

# The National Ex-Prisoner of War Association

## Summer 2004 Newsletter

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**ASSOCIATION NEWS by Les Allan, President & Honorary General Secretary.**

Contact details – 99 Parlaunt Road, Langley, Berkshire SL3 8BE. Tel/Fax 01753-818308.

**ANNUAL REUNION.** This is a final reminder to all members that the association will hold its annual reunion at Warners Lakeside Holiday Village, Hayling Island between 1st and 4th October 2004. Members, family and friends are all welcome. We have to give our final numbers to Warners in the very near future, so if you would like to attend, please contact us NOW. We would especially like to see more of our Associate members, who are hereby reminded that all former prisoners of war are prepared to tell stories all night long if there is a steady supply of beer to refresh their memories. If you would like to know what your relative got up to whilst a guest of the Germans or Italians reserve your place now with Flt Lt Ken Jackson, Haere-Mai, 29 Highwood Avenue, Booker, High Wycombe, HP12 4LS. Telephone 01494-436978.

**NEW MEMBERS.** We would like to welcome the following new members to the association; Mr Raymond Williams who fell in the bag on Leros and Mr Geoffrey Goldsmith. Associate Members; Dr Richard Cliff, Mrs Ann Cooper, Mrs J Cox, Mrs J Tulloch, A.Kallmeier. If you have just joined us and have not yet received your back issues of the newsletter, or have not been mentioned here, please drop a line to Phil our newsletter editor, whose address can be found in the Historians section.

**OBITUARIES.** We regret to report the passing away earlier this year of three of our stalwart members. Our first loss was Charlie Jago, and it was a huge loss. Charlie had filled many posts within our organisation and to report on all would take a book. Notably he was our National Vice-Chairman, Secretary of the Salisbury Branch and the organiser of our Annual Reunion weekend for the last seventeen years. This is an impressive record in anyone's book, but not content with that he also organised the annual dinner for the Salisbury Branch and acted as Liaison Officer with the Salisbury Branch of the Royal British Legion. Charlie had been captured in France at the start of the war and was a 'guest' of the Germans for five years, having to carry out forced labour. The work was mainly in the timber trade and consequently it took a toll on his health. Nevertheless, he returned to his pre-war job with the Dorset Bus Company and rose to the rank of Inspector.

Arthur William James Small was born one of ten children at Bitterne, Southampton and, following school in the local area, started his working life on a farm. He quickly realised that he wanted something more challenging and trained to drive lorries with a local firm of Cores. In the late 1930's Arthur joined the TA and, at the outbreak of war was called up into the Hampshire Regiment. Whilst serving with the regiment in North Africa he was taken prisoner. At the end of the war Arthur returned home and to his job with Cores. He also joined the Auxiliary Fire Service and the Home Guard. He married Di in 1945 at Eastleigh and had two children, Ken and Carol. He was from the very beginning very supportive of our association and held many posts in the Salisbury

Branch, culminating in his appointment as its President in 1994. In this latter post he was invited to meet Her Majesty the Queen at Buckingham Palace, an event of which he was extremely proud.

Reverend W. John Green was our National Chaplain for a number of years and his cheerful, outgoing attitude was just right for our association. It is an intriguing fact that John was not a prisoner of war, nor indeed in the Services, but he gave a great deal to our members and was always willing to give his time and efforts for them. John was born in Stourbridge, West Midlands in 1923 and following grammar school he read fuel technology and engineering at Birmingham University. Being wartime John joined the OTC unit at the varsity, but was not called up to the Services. He worked in the engineering field of gasworks and his ability was soon recognised, as he was responsible for the whole of Scotland! He married his childhood sweetheart, Mavis in 1947 and had two children in the 1950's while the family was based in Glasgow. Moving to Kent in 1960 he discovered he had a vocation to become a priest and was ordained in 1966. He held posts in Gloucestershire and during this time formed a connection with the RAF and Army at South Cerney. Retiring to Upavon in Wiltshire he assisted with services in local churches and also at Trenchard Lines, maintaining contact with serving and ex-service personnel. John was forced to retire as our Chaplain only recently due to ill health and was immensely proud of the fact that he had served our association.

We must also sadly record the passing away of other members. Mr Roy Gear, in Exeter on 5<sup>th</sup> February. Albert Johnson passed away on 17<sup>th</sup> March in Southampton. David Lidstone passed away on 26<sup>th</sup> February in Luton. Our condolences go out to his wife Diana. John Kallmeier passed away on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2003 in Cheltenham. He was a Signaller attached to the Royal West Kents and the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry. Captured near Hazebrouck he was a resident of Stalag 8B/344 Lamsdorf and spent much of his time in the E571 forestry department at Gruden. Bill McGill of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders also passed away and members of our North-East branch represented the association at the funeral service. As Bill was a piper the Lord Mayors Northumbrian Piper came along to see him on his way. Leon Frank passed away in London last April. Leon was well known to our Historian Phil Chinnery having assisted him with his book 'March or Die' a few years ago. The book told the story of Wingates Chindits, the men who fought behind the Japanese lines in Burma. Frank was with 7 Column on Wingates first trip behind the lines in 1943. The brigade had to split up and it was 'every man for himself'. Frank and some others made for China but were betrayed by villagers and captured. He spent the rest of the war in the notorious Rangoon Jail. We will remember them.

**DONATIONS.** We would like to thank the following for their kind donations to the welfare fund. All donations whether big or small are most welcome; Mr Andrew Baatz £20, Mr Jack Batt £5, Mr Robert Black £10, Mr Ted Burke £10, Mrs K Burns £10, Mr Ian Cameron £20, R.Chaplin £10, Mr Andrew Cheyne £5, Mr E.R.Dobson £45, A.C.Downard £5, Dr Moira Elliott £10, P.L.Felton £5, Mr Adrian Gilbert £10, Mr Ivor Gordon £10, Mrs Janet Gosling £10, Mr John Green £5, Mr S.J.Harris £5, Mrs B Holden £10, Mrs M.N.Hume £20, Mr and Mrs K Jackson £20, Mr Diarmuid Jeffreys £20, B.R.D.Jones £5, Mr John Kelly £5, P.A.F.Liddle £5, Mr Adam Lindsay £5, Mr Edgar Martyn £15, Mr Frank McGauley £5, Mr Ted Graham £5, Miss Meanly £30, Mrs Pat Ramsay £30, Mrs May Reeves £7, Mr Arthur Roebuck £5, Mr Sinnott £5, E.J.Skipper £5, V.J.Smith £5, Mr Bill Taylor £5, Mrs Elaine Tray £20 in memory of her father Leon Frank. Mr Ron Venus £5, J.V.Trenchard £5, S.C.Wade £20, Sian Ward £5, Mr J Yates £20.

We would also like to thank Mr Ian Morris, the Secretary of the union A.M.I.C.U.S. Retired Members Association for their donation of £100 and Mr Tony Talbot our Public Relations Officer and Editor/Publisher of the annual journal 'Intrepidus' for his donation of £250.

Fred Goddards Dance at Haywards Heath was a great success with £500 being raised for the welfare fund. The event took place at the St Francis Sports and Social Club and Dame Vera Lynn was the guest of honour. Fred tells us that "Dame Vera Lynn was a lovely lady and stayed for about two hours. Having her there was all my dreams realised." The Haywards Heath Rotary Club

also kindly donated a further £50. Photo from 'The Middy' showing from left to right; Ken Jackson, Eric Reeves, Dame Vera Lynn, Fred Goddard and John Yates.

## **PHOTO IN HARD COPY OF NEWSLETTER ONLY.**

**FLAG DAY IN SLOUGH.** The presence of some of our stalwarts on the streets of Slough in May raised £366 for the welfare fund. I would like to thank the following for assisting my wife Doris and I on a very hot day; Flt Lt Ken Jackson and his wife Judith and their grandchildren Charlotte and Joseph Allen, and Norman and Nancy Stevens. Such was the help and assistance given freely by Slough Licensing and Highways Authority, the kindness and encouragement of the public in Slough High Street, I will again apply for permission to hold another flag day in Slough in May 2005. The more collectors we can muster, the more our welfare department will be able to help ex-POWs in need. You do not have to be an ex-POW to sell flags for our elite association. If you would care to help please let me have your name and address.

**QUARTERMASTERS STORES – LATEST.** We are pleased to report that the office of Quartermaster and Vice-Chairman of the Association has been taken over by Mrs Judith Jackson, wife of our welfare officer Flt Lt Ken Jackson. Judith tells us that "Most of my orders for goods have now been received in readiness for the reunion. The new diaries, 2005 version, are being ordered this month and we should receive them in August. Christmas cards are now ready for sale; each packet contains five different designs, which differ slightly from each other. Price will be £3 per pack, plus 50p for postage and packaging. The cost of goods supplied to us has increased and, in consequence, our prices have had to be reviewed to take account of this and VAT charges. I will shortly have to order new forms with full price details ready for distribution."

**GERMAN POW RECORD CARDS.** These were recovered at the end of the war and now reside with the Veterans Agency at Tomlinson House, Norcross, Blackpool, Lancs FY5 3WP. Mr Derek Montgomery in the customer service office (Room 6129) can arrange for photocopies of the cards to be sent to you. His phone number is 01253-333600. To obtain a copy of someones Service Record, you will either need to be that person or his next of kin. Contact the Army Personnel Centre, HQ Secretariat, Historical Disclosures, Mail Point 400, Kentigern House, 65 Brown Street, Glasgow G2 8EX. Tel 0141-224-3303/2023.

**ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION.** The 2004 subscription was due on 1<sup>st</sup> January. The cost remains the same as previous years; £5 for former prisoners of war and £10 for Associate members and members living overseas. Please make cheques out to NEXPOWA and send to Les Allan, 99 Parlaunt Road, Langley, Berkshire SL3 8BE. If you join us half way through the year you will receive the back issues that you have missed, plus any other issues we may have spare. If you have not yet renewed for 2004 please consider yourself reminded.

**CORRESPONDENCE.** We would be pleased to reply to any correspondence sent in to HQ, but please enclose a stamp if you would like a reply. Also do remind us that you are a member, so we can put your letter on the top of the pile. We receive lots of requests from the general public, but would like to deal with yours first.

**AUSTRALIAN EX-POW MEMORIAL.** John Toon, the Hon Sec of the Victorian Ex-POW Association down under has sent in a photo of the black granite wall which forms a part of the memorial in Ballarat. The wall shows the names of all Australian POWs from the Boer War to Korea and includes the Nurses and the Merchant Navy.

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## **WHERE ARE THEY NOW?**

If you would like to contact anyone mentioned below, please write to Phil Chinnery, address in Historians Section. We do not include members addresses on the website.

A Wiltshire-based musician researching musical life in allied POW camps would like to hear personal recollections from anyone who actually played or sang in an organised camp orchestra or choir. If you can help, please contact Andrew Baatz in Swindon.

Mr Diarmuid Jeffreys in East Sussex is writing a book about I G Farben the giant German cartel that dominated the global chemical industry before and during WWII. If you worked in the I G Farben 'Buna' plant at Auschwitz between 1942 and 1945 he would like to hear from you.

A.Kallmeier in Gloucester wishes to hear from anyone who knew her father Signaller John Kallmeier, or shared his experiences. Attached to Royal West Kents and Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry, captured at Meteren, near Hazebrouk 28/5/40. To Lamsdorf via Trier. Also at a camp near Kossorowitz. Work party E571 Gruden. Also Blechhammer. Escaped in March 1945 to Czechoslovakia and fought with Russians before meeting the US Army.

Mr Roy Cardus in Wrexham is seeking information on the members of the crew of Royal Navy Destroyer HMS Bedouin, which was sunk during the 'Harpoon Convoy' to Malta in June 1942. The 213 survivors were taken POW, firstly in Italy then in 1943 to Germany.

Mr Ian Cameron in South Staffordshire would like to hear from anyone who resident in Milag-Nord, especially if you knew his late brother Duncan who was in Hut 12 in 1940-42. He would like to obtain an original Milag-Nord POW identity disc and is willing to pay £100 for one. He would also like to purchase camp money, photos, postcards etc for the file that he is compiling for his son and daughters, so as to keep his brothers life at the camp in the family. His phone number is 01902-326306.

Mr John Stark in Surrey would like to track down his old mates from Stalag 4B Charles Pheeps, Tony Walters, Phil Remington, Roy Goodhind and Harry Hopkins.

Mr Andrew Cheyne in Aberdeen would like to make contact with any of his old mates from arbeits kommando E94, a limestone quarry at Emilienhoff near the River Oder. (Stalag 8B Lamsdorf).

June Tulloch in Cambridgeshire is searching for the exact location of Weaville. Her uncle Arthur Lionel Grant was taken prisoner at Weaville in France in May 1940 before going on to Trier and then Stalag 20A at Thorn.

Can anyone identify the camp where this picture was taken or supply the names of any of the musicians? The photo was sent in by Alf Solomon, who was given the photo by Jack Clements.

#### **PHOTO IN HARD COPY OF THE NEWSLETTER.**

#### **MEMBERS IN THE NEWS**

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#### **PHOTOS IN HARD COPY OF THE NEWSLETTER.**

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Peter Constable (above left) and Patrick Hegarty (above right) marched to the site of Pegasus Bridge on 5<sup>th</sup> June and raised a glass of beer in memory of fallen comrades. The operation to capture the bridge involved members of their Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry Regiment. The two men could not take part in the battle themselves, having been taken prisoner earlier in 1940 as the BEF fell back towards Dunkirk. Many thanks to the Slough Midweek Observer for the use of photograph.

One other member of the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry who fell in the bag in May 1940 was our Hon Gen. Sec. Les Allan, standing on the right hand side of this picture. The photo was taken outside the famous Mars factory on the Slough Trading Estate. Les was a stretcher bearer and was captured at Hazebrouck as he stayed behind to tend the wounded. He was later to learn that it was Lieutenant General

Miles Dempsey, his commander in 1940, who had led the D-Day landings on Sword Beach. At the left hand end of the photo stands John Collins who got away at Dunkirk and returned again at D-Day. He was later awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal for his actions.

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### **HISTORIANS NEWS by Phil Chinnery.**

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Contact details: 10 Lambert Avenue, Langley, Berkshire SL3 7EB. Email [PHIL@chinnery49.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:PHIL@chinnery49.fsnet.co.uk)

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I would like to explain one or two things regarding the photos that appear in the newsletter. One of our members suggested that they give a false impression of life as a prisoner of war, with group photos of men in smart uniforms and bands and theatre groups. The fact is that the Germans were quite happy to allow 'official' photos to be taken of groups of men and sent as postcards to the folks back home. It gave the impression that the Germans were looking after the men and this became more important as the war progressed and more German troops found themselves in British POW camps. The smart uniforms were usually supplied for the photo session only and had to be given back afterwards. Contrast the 'official' photo of the uniformed men in Stalag 20B below, with that of the ad-hoc photo of the men in arbeits kommando 2771 at Stalag 7A. Note in particular the wooden clogs worn by some of the men in the front row and the various items of clothing.

The Germans did allow the formation of bands and orchestras in some of the main camps, using musical instruments supplied by the Red Cross or YMCA. Theatre groups were not so lucky in that they generally had to make anything they required, whether it be stage props or costumes. Red Cross parcel string and boxes could be turned into all sorts of things. German POWs in British camps were allowed the same privileges and I am sure that both sides agreed that while the prisoners are engaged in such pursuits they are less likely to be trying to escape or cause trouble. Also, with the majority of the prisoner population working outside the Stalags in arbeits kommandos at farms, factories, quarries or mines, there was little opportunity to attend a show or concert.

**STALAG 383 PHOTO FEEDBACK.** Mr Richard Vincent takes issue with Tug Wilsons claim that the photos in the Winter 2003 newsletter were not of Stalag 383. Richard is certain that they are. He spent most of his captivity at Fort 17 at Stalag 20A Thorn and at 383. It was previously known as Oflag 3C. See the item about the 383 Beekeeping Association elsewhere in this newsletter. Do any other former residents of Hohenfels have any comments on the photos?

Thank you to Mr Neil Beck who has sent in copies of both Issue 1 and 2 of the Stalag 4B newsletter 'Argus' plus a collection of souvenir menu cards from the Stalag 4B reunions. Former Signaller Andrew Cheyne, who was allocated the early POW number 23 after capture with the 51<sup>st</sup> Highland Division Signals, has sent in a copy of his memoirs covering his time with Stalag 8Bs arbeits kommando E94 in a limestone quarry at Emilienhof. Sketches of the camp and rooms were also much appreciated. Also a photo reproduced below of his mates in Room 2 (washroom. 1943).

Others in the kommando in Room 1 included the following; William Ashford, John Bowra, Fred Camfield, Thomas Emmett, Gavin Halliday, Jack Hemmingway, William Hurst, William Little, ? MacLennan, Bert Morton, Jack Peddington, Fred Potter, Albert Scothern, Dennis Tolson, Ted Weaver.

Below, front row left to right. Walter Thompson, Alfred Horne, Andy Cheyne, Norman Waugh. Rear row l to r. 'Hooky' Walker, Snowy Wilkinson, Andy Anderson, Dick Falconer.

## **PHOTO IN HARD COPY OF THE NEWSLETTER.**

**CAPTIVE DRONES.** Member Richard Vincent has sent in a copy of the souvenir programme for the 1944 Anniversary Concert staged by the Stalag 383 Captive Drones Beekeeping Association. See front cover. The programme contained some photographs of the committee and of some of the students who applied their efforts to learn the secrets of beekeeping. It also contained a report entitled 'Calendar of Operations 1943-44' and it is reproduced herewith.

"Many associations have small beginnings and 'Captive Drones' was no exception. From a small, but enthusiastic group of students under CSM Savage, MM, the craft and science of agriculture was first studied in Stalag 383, on 14<sup>th</sup> October 1942. Conditions of study were far from agreeable but the group gradually gathered momentum and in the spring of the following year was over fifty strong. The need for free discussion and the possibility of obtaining a stock of bees brought about the formation of an association, under the Presidency of Captain C F Grant, and on the 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1943 fifty-three members signified their assent. A week later the name of 'Captive Drones' was approved.

"From the dated of inception the association has not looked back and on the 15<sup>th</sup> May a hive of bees was obtained from Hohenfels. Very shortly an apiary was established under the associations care. For this purpose the economic subscription of ten cigarettes or a bar of soap was duly approved for maintenance purposes. Thus the very generous loan from a true bee-keeper, for the duration of the war, enabled the students to have practical and theoretical instruction. Meanwhile the periodical meetings provided opportunities for theoretical discussion and every possible aspect of the craft was considered. The interest was now increasing daily, enhanced no doubt by 'the apiary on the hill' and by the 14<sup>th</sup> July 1943 membership was well over the hundred mark. A week later the problem of winter feeding was discussed and the members agreed to give up six ounces of sugar per man so that the bees might winter in comfort. During the same period many demonstrative manipulations were made by the Chairman and Instructor and not a few were amazed that bees could be handled so easily. The warm weather brought a glut of operations wherein swarms were hived, Queens reared, hives inspected etc. The summer waned and winter approached with the examination of candidates for the B.B.K.A. Craftsman Certificate. These examinees may be termed as the 'pioneers' of such examinations.

"In the meantime, the executive was strengthened in October by Captain Mackay and Captain Crawford as Vice-Presidents. From this date despite inclement weather, studies carried on in preparation for the winter examination and on 15<sup>th</sup> January 1944 no fewer than 32 candidates presented themselves for the Craftsman Certificate and two for the Expert Certificate. At the same time the hives in the apiary were packed down for the winter, they gave an outward appearance of still life.

"The Christmas vacation temporarily halted the associations activities until 16<sup>th</sup> February when more than twenty new members were welcomed and official notification of affiliation was received with the significant words 'captive you may be but drones never'. Spurred on by these

heartening words the Chairman commenced upon the prodigious task of individually examining over fifty suitable candidates for the Oral Section of Junior Craftsmanship. On the 28<sup>th</sup> March the association was gratified to learn that eight candidates were entitled to the designation 'Craftsman'. So concluded a very successful years bee-keeping, due in no small measure to the Chairmans initiative and resourcefulness, the Presidents never failing interest and the invaluable work of the B.R.C.S. and the Y.M.C.A."

The photograph below show the Chairman, C.S.M. J Savage, M.M. (Queens Own Cameron Highlanders) and the President Captain/Reverend K Grant, Royal Army Chaplains Dept.

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The three Vice Presidents were Captain G R MacKay, Royal Army Medical Corps, Captain J G Crawford of the New Zealand Army and Captain L Foote. The Secretary was C.Q.M.S. W L Chartrey of the Queens Royal Regiment and the Treasurer P.S.M. L Shepherd. Honorary Members were S.Q.M.S MacKenzie, R.S.M. W G Goddard of the Durham Light Infantry, C.S.M. MacLennan and Condr E Hawley, Royal Army Ordnance Corps. We believe they all appear in the photo below, but are not sure in which order.

**PHOTO IN HARD COPY OF THE NEWSLETTER.**

The Entertainments Committee comprised S.Q.M.S. Adams, C.S.M. Stott, D.C.M., Sgt E B Tarry of the R.A.S.C., Lance Sgt W Raitt of the Gordon Highlanders and Sgt Butler.

Part One of the Programme featured; 1) The Chairman CSM Savage, MM who gave the Annual Review. 2) Vice President Captain J G Crawford on New Zealand Bee-keeping. 3) Presentation to the Chairman and President. 4) Vice President Captain G R MacKay on Scottish Bee-keeping. 5) Distinguished Visitor Condr Hawley on 'I have been stung.' 6) The President Captain K Grant on Bee-keeping. Following the Interval, there was ninety minutes of song and music by John Wilkens and his Band.

Note; Hawleys rank is shown in our official POW lists as Cdr and in the programme as Condr. He appears to have been in the R.A.O.C. Can anyone elaborate on this rank?

The photograph below shows Scottish and Dominion Students, but we do not have any names. If you recognise anyone please let us know.

**PHOTO IN HARD COPY OF THE NEWSLETTER.**



Thank you to George Chrisp who has sent in a drawing of the layout of Stalag 20B. This is the first plan I have seen of the camp. If anyone would like a copy please send an A4 sized SAE to me at the address above. According to the Germans, the camp was at Willenburg, not Marienburg. Can anyone shed any light on this? George has also sent in the photo below of the London Group at the main camp. He is in the second row from the front, second from left.

#### **PHOTO IN HARD COPY OF THE NEWSLETTER.**

**ESCAPE FROM BREST.** It seems that not much has been written about the men who returned home from other French ports than Dunkirk. Member Fred Goddard was a driver/wireless operator in the Royal Tank Regiment at the time. Surrounded by Germans, he and his crew set fire to their tank, infiltrated between the enemy lines and began a long trek to Brest. It took them more than a month and they arrived there with the Germans hot on their heels. The port was under fire and many men were waiting with their backs to the sea in the hope of evacuation. Finally a coal barge came in, along with other small boats. Fred recalls; "The skipper called out through a loud hailer that he would not tie up, but when he got close to the harbour wall we were to jump. We jumped down and landed on the coal. Many jumped but missed the barge, although we managed to pull between 30 and 40 on board. The barge was so low in the water that the skipper had shouted to take no more. As we left the harbour and headed out to sea we saw the German flag raised over Brest. About 48 hours later we arrived in England." Fred later fell in the bag in North Africa. Over 60 years later he met up with another of the men who escaped on the barge that day. Alfred Winson read his article in SAGA magazine on 'Those who missed the boat' and contacted him. When they met up Alfred bought with him the photo top opposite, taken by a French photographer on the barge en-route to England. The top of Freds head can be seen in the bottom left hand corner and to the right sits Bill Meadows his tank driver. Alfred Winson sits to Bills left, facing the camera.

#### **PHOTO IN HARD COPY OF THE NEWSLETTER.**

Thank you to Mr Martin Sugarman, the Archivist of the Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen and women. (AJEX) who has sent in a copy of his list of the British and Commonwealth Jewish POWs of the Japanese. He is currently working on a list of Jewish POWs in German and Italian hands. If you can help please contact him via Ajex House, East Bank, Stamford Hill, London N16 5RT.

**PHANTOM MEMORIAL GARDEN.** Our comrades in the Allied Special Forces Association have sent in details of the Phantom Memorial Garden which was dedicated on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2003 at the National Memorial Arboretum, in Croxall Road, Alrewas, Staffordshire. The garden is in memory of Sgt Gerald Davis and Signalmen George Johnston and Peter Bannerman who lost their lives in 1944 whilst part of Operation Loyton in the Vosges Mountains of Eastern France. This was a Special Air Service operation that faced determined enemy opposition and anyone rendering them assistance was taking a grave risk. Over 220 villagers were rounded up in Moussey and deported to concentration camps, from where 140 did not return. The piece of Coral Granite that sits in the garden represents the resolve of the villagers and resistance forces that protected the soldiers on this operation. The Phantom Signals Party was providing communications for men of 2 SAS and

thirty-one of its troopers were also captured and shot, victims of Hitler's infamous 'Kommando' order. Three service women with the SOE were also caught and killed later. The granite was brought from France by Richard Marshall, Scarf Jones and Mike Colton. The garden was created by Robert Owens.

**POW VICTORIA CROSS RECORD.** A Victoria Cross awarded to the late Warrant Officer Norman Jackson was sold for a record £235,250 at auction on 30<sup>th</sup> April. He was awarded the medal for his valiant bid to save the crew of a blazing Lancaster bomber at 20,000 feet over Germany. The twenty-five year old Sergeant clambered out of the cockpit into a 200 mph slipstream to try to extinguish a blazing wing. He fell to earth with his parachute ablaze and suffered horrific burns. He later escaped from his POW camp after spending ten months in hospital.

The story only came to light at the end of the war when the four surviving members of his crew returned home. The other two died that night in April 1944. Normans VC, awarded to him by King George VI in 1945, was sold at Spink auctions in Central London, smashing the previous record of £178,250. The identity of the buyer remains unknown, but it appears that the VC will be staying in this country.

Photo below. Men from Stalag 7A Moosburg, arbeids kommando 2771 with Rifleman R.F.Carr second from the right hand end of the front row.

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### **FAR EAST NEWS.**

I have just obtained for our archives via auction a book entitled 'Operation Rangoon Jail' written in 1954 by Colonel K P MacKenzie, RAMC, the senior medical officer in the jail. It includes a plan and photos of the jail and contains an account of his capture on the wrong side of the Sittang Bridge and his brief sojourn at Moulmein Jail before he was sent to Rangoon. The book records the full repertoire of sadism and brutality used by their captors and tells of the suffering and bravery of the officers and men incarcerated in that infamous prison in Burma.

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