn to lay mines in French waters off Bayonne. It crashed at Pont due Cens in the north-west outskirts of Nantes, France. The two survivors of the crash were Sgt A Edgar (Stalag 7A) and Sgt J Daly (Stalag Luft 6). If anyone knows the whereabouts of either man could they contact Phil Chinnery or email our French reader Christian Chevalier at Christian.Chevalier@exchange.france3.fr

STALAG LUFT 6 HEYDEKRUG. I have a 22 page History of the Camp. If anyone would like a photocopy, please contact **Phil Chinnery, 10 Lambert Avenue, Langley, Berks SL3 7EB.**

THE RUN UP THE ROAD By KEN WOOD.

The arrival at Stalag Luft 4 Gross Tychow after a sea journey from Stalag Luft 6 Heydekrug, Lithuania.

"Lots of activity now. Guards rushing all over the place. Slowly, they separated the Americans and formed them with much obstruction into an untidy column. They were about five deep and the front rank was lined up at the beginning of the road which we were to come to know so well! The order to march off was given and a very un-military body of 'scruffs' began to shuffle along, at this stage in comparatively good humour. The rear ranks were about a hundred yards away from us. We could hear the guards yelling at them to run. As they rounded the first bend, we lost sight and sound of them. After what seemed an age, their guards came into view round the bend of the road and we assumed that the Americans had reached their destination.

Our turn now! Once more, this time, a rather apprehensive column was formed up at the starting post. God! I wasn't looking forward to the next episode in my condition. Also, I was thinking, there were now twice the number of guards that had accompanied the Americans. Another sobering thought – the guards had returned with several Alsatian dogs, on leads at the moment. The Feldwebel gave the order and we set off at more of a stroll than a march. He was not particularly amused at our tactics and soon had the guards giving us a little encouragement with cries of 'Los!' and 'Schnell!' faster, faster and a few digs with rifle butts in our backs.

From this point on, the exercise was to become forever known, for want of a better description, as 'The Run Up The Road'. It should be remembered that all these men (boys) were very tired and very, very hungry. By now, there was no sign of humour among the guards. Some of them had been relatively friendly during the journey but this was a thing of the past. A few true colours were becoming visible. We had only travelled a few hundred

yards and already we were staggering rather than jogging. Strewn all over the road ahead were items of kit which the Americans had discarded, soon to be joined by our own pathetic belongings. The way ahead had suddenly become a veritable obstacle course. We were continually tripping and recovering with the help of those running alongside.

Now, the guards meant business; they were really wading into us. To my horror, they started to 'fix bayonets' and began with no lack of enthusiasm to prod the backsides of those unfortunate enough to come within reach. Suddenly a German officer on horseback rode back and forth beside the column shouting encouragement to his men. I learned later that he was indeed the commanding officer of the new camp. He was an Oberst, a Colonel, and whilst making a morale inspiring impression on his men, he did little for our peace of mind. By this time, most of us were having considerable difficulty in breathing. We were engulfed in a cloud of dust and as for me, my mouth and nose were continually becoming blocked with a nasty mixture of sand and saliva. I wondered how long I could continue like this and what would be the outcome. Some of the boys had literally fallen by the wayside, their fate unknown. Also, at this time, I could hear the dogs at the rear barking wildly and God help us, shots were being fired. I believe these sounds spurred us on to record breaking effort.

I had been jogging along behind a Canadian I had been friendly with for some time at Heydekrug. He was a hefty six-footer called Phil and he turned to see me in difficulties. 'Hang on to my belt!' he shouted, which I did and thus enabled me to keep going. Just then, an over-enthusiastic guard came alongside. He reversed his rifle and holding it by the barrel swung the butt at Phil's head. It was a hell of a clout and the blood spread rapidly over his head and neck. He gave a great lurch forward, shook himself and regained his momentum. I think my hanging on to him steadied him, but he was, understandably, not in very good shape. The guard lost his balance with his effort and as I drew level, I managed to put my foot in front of his leg. He went sprawling, his rifle landing several yards away. Fortunately I never saw him again. He probably vented his rage on some other poor devil further back. I could still hear occasional shots being fired and the possibilities were frightening.

I hoped I could keep my position and not fall back. My legs were like jelly and I expected them to give way at any moment. There must be some hidden reserves that keeps one going in nearly impossible circumstances. I do not believe it was fear I saw in the now, fairly exhausted men's eyes – was it sheer excitement, or perhaps stubborn defiance – to beat this unfair challenge at all costs. The road twisted and turned ever steeper between the high pine trees on either side. Would we never get to the top? I did not think I could last much longer, the pace was getting slower and slower by the minute. One blessing, no more obstacles on the road, everything discarded.

Suddenly, the road levelled out into a clearing and we emerged from the trees. In front of us was the camp. The high barbed wire and the watch towers, all too familiar. I don't think the guards were in a much better condition

than us, they were falling about all over the place and getting a hard time from their superiors. Once inside the compound we were ordered to sit and put our hands on our heads. We were now back to square one. No food, nothing. How insignificant we all felt after four years of captivity without a single possession other than a very dirty, sweaty shirt, jacket and trousers, not to mention a pair of practically non-existent socks.

Gradually our breathing returned to normal and we tried to take stock of the situation. We learned later that we had beaten the Americans time up the road by three minutes, but we were not celebrating the event. Considering we had to negotiate their discarded belongings as well as our own, we had not done too badly!"

FAR EAST REPORT.

We have had a lot of requests from former prisoners of the Japanese or their widows or children, regarding the compensation of £10,000 that the current government have agreed to pay out to former prisoners or their widows. The claim forms are rather detailed but the War Pensions Agency tell us that they have their own records of your imprisonment, so just fill out as much of the form as you can and send it in. Until recently there were thousands of **Japanese Prisoner of War Record Cards** at the public record office, that could have been consulted by members of the public, but they have now been taken to the Army Historical Branch of the Ministry of Defence. If you would like to know whether your card is amongst them, give them a ring or drop them a line and ask them to check and supply a copy if they can find the card. They are at 3-5, Great Scotland Yard, London SW1A 2HW. Tel 0207-218-5251.

We have received copies of two books written by Australian author Lynette Ramsay Silver. We will review one now and the other in the Summer Newsletter. **SANDAKAN - A Conspiracy of Silence** is the first. It is August 1945 and World War II is over, Japan has surrendered. As the Western world rejoices, deep in the jungles of British North Borneo the small number of remaining Australian and British prisoners of war are massacred. Of the 2,434 prisoners incarcerated by the Japanese at the Sandakan POW Camp, only six, all escapees, have survived. The POWs, sent from Singapore in 1942-43 to work on airfield construction, endured frequent beatings and were subjected to other, more diabolical punishment. Sustained only by an inadequate and ever-diminishing rice ration and with little medical attention, many died of malnutrition, maltreatment and disease. In 1945, in response to an order from the Japanese High Command that no prisoners were to survive the war, those still able to walk were sent on a series of death marches into the interior. Anyone unable to keep up was ruthlessly murdered. Those left behind were systematically starved to death, or massacred. In late 1944 the Allies, aware that POWs were being eliminated, had evolved a plan for their rescue – a rescue which, after months of bungling, was finally cancelled in

April 1945, in the erroneous belief that the camp had been evacuated. Gross incompetence and faulty intelligence were to blame for the failed rescue attempt. When it was realised that mistakes and stupidity were responsible for the deaths of hundreds of men, those at the highest level shifted the blame to others, before embarking upon a policy of wilful and deliberate suppression. ISBN 1-86351-245-4 £12.95 soft cover. Copies can be ordered from any bookshop or direct from Windsor Books International, The Boundary, Wheatley Road, Garsington, Oxford OX44 9EJ. Tel 01865-361122.

Associate Member Mr Geoffrey Staves wonders whether anyone may remember his late father **LAC Henry Staves** RAF 870759? A member of the MT repair section at RAF Seletar in September 1941 he was later resident in Malay Fuyo Shuyosho No1 and Java. Three of his postcards home mention camps Java C, Java WL and Java Z. Does anyone know where these camps were, or are they all the same? The six cards that were sent home all contain the same sentence; "The Japanese treat us well, so don't worry about me, and never feel uneasy." Was this a requirement of the Japanese in order to send a postcard home?

Australian correspondent Philip O'Brien is the nephew of Sergeant K J O'Brien who served with the 8th Australian Division. A member of 'A' Force sent to Burma from Singapore in May 1942. He would like to contact fellow FEPOW **Mr E L Brailey**, who lived at Bryndorion House, Cwmrhydyceirw, Morriston, Swansea, Glamorgan, South Wales. Does anyone remember Mr Brailey or do you live near enough to Swansea to make some enquiries? If you can help please write to Phil Chinnery, address below.

THE UN-NAMED DIARY.

One other question which may help shed some light on the owner of the diary which I recently obtained. Does anyone know which regiment the troops belonged to who were taken off the sinking 'Empress of Asia' when it was hit by Japanese dive bombers just off Singapore, about a fortnight before the surrender? There were 2,651 men on the ship, including 416 crew. Around 1,000 of the troops belonged to the 18th Battalion, Reconnaissance Corps, who were the others?

HISTORIANS NEWS by Phil Chinnery.

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To help us with a survey, would anyone who reached allied lines **after 8th May** please contact me. This would include Stalag Luft 1 Barth, Stalag Luft 3a Luckenwalde, Stalag 4B or anyone who came home via Odessa.

A big THANK YOU to **Mr G J Duffree** of Essex who sent in a copy of his wartime experiences for our archives. Entitled 'The Will to Survive' it describes his time as a prisoner of war in E711/715 Auschwitz, working for I.G.Farben. Thank you also to John Stark for his recollections of Campo 54. If you have written about your wartime experiences could I please have a copy for our archives. If you have not yet done so, perhaps you should, if only for your family or relatives.

ITALIAN PRISONER OF WAR SEARCH INDEX.

I now have a list of the men held in Italian prisoner of war camps, which includes their prisoner of war number and the number of the camp, in addition to their regimental number, rank and unit. If anyone has any queries please drop me a line (with an SAE). Phil Chinnery, 10 Lambert Avenue, Langley, Berkshire SL3 7EB.

STALAG 8B RED CROSS REPORTS.

I have a copy of an 8-page Red Cross report on their visit to 8B on 5th March 1943, plus a 17-page 8th March 1943 report on the work detachments at E62 Gleiwitz Steigern, E72 Hohenzollerngrube Beuthen coal mine, (man of confidence PSM MacRobb), E114 Gross Kunzendorf stone quarry, E209 Bobrek coal mine, E256 Zuckmantel, E411 Hohenzollerngrube Beuthen coal mine (man of confidence TSM Hanes), E446 Zuckmantel, E456 Kalkau (Jewish/Palestinian POW), E484 and E486 Neisse (labouring), E490 Beuthen (railway building). Also an 8-page copy of the Red Cross report on their 12th February 1943 visit to **Camp 319 Cholm**, which was dependent on Stalag 8B and was later closed. This camp was established in August 1942 as a reprisal camp, after the German authorities learnt of the camp at Latrun in Palestine where members of the National Socialist Party were guarded by Jewish sentries. If anyone would like a copy of any of the reports, please drop me a line.

STALAG 4B. A plan of the camp, expertly drawn by Peter Liddle is available for the cost of a £5 cheque made out to the International Red Cross plus ten first class stamps. If you were at Stalag 4B you should obtain a copy while they are still available from Phil Chinnery, address above. The plan, which is A3 size, will be sent to you in a cardboard tube.

LIBERATION INTERROGATION REPORTS.

Do you remember filling out one of these reports in 1945? It has come to our attention that thousands of these reports are listed in Class WO344 at the public record office in Kew but are stored at the Ministry of Defence Records

Office in Hayes, Middlesex. They are closed for 75 years and not open to the public. However, if you are the person who filled out the report, you are entitled to ask for a free copy. If you would like to request a copy of your liberation interrogation report, write quoting your service number to the MOD Records Office, Dept CS(RM)2B, Bourne Avenue, Hayes, Middlesex UB3 1RF. Tel 0208-573-3831 extension 333 Miss Hearn. If you manage to obtain a copy, please let me know, or better still send me one for our archives. If you have any problems, again let me know. (Phil Chinnery).

ARBEIT KOMMANDOS.

I would like to include some recollections of Working Parties in future newsletters. Can recall where you worked and what you did or who was with you? Any particular incident that comes to mind whether humorous or sad? It does not have to be anything fancy, just a page or two.

AUGUST REUNION DOWN UNDER.

We have received an email from Greg Standen, the Verger at St Barnabas Anglican Church in Bathurst, Australia. Bathurst is 205km by road and 240km by rail from Sydney. Each year Greg organises a weekend for ALL POWs and PADRES of WWII including civilian internees, their families and friends. This year it will take place on the 11th and 12th August. There will be a dinner on the Saturday night and on Sunday wreaths will be laid at the Carillon and at the 8th Division Broken Blade, thence to the church for the service, with a guest speaker who was taken prisoner on Crete. If any of our members are in Australia at this time, they would be most welcome to attend. Currently living in the area are some ex-RAF Kriegies and sons and daughters of POWs who were caught on Crete. For further details contact Phil Chinnery or email Greg direct on standen_lrtc@yahoo.com

SINGAPORE DIARY by Alan V. Toze, 122nd Army Field Regt, RA, TA.

"This Bible which I came by nearly 60 years ago, was already old and well-thumbed when I decided to take charge of it during the noisy and doom-laden night of 12th-13th February 1942. Trying to snatch some rest in what we hoped was reasonably safe from the hazards of street-fighting in the town, Frank Howarth and I took cover under the judges bench in the Second Court of the splendid Law Courts building on the Padang, which was eerily lit by the reflections of lurid flames from blazing buildings in the lofty coffered ceiling. Sleep being impossible I spent some time leafing through what was obviously the oath Bible, as it lay on the witness box shelf. When we moved out, the

Book went with me, as I reckoned it wouldn't be being used for its purpose in the foreseeable future – and it has been with me ever since.

There are two splendid stamps on the first and last pages, bearing the arms of the Federated Malay States, and '2nd Court' written alongside. At times of acute shortage during the ensuing years, one or two of the flimsy flyleaves were used to roll smokes, and at some juncture I made a brown paper jacket to protect the disintegrating cover. The brown paper is still in situ, but sadly fragile.

One dreary winter period in Keijo (Seoul, Korea) I started to read from page one and plodded right through to the end, all 1,277 pages. It took weeks and weeks of spare moments, as I tried to get some sense, particularly from the Old Testament, but with little success. Various prophecies of course were juggled about in an effort to try to make them fit my predicament. Daniel was very popular and 'time, times and half a time' (chap 12, v 7) which proved to be the actual length of our incarceration.

The Bible was much borrowed in various camps, having to be recovered at times from careless folk, but most were meticulous in returning it in good order and with due reverence, some having discovered its true value for the first time in their lives.

Apart from the cover to cover marathon, which was of little value really, I think that scarcely a day passed during those years when I did not open it at random, enjoying especially Proverbs and Psalms, which have so much common sense and quite a lot of humour. It lives on my bedside table ever since returning and gets a little read most nights. Surprisingly enough, it was only recently that a thought struck me so strongly, that this little history of the old Book had to be committed to paper. It bears no date of printing, but must have been used as the oath Bible for years before I acquired it, judging by its condition, and as such would have been handled by all sorts of witnesses, in all sorts of court cases and trials, from minor infringements of law, to murder. Indeed, some of the witnesses themselves could have been malefactors. Malaya having been multi-cultural for centuries – Malays, Straits Chinese, Tamil and other Indians, as well as Europeans, would have taken the oath in that Court if they claimed to be Christians. Singapore had, and presumably still has, a large Anglican cathedral and Bishop Wilson, cousin of one of my army friends, was incarcerated with us and became Bishop of Birmingham postwar.

My other durable souvenir from those days is a fat combined hymn and prayer book with 'Canadian Pacific' gold blocked on the cover. This was pinched from our trooper, the 'Empress of Japan' by Walt Valentine, a friend who did not survive. For some time it was the only combined hymn and prayer book in Keijo Camp and was frequently borrowed by Captain Peter Cazalet, 2nd Loyals Padre, for camp services. It still has some of his bookmarks in it, one having been put in to mark a passage read on our prison ship en-route to Formosa and Korea. Another marks a prayer of thanksgiving read by another Padre in Japan, after the Japanese surrender."

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

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If you can assist with any of the enquires below, please contact Phil Chinnery, Editor.

Mr Chris Howes of Kent would like to hear from any member who served with the 1st Bucks (TA) Battalion, Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry. His relative Private C L Horne was a member of the battalion and was killed in action on 28th May 1940. He is listed as 'No known grave' but is believed to have been in the Hazebrouck area at the time. If anyone knew him or served in the same unit, please drop Chris a line.

Mr Z Gomulkiewicz was a Lieutenant in the Polish Army and spent time as a POW in **Stalag XIB** in an American compound where he met a Lt T J Barnik. He was then transferred to **Oflag 79** in Brunswick and remembers Captain Oliver Smith from Ongar and Captain John Cowper of the Black Watch. Does anyone remember Mr Gomulkiewicz?

Mr Mike Lewis from Bath would like to hear from anyone who knew his late uncle **Signalman Jack F Newport** who was a resident of Stalag 18A Wolfsberg, in particular Ron Mitchell (Stretham), Ron Norstrand (Luton), Alf Edwards (Blackpool), Bert Pearson, Jock Henderson, Arthur D Guthrie, Bill Blexley, George Holroyd, Bob Jessup, Leslie Dornauf, L Barnacote and H J Cliff.

I am seeking anybody who may have possibly known or knew or my late father-in-law **L/Cpl Joe Dugmore**, KOYLI who was captured in Italy and then prisoner in Stalag 8A Gorlitz and later transferred to Stalag 7A Moosburg. Any information would be greatly appreciated. Mr Barry Hammond, Bristol.

Mr Jack Driscoll of Devon would like to hear from anyone who was in **Campo 52** in Italy or BAB20 working at the I G Farben chemical factory at the doors of **Auschwitz**.

Member Mr H L Martin of Dorset (ex-RAMC) would like to contact three members of the **Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders**, part of the 51st Highland Division captured at St Valery in 1940. They are 'Willie' Watson, Jock (John) Boyd and Joe McCluskey. All spent considerable time at the

Obermassfeld Lazaret (Kdo 1249, Stalag IXC) and were piper/stretchers bearers.

Associate member David Garnett in Cheshire would like to contact anyone who knew his father **Gunner Frank Garnett** of the Royal Artillery, captured with the 51st Highland Division at St Valery. Frank was a resident of Stalag 20A, Fort 11? from 1941 to 1945. Even if you did not know Frank Garnett, but were at St Valery, please drop David a line.

American Mr Howard McCord of Alabama, USA was taken prisoner during the Battle of the Bulge in December 1944. He was put in **Stalag 4B** with British POWs, which was a good thing for him. "They had been prisoners for a long time and their experience as Kriegies helped us green Americans to survive. The reason I am here today is because of their teaching me about Stalag life and taking good care of me. I owe these men my life." Howard would like to hear from any British soldiers who were in Stalag IVB, VIII-A or XI-B Fallingbommel.

Mr John Parker in Ayrshire is seeking information about his late father **Sgt Eric Alexander Parker** of the Royal Signals. He served with the B.E.F. and survived Dunkirk, then served with PAI Force around January 1942. He was captured and taken to a POW camp in Italy, from which he escaped with a friend and was looked after by Italians in the mountains in the North, Castel Noavo Di Momti, Reggio Emilia (November 1943). He was recaptured and while on a POW train was killed at Aquila during an Allied air raid (December 1943). If you knew Eric please contact John.

Mr Jeff Schur in New York would like to contact anyone with information on his father-in-law **Gunner Kenneth James Breakey** who died in 1974. He was an anti-aircraft gunner with the **South African** brigade at Tobruk and believe he was taken prisoner after Kloppe's surrender on June 20/21st 1942 and transported to Italy after July 4th where he may have spent time in a camp in Lucca, Tuscany. He was registered to Stalag 8C Kunau around March 1945 and was repatriated to South Africa after VE Day. If anyone can help please contact Phil Chinnery, address elsewhere in the newsletter.

Associate member Mr R J Waterton of Norfolk (email raywaterton@hotmail.com) would like to hear from anyone who remembers his father Lance Corporal 'Eddie' Edward Waterton, 183605 RASC, who was captured in North Africa and finished the war in Stalag 344 Lamsdorf until his liberation in March 1945.

Member John Green of the Royal Artillery, a former resident of E715 Auschwitz spent his first two years in captivity in Stalag XXA Thorn. He worked at D.A.G (Dynamite Actien Gazelschaft) digging drains for a firm called Alfons Blank. He would like to trace other members of **Room 21, Stalag XXA**. They were: Reginald Alais, Quentin Burlton, John Calip and Douglas Myles all from the Queen Victoria Rifles; Robert Carr and Alister McIsaac of the Royal Artillery; William Cole and Stuart Kidney of the Black Watch; Geordie Robinson of the Durham Light Infantry; Charlie Wignall of the Royal West Kent and Arnold Huges, regiment unknown.

Member John Stark of Surrey would like to contact Tony Walters, Phil Remmington, Roy Goodhind, Charles Phelps and Pat Ashworth. All of whom appeared on the stage of the **Empire Theatre, Stalag 4B** Muhlberg.

Member Sydney Barthorpe in Notts would like to know if anyone has a photo of **Moosburg Bridge** after it was blown up by the SS? In fact if anyone has any similar photos showing war damage, perhaps you might consider lending them to us for a future issue of the newsletter.

If you can help please drop Phil Chinnery a line at 10, Lambert Avenue, Langley, Berkshire SL3 7EB.

FREEDOM GATE - KOREA.

I now have a list of all of the British and Commonwealth prisoners taken during the Korea War, including the camp number and date of release. If anyone has any queries please drop me a line (including an SAE).

From Associated Press, Seoul, South Korea 31st January 2001. Two more South Korean POWs and five North Korean defectors arrived in Seoul recently, South Koreas main intelligence agency said Wednesday....Park Ki-school, 70 and Lee Ki-hyong, 75, returned home after spending almost half a century in the North. They were captured while fighting for South Korea during the 1950-53 Korean War...

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