

Honorary Chairman - Mr Ron Mockford

Treasurer - Mrs Margaret Walton

Committee Members - Mr Keith Andrews, Mr James Whiskens

Vice Chairman - Mr Kenneth Coy

Secretary - Mrs Barbara James

BAFEPOW NEWS SHEET, MAY 2021

It seems such a long time since we first started to hear about a strange new virus in some far off Chinese city that was causing concern as it was potentially life threatening. Little did we envisage when we last met up in Birmingham that it would be so long until we would see each other again. The wait continues and we all miss getting together and catching up with one another or having serious discussions about FEPOW history including the latest discoveries that have been made about the War in the Far East.

The BAFEPOW News Sheet back then was just a few pages of items of general interest, some commemorations to our FEPOW and remembrance of them, especially dates such as 15/02/1942, 15/08/1945 and 02/09/1945. Recently, the news sheet has been put together to engender the feeling of being able to learn more about our FEPOW's history from one another and to 'fit more pieces into the jigsaw' that is the story of what happened out there.

Over the last few months, there have been items about communication home, F Force and Frederick Camp/ Pat de Paeztron, and also about Sempill and Churchill, plus a mention was made of the 'Comfort Women' whose distressing history is still being researched and brought into the public domain as a tragedy and an atrocity.

There has been some feedback about these topics and they are included in this news sheet but, firstly, it is important to mention the approaching service at the FEPOW Church in Wymondham:-

THE ANNUAL MEMORIAL SERVICE IN MAY AT WYMONDHAM

As you will have seen in the last few editions of the BAFEPOW News sheet, the annual FEPOW Remembrance Service that is held at the Catholic church of Our Lady and Saint Thomas of Canterbury in Wymondham, Norfolk has been restricted for attendance. Because of the Covid restrictions the service on Sunday, May 16th will be live-streamed - the information on this can be found in the March or April news sheet.

I am very pleased to say that our member, Tony Truett, will be able to attend in person and has agreed to lay a wreath on behalf of BAFEPOW. Having been fortunate to have attended this annual event in the past, I remember how well attended it was and there were so many FEPOW descendants gathered to pay tributes to our FEPOW in this very special church where so many of them are commemorated - it will be a very much reduced event this year but it will still be very special and very atmospheric.

I believe that there may be plans for the names in the memorial books that are kept there to be digitised so that they can be illuminated on a screen - perhaps in a similar way to the 'Wall' in the COFEPOW Hut at the NMA. I will keep you updated if this goes ahead.

The FEPOW Memorial Service will be held on Sunday 16th May 2021 @ 12.30 pm. The live-stream is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmPstVjBimy3N0oC3Zmln8g/videos?view=57>

F FORCE

Following on from Margaret Walton's item in April's News sheet, there was a mention by several people on Facebook about the anniversary of the departure of F Force on 18-25/04/1943 to their destiny on the Railway. A few requests were made as to which carriages their FEPOW would have been in and Margaret had made a reference to her dear Dad, Frederick Camp, being in the same carriage as Pat de Paeztron. I have copied one of the comments from Facebook below:-

Louise Reynolds

My Dad was transported with F Force too. What a terrible time lay ahead of them. He was a Chaplain and tried to be with any man who was dying and then he gave them as dignified a burial as possible. He buried more than 600 young men. RIP.

Many of you will be aware of Louise's father - Reverend Eric Cordingley - and how he supported his fellow FEPOW in their captivity. He is also known for his connection to the Changi Cross which he brought back home with him when he was repatriated. Later the cross was restored to its new resting place in the Changi Museum. It was made from the remains of a brass Howitzer by Staff Sergeant Harry Stogden and his son, Bernard, discovered in 1992 that it was his father who had made it and he was later able to see the cross at the museum. Louise has written a book about the cross which is well worth reading.

F Force was not deemed to be a 'working party' and the 7,000 men within this unit composed of 3,400 British and 3,600 Australians. It was known that the majority of this contingent were already sick or in need of medical care - no Geneva Convention in place to protect them from the horrors that awaited them.

Eric Cordingley himself said:-

Looking back to the really grim time in the jungle camp beside the Railway, the truly remarkable thing was the way the human spirit rose to magnificent heights. After months of sheer degradation, gradually the spirit to care for one another revived, incredible kindness and self-sacrifice was in evidence.

If you would like to know more about the story of the Changi Cross, please follow the link below:-
<https://thechangicross.co.uk/about>

THE COMFORT WOMEN - A LITTLE KNOWN WWII ATROCITY!

Following on from a previous mention on 'Comfort Women', I am most grateful to Margaret Walton for contributing this item that she has researched:-



'Comfort Women' by Margaret Walton

When we talk about the Far East Theatre of War, we hear of the many atrocities that our menfolk endured at the hands of the Japanese and even worse, the Koreans. What is very seldom talked about is the brutality that many Asian, particularly Korean and some Dutch women went through when forced into sexual servitude to satisfy the needs of the Japanese Military. Their story is understated and their fight for the Japanese Government to acknowledge their responsibility for what happened is still ongoing.

We have to remember that at that time prostitution in Japan was well-organised and in Korea it was legal, though that shouldn't be used as an excuse for what the Japanese did.

I remember seeing a programme on the BBC (The Red House) about Lita (15) and Mileng (13) who in 1944 lived in a village Mapanique which was 50 miles north of Manila in the Philippines. They told their story of how the Japanese over-ran their village, killing all the males and forcing women and girls into prostitution. What I hadn't realised at the time was that the Japanese had been forcing women into sexual slavery since 1931 when they set up the first comfort stations in China. These comfort stations were usually next to military barracks, and were quite often walled in, convenient for the soldiers who would repeatedly rape, beat and torture the women multiple times a day. As the military moved to new territories, so did the women.

When the Japanese Military were serving in China in the 1930's they requested that the Government supplied 1 sex slave for every 70 soldiers. At first the Japanese authorities recruited prostitutes through conventional means. Initially, Japanese prostitutes volunteered to work in the comfort stations but as the Japanese expanded their territory, there were insufficient numbers so they had to look in other directions. In urban areas, middlemen advertised in newspapers that circulated in Japan and in the colonies of Korea, Taiwan, Manchuria and China but eventually these sources also dried up. It

was at this point that they turned to the local population, coercing women into work, they not realising that the work was as a sex slave at the comfort station. Many agents tricked women by falsely promising payments that could help repay family debts, with many Korean girls sold for up to 1,000 yen, becoming the property of the Japanese. Such was the demand that local girls and women were forced into slavery to fulfil the needs.

Why did the Japanese Government do this? Even though the military followed the 'Three All's Policy', kill all, burn all and loot all, which included the kidnapping and raping of the locals, they thought that by setting up comfort stations near to the military camps, they would satisfy disgruntled soldiers as a means of keeping them occupied, and by confining rape and sexual abuse to military-controlled facilities, it would reduce venereal diseases amongst the troops and prevent the leakage of military secrets. They were also concerned about the increased cost of treating the soldiers if they were allowed frequent widespread rape within the local population. In practice, the exact opposite proved to be the case.

Not only were the women held in comfort stations but were sent wherever the Japanese troops were to be found as confirmed by Robin Rowland in his book 'A River Kwai Story, The Sonkrai Tribunal' (the story of 'F' Force on the Thai-Burma Railway) stating that... 'the Kempeitai combined many roles ... control of the subject population in conquered countries and the supply of jugun ianfu, comfort women – impress prostitutes, most often from subject nations, especially Korea'. Further on in the book when talking about the soldiers returning to Kanchanaburi from Tanbaya hospital in Burma it says ... 'The official train passed Tanbaya some hours later than expected. A second train carried military supplies. The third, which stopped at Tanbaya for the night, carried comfort women, probably delayed en route by its business'. Ullman (a translator at Songkurai No2 Camp and later Tanbaya hospital,) 'heard a prisoner remark, 'Blimey! It was for these bleedin' whores we built the railway'. They are mentioned again when the train taking the Tanbaya survivors south reached Niek camp ... 'Ullman said, the guards 'ogled' a batch of comfort women in a train waiting on a siding.' No one of course then realised that the comfort women were prisoners just like they were.

It is estimated that the numbers of women who were enslaved or recruited as prostitutes is in the region of 200,000. When the Japanese realised that the war was nearing an end the comfort women were disregarded. When we read and talk about our Allies being repatriated and the Japanese being returned home, we never hear about these poor souls. Many didn't make it back to their countries, and those that did return home had to live with the shame of what they had endured. Many suffered greatly from health problems, others unable to have children.

It will come as no surprise that the Japanese Government refuses to admit that they operated 'comfort stations'. It is only recently that the brave survivors of this atrocity have come forward and told their stories, some have and are still, filing law suits against the Japanese Government and also the issue has been raised at United Nations Commission on Human Rights. In 2015 the Japanese Prime Minister issued a formal apology and contributed 1 billion yen, forming a foundation to help the surviving women in a bi-lateral agreement between South Korea and Japan. As with our loved ones, far too late for the many.

The Guardian in November 2018 ran a piece 'Comfort Women: anger as Japan paper alters description of WWII terms: prompts concern that the country's media is trying to rewrite wartime history under right wing pressure'. The Japanese Times, an English-language newspaper was revising its previous description of 'comfort women' from 'women who were forced to provide for sex for Japanese troops before and during world war two' to 'women who worked in wartime brothels, including those who did so against their will, to provide sex to Japanese soldiers', said that it made the changes, 'because the experiences of comfort women in different areas throughout the course of the war varied widely'.

The piece went on to say, 'the revision has added to concern that sections of the media are bowing to pressure from right wing politicians and activists to rewrite Japan's wartime history and portray its actions on the Asian mainland in a more favourable light'. When researching the Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, I found Wikipedia's description of him as 'Abe is a conservative whom political commentators have widely described as a right-wing nationalist...and holds negationist (a historical negationism also called denialism, falsification or distortion of the historical record,) views on Japanese history, including denying the role of government coercion in the recruitment of comfort women during World War II'. His ideology seems to be in line with that of other Japanese Prime Ministers since 1945. When will they admit that human beings should learn from their mistakes? Although the women were drawn from many countries, it's the Korean women who are still battling for Japan to take ownership of the suffering that was caused. Today there is still support for the memory of these women. Every Wednesday since 1992, there has been a rally of supporters in front of the Japanese Consulate in Busan, South Korea, where in 2017 a monument was raised to their

memory. Other monuments have appeared over the years always in poignant locations; in 2011 one monument appeared in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul, with another sitting on a seat on a bus. When we remember all those who suffered at the behest of Emperor Hirohito, we are apt to forget these women. They deserve to be included in our thoughts. Lest we forget.

Below is the link to an article on Comfort Women and it includes photos of memorials to them plus a really interesting one that explains the meaning behind the design of the monument in Busan which is at the start of this item. There are several versions of this statue which caused much diplomatic angst between Korea and Japan.

<https://edition.cnn.com/2017/02/05/asia/south-korea-comfort-women-statue/index.html>

KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH THE FAR EAST

In the February and March news sheets the topic of communication from FEPOW to family and vice versa were included. Some of us are very fortunate to have items that were sent back by loved ones, items that were sent to the FEPOW from home and also the official documents that were sent out, either to report a man as MIA (Missing In Action), POW (Japanese Prisoner of War), KIA (Killed in Action) or MPD (Missing Presumed Dead)

This topic led to quite a few of you getting in touch about the various items - treasures - that are kept and preserved for the future as a means of passing down FEPOW history on through our families so that what our FEPOW experienced is not lost. Some of us, sadly, do not have these items and it is at our monthly meetings that these precious papers are brought in so that we can take a look at, and acknowledge, the pathway of FEPOW through their captivity. Obviously, some of us have more than others but we all are interested to see these records and to share them with others.

And so I was really pleased to hear from Tom and Gwen Horrobin about the items that they have from Tom's brother, Joe, who was a member of BAFEPOW. Tom's grandson, Thomas, is the youngest member of BAFEPOW and he is very interested in history and, possibly, much of that interest has arisen from being able to talk with Tom about Joe and to actually be able to look at, handle and discuss what these momentos relate to. (We at BAFEPOW are so lucky to have three generations from one family being BAFEPOW members) Tom offered to share with us the historical items that he has and wants to share them so that those who have not seen these before can see them - as he said - in normal times, we would have looked at them during one of our monthly meetings but by putting them in an online news sheet, even more of us can see what was sent outdoing WWII.

Many thanks, therefore, to Tom, Gwen, Michael, Sam and Thomas, our members and I begin by including some details that Tom sent to me about his brother, Joe, for VJ75 in August last year:-

Joe Horrobin

D.O.B.1-4-1919, Died 23-5 2017. Service Number 5830808. Rank : Private.

Regiment : First Battalion, Cambridgeshire Regiment. No.2 POW Camp Thailand.

Joe was from Smethwick. He enlisted on the 20-10-1939 and after training he embarked for service in the Middle East. Had a brief spell in India, was then sent to Singapore arriving in time for the final battle. He was taken prisoner, sent to Changi. In October he was sent to work on the Thai/ Burma railway. He spent time in Chungkai, Takanun, Kinsaiyok, Tamuang and Bangkok where he was liberated. He flew to Rangoon and on 19-9-1945 sailed on the S.S Worcestershire to Liverpool arriving on 14-10-1945.

The following pictures show the various items that were received by Joe's family during his time in the Far East:-

Army Form B. 104-83A.

No. Cao/Suffolk/7146
(If reporting, show grade above No.)

Infantry Record Office,
Warwick Station.

21 July 1943

Sir, ~~as follows.~~

I have to inform you that a report has been received from the War Office to the effect that (No.) 5880808
(Rank) PTE (Name) MORROBIN Joseph
(Regiment) Cambes Regt.
is a Prisoner of War in Japanese hands at
a camp unlocated
N° 2702 Thaisong

Should any other information be received concerning him, such information will be at once communicated to you.

Instructions as to the method of communicating with Prisoners of War can be obtained at any Post Office. By applying for Leaflet P 2527 B

Thank you very much for the card from your son which is returned herewith

I am,
Sir, ~~as follows.~~
Your obedient servant,
Ernest Mayne
Colonel
Officer in charge of Records.

IMPORTANT.—Any change of your address should be immediately notified to this Office. It should also be notified, if you receive information from the soldier above, that his address has been changed.

WAR OFFICE FORM B. 104-83A (REV. 1942) FORM B. 104-83A

Army Form B. 104-83A

RELEASE LEAVE CERTIFICATE

Army No. 5880808 (Rank) Pte
Surname (Block Letters) MORROBIN
Christian Name Joseph
Unit, Regt. or Depo. Suffolk

Date of "Last release" 27.10.39
(Being up to military service)
(Date of release in civilian life)
(If Trade or profession) Station Porter

(1) Trade or profession
(2) Trade course and trade name pursued
(3) Military character
(4) Remarks: Exemplary
Love, honest, hard working. He does good work under difficult circumstances. Trustworthy and reliable.

Date 14 MAR 1946

Officer's Signature [Signature]
Signature of Soldier

(1) Length (2) Total hours of extraction (3) Period of extraction

THE GOVERNMENT MAKES PROVISION ON RELEASE LEAVE OF THE BEST OPPORTUNITY TO THE MILITARY DEPENDENT THAT STANDS OPEN.
S.A.—A certificate showing the date of receipt by the appropriate Army Bureau (S.P. 2) should be issued by the Officer in Command.

FORM NO. 10

ESTATE FORM NO. 10

FORM OF WILL to be used for a
single document - DATING THE WILL OF
AN INDIVIDUAL AND VALID IN ALL STATES

(See page 11 for instructions when making
application to have this form printed.)

I, the undersigned, do hereby certify that the within and foregoing is a true and correct copy of the original will of the testator, as the same appears from the records of the County of San Diego, State of California.

Witness my hand and seal of office this 1st day of June 1917.

Notary Public in and for the State of California

1. Joseph
Herrobin

2. Mr. J. J. J. J.

3. The Land Agency Co.

4. Thomas

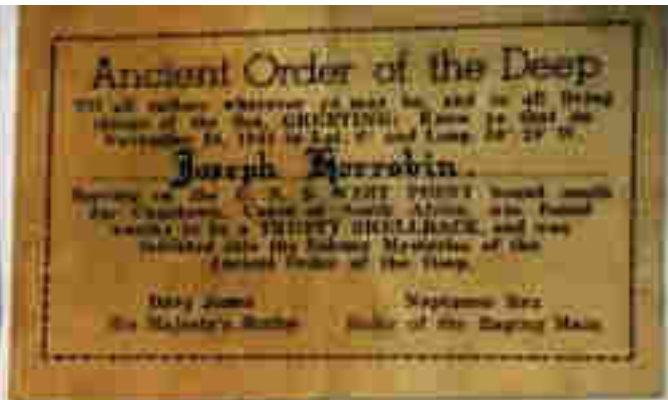
5. Charles


6. 118 Madison St. San Antonio, Tex.

7. Father

8. Thomas Charles

9. Herrobin




BRITISH REGISTRATION

MEXICAN WAR ENQUIRY DEPT.
11, CAVENDISH SQUARE,
LONDON, W.1
No. 146898 1917

Dear Mr. Herrobin,

As yet we have no news of missing in the Forward
however we will send to the Vets. the name you for ourselves &
I hope in a short while you will be all well informed.

May God bless & comfort you in your anxiety

Sincerely yours (Secretary)

Date of Exhonor

Name and Telephone No. 115 BALTIC

STAFFS - EN

Site of Original Capture SARAJEVO

A.P. in your plans

in your plans

in camps, detachments or hospitals were you in? Give dates and names of each one of, in the case of hospitals, the Senior British Medical Officers.

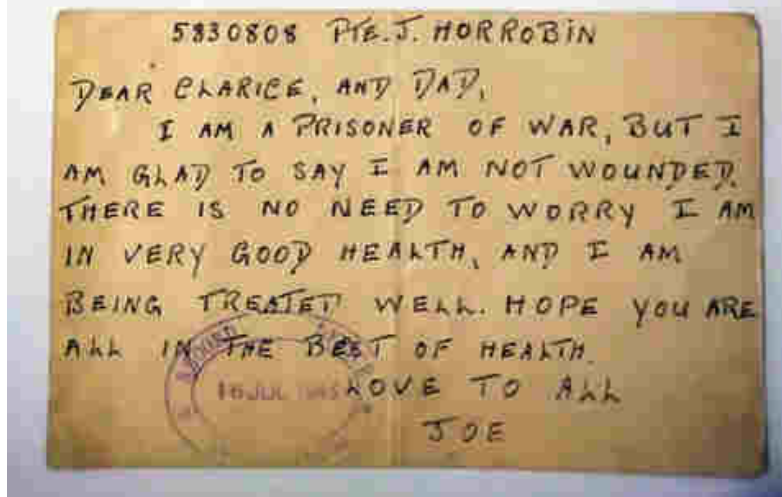
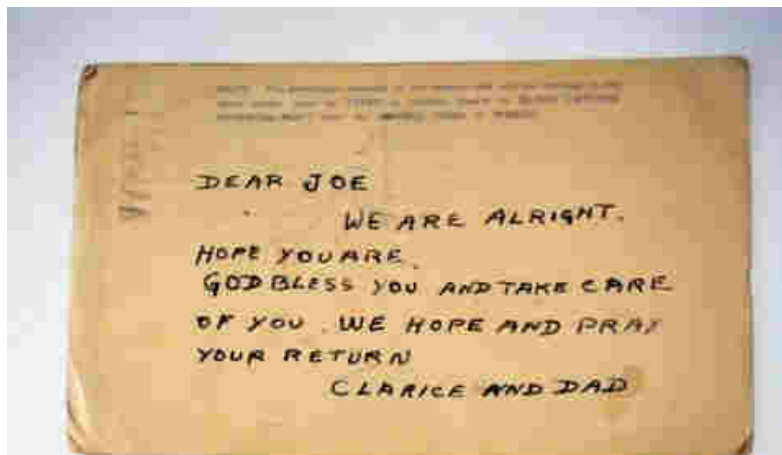
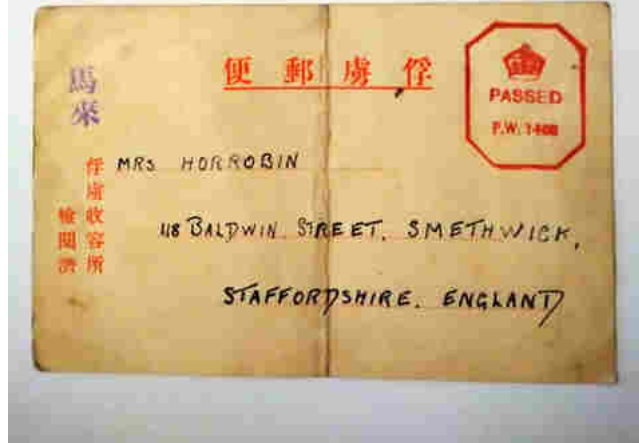
Hospital	Dates	Camp Leader
<i>[Faint handwritten text]</i>	<i>[Faint handwritten text]</i>	<i>[Faint handwritten text]</i>

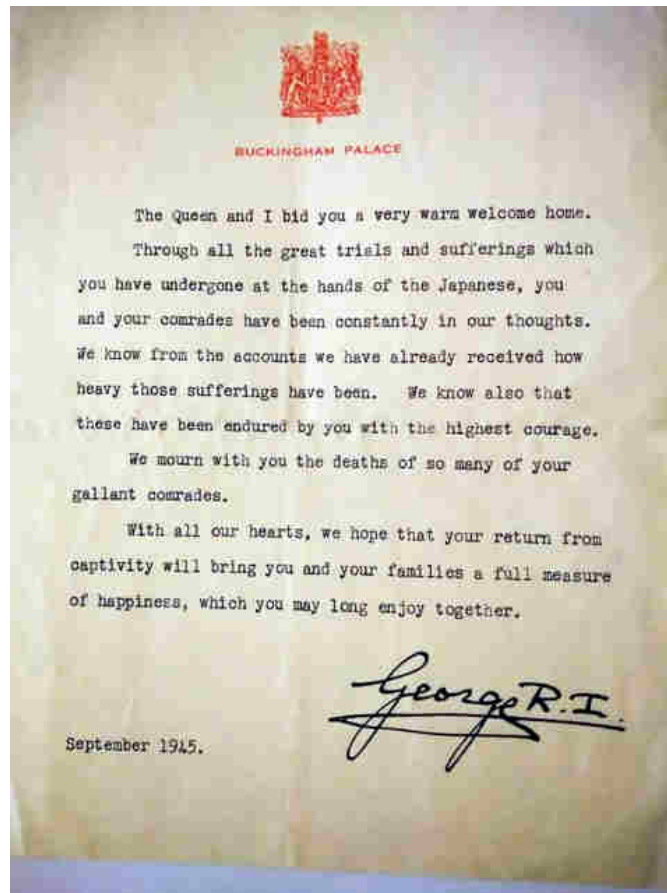
ESCAPES OR ATTEMPTED ESCAPES. (Additional paper will be supplied on request.)

Give full description and details of each attempt you made to escape, including each attempt with date. State whether there was an air-raid on the camp from which you escaped or whether the attempt was made and whether it was successful.

Were you physically fit when you made these attempts?

Sorry that the above picture is blurred but I hope you might be able to see some of it - it is possibly Joe's Liberation Questionnaire?





Many thanks to the Horrobin Family for sharing the photos of Joe's messages home and the articles that were sent to his family about him.

REACTION TO CHURCHILL'S REFUSAL TO SEND ARMAMENTS TO THE FAR EAST AND FALL OF SINGAPORE ON 15/02/1945

Follow-up by Barbara James

In April's news sheet, Margaret's item on Lord William Forbes-Sempill and his links to Winston Churchill came up during a discussion on a video conference of the FEPOW Family Charity group. Again it was quite surprising to find that so many of us who are FEPOW descendant's hold little admiration for Churchill and his refusal to send the urgently requested armaments out to Singapore for its defence against attack by the Japanese. One participant of the group suggested a book to me - *The Sacrifice of Singapore, Churchill's Biggest Blunder* by Michael Arnold - and I was able to obtain a used copy from Amazon for less than £4. (Arthur Lane , a well known FEPOW author, receives a credit from the author too)

I have to say that I was gripped by the book and I came to realise that Churchill had been excessively ambitious and this first became evident during WWI. His political career was led by his determination to succeed in politics but was overshadowed by what would now quite possibly be diagnosed as him being bi-polar and he had frequent bouts of depression which he described as 'the black dog' (*The black dog has been used as a metaphor for depression from classical mythology through medieval folklore to Churchill. It acts as a symbol to externalise moods and thoughts that are difficult to communicate*)

Against advice from senior military advisers that Singapore was an essential part of the British Empire and should be defended at all costs, he went along with the notion that Singapore was a 'fortress' and therefore would be impregnable. He described the Japanese as being inferior and that the 'white man's supremacy was unquestioned'. The British Empire was the largest in World history - the 'little yellow men' would never dare to attack British colonies. Looking back Churchill was

undoubtedly extremely racist and believed that it was our right to have and to hold on to our colonies. A big mistake came about when Japan was denied access to oil and rubber supplies and so the seeds were sown for Japan to fulfil its requirement for these by capturing the lands where these commodities were in abundance - Burma, Malaya, The Dutch East Indies and French Indo China. The Japanese set about making plans for invading these areas including Singapore and Hong Kong. They equipped and trained first class troops to undertake these invasions, trained pilots to fly their planes which vastly outpaced and were superior to any Allied planes out in the Far East and they had an understanding and knowledge of the area that enabled them to launch an unexpected invasion that totally surprised the forces they attacked.

Churchill was constantly being asked to send supplies to the Far East as they were under threat of invasion but he refused to sanction the requests, especially with regard to Singapore to which he constantly referred to as a fortress. He even sent supplies to North Africa where he was transfixed by his determination to beat Rommel, he sent tanks to Russia to help there but he persisted in his refusal to send equipment to the Far East. The belief that a Japanese invasion would come by sea was totally wrong, so when the attack did come it took them totally by surprise as it came by land from the north. Churchill ordered that every man should fight to the end (last man alive!) General Percival could see that the situation was desperate and that local populations were being slaughtered, water supplies were cut off, fuel supplies were running out and they had no chance of defeating the Japanese invasion. He decided to call for a surrender and the rest is history. So, who was to blame for the defeat? Churchill, aware that he could be blamed if it became known that he had refused to send out the required armaments, put the blame on to Percival and there it stuck.

So we have to look at the circumstances that led up to this catastrophe and decide who was at fault - Churchill for not sending out the equipment or Percival who was there in those awful days of fighting and could understand the situation clearly and wanted to preserve livesI know who I blame, but then I am biased perhaps.

Usually there should be an inquiry into military disasters such as the conquest of Singapore but it was not done and so the blame remained with Percival and Churchill's part in this disastrous event which could possibly been avoided if the requests for equipment had been approved, went unrecognised!

In honour of my Dad, Eric Taylor and all those who were captured in the Far East - We Will Remember Them!

A REMINDER ABOUT THE FEPOW GALLERY OF HEROES ON FACEBOOK

Just a reminder that the second gallery is still a work in progress - if you added a photograph to the first gallery for VJ75, it is important that you re-send the photo again if you wish it to be included in this one which is only for FEPOW! If you aren't on Facebook, send me a photo plus the name and a few details and I will forward it on your behalf.

Pam and Gail are still adding FEPOW photos to the gallery that is dedicated only to those who were prisoners of the Japanese so if your relative was a FEPOW or an internee, please join the group and add their photo. Thank you!

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/511536153140001>

RESEARCHING FEPOW HISTORY GROUP BLOG

This continues to feature some really interesting items and they are also looking for suggestions for future blogs if you would like to contribute to it.

<https://fepowhistory.com/blog/>

WELFARE GRANTS FOR FEPOW, WIVES AND WIDOWS

If you need help with a grant towards hospital stays, Nursing Home Costs, alterations to the home, mobility aids etc, then please get in touch with:-

Mrs Margaret Martin, Java Club, by phone:- 01273 424686 or by email:-

margaretmartin1944@sky.com

Pauline Simpson, NFFWRA, phone :- 07818599303 or by email:-

enquiries@nationalfepowfellowship.org.uk

The BAFEPOW News Sheet is put together and distributed by Barbara James. If you have any items for inclusion, please do send them to me.

If you just want a chat, do ring me, I think we have all missed being able to meet up at our monthly meetings during the pandemic.

Secretary to BAFEPOW:- Barbara James, Tel: 0121 258 4300 or 07954104857

Email: bmjames142@yahoo.co.uk

