

Chairman - Keith Andrews, Treasurer - Margaret Walton, Secretary - Barbara James
Committee Members - James Whiskens, Angela Lane, Annette Hughes, Rowford Bowditch

BAFEPOW NEWS SHEET MAY 2025 (INCLUDING VE80)



WE WILL REMEMBER THEM!

It is very important that we in BAFEPOW commemorate this significant event with the rest of the UK. So many of us feel that VJ Day is neglected and that VE Day is so often talked about in the news etc as being the end of WWII and not just as the end of the war in Europe, Most of us were not even born back then and this is because our fathers were still suffering, many still dying, in captivity in the Far East in the many camps that were holding them (over six hundred widespread sites) and they were becoming aware that they faced being executed by their Japanese captors to prevent the reality of their captivity and the conditions under which they were imprisoned becoming known to the world.

We all understand why there were widespread celebrations going on at home in Great Britain as they had suffered since 1939 and this meant a lot of their loved ones would be returning and life would be more settled again. However, for many, the pain of separation and not knowing if where their loved ones were alive or if that war would end soon prevented some from being able to celebrate. There were families that had loved ones fighting on both sides of the world and they must have felt it even more difficult as their emotions were divided between being happy to at last be in peace at home and in Europe but anxious at the scale of warfare still underway in the Far East and the lack of news about the safety of their loved ones, some of whom they still hadn't had any news from for three years or more.

In the April edition of our BAFEPOW news sheet I mentioned the suggestion that our member, Ray Withnall had put forward that we should mention those FEPOW to whom we have links and share where they may have been on VE Day 45 when Europe and most people were celebrating the return of

peace. My thanks go to those who have contributed to the list which is on the next page. I asked my cousin where my Dad's brother was as he had been in North Africa and Italy and discovered that he

BELOW ARE SOME OF OUR OWN FEPOW'S WHEREABOUTS ON VE DAY

<u>NAME OF POW</u>	<u>CAMP LOCATION</u>	<u>WAITING BACK HOME</u>	<u>REPATRIATED TO?</u>
Edwin Coy	Singapore	Wife and two sons	
Ron Mockford	Bukit Timor Hills - digging tunnels *	Parents	Liverpool
Frederick (Fred) Camp	Changi and Sime Road, Singapore	Wife and two sons	Liverpool aboard the SS Mauritania on 25/11/45
Kenneth Edward Truett, 5828960, 5th Battalion Suffolk Regiment	Sime Road and Changi, Singapore	Father and his sister	? On 23/10/45 aboard the Sobieski to Liverpool
Bill Wheale	Singapore	Mother, his three sisters, two brothers and girlfriend, Ivy.	Not known
Eric Taylor, Gnr RA	Saigon Docks, French Indo China	Father and brother with his new wife	19/10/1945 at the Pier Head in Liverpool aboard the Orduna
459 HMS Exeter, HMS Encounter & HMS Stronghold	Survivors at Macassar, Celebes	450+ Mums, Wives, & Girlfriends. Lots of Children - some they didn't know about.	11th December 1945 at Portsmouth onboard HMS Maidstone.
Edward Alexander Murray and his brother, Douglas I. Murray	Various including Japan and Taiwan	Their mother, a brother and two sisters	Not known
Malcolm Ingleby Scott, Radio Officer, Merchant Navy.	Fukushima internment camp from 11th July 1942	Parents and fiancée	Southampton Docks 3/12/1945 aboard the Andes
Alfred Thomas Hall, Trooper 3rd Hussars	Changi, Singapore	Mother and 3 siblings	18/10/1945, Southampton aboard the SS Almanzora

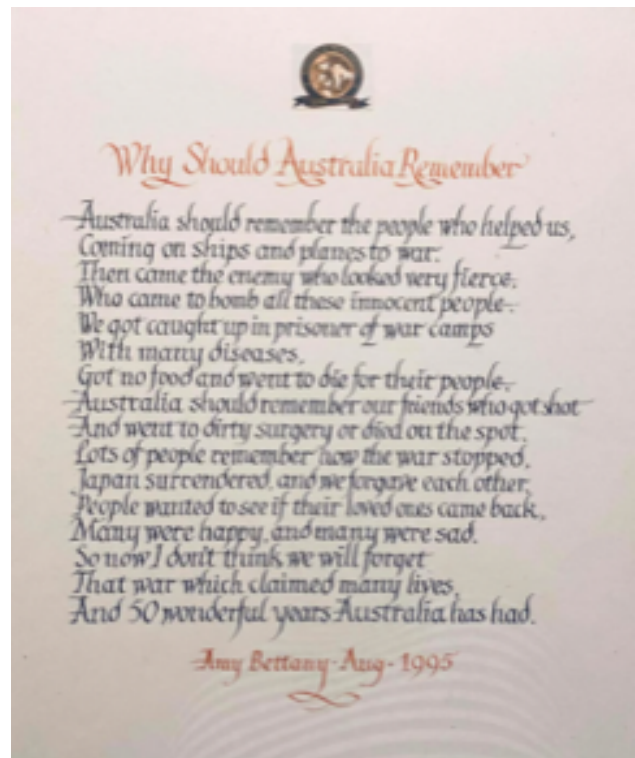
* Whilst putting the info into the grid for dear Ron Mockford, I thought I would look up some info about the tunnels that the FEPOW were put to work on at Bukit Timor and I came across the following. If you copy and paste the link, it will take you to a very interesting web page and a FEPOW Family link to click on that takes you to a page all about the tunnels where Ron was working at the time of VE Day.

*“While a comprehensive, easily accessible map of all Bukit Timah POW tunnels is not widely available online, some resources and maps focusing on specific areas within the Bukit Timah region can provide some insight. The **FEPOW Family** website includes a map, along with other resources, focusing on the Adams Park area, which was near some of the POW camps. Additionally, the Adam Park Project website offers maps of Sime Road POW Camp and related areas, providing some context for the potential locations of tunnels in the vicinity.”*

[https://www.google.com/search?](https://www.google.com/search?q=bukit+timah+pow+tunnels+map&sca_esv=9ff50885e6f6a77d&rlz=1C5CHFA_enGB902GB902&sxsrf=AHTn8zrBuLgF9eRmCoOLs9LGJ_IDCi5T)

[q=bukit+timah+pow+tunnels+map&sca_esv=9ff50885e6f6a77d&rlz=1C5CHFA_enGB902GB902&sxsrf=AHTn8zrBuLgF9eRmCoOLs9LGJ_IDCi5T](https://www.google.com/search?q=bukit+timah+pow+tunnels+map&sca_esv=9ff50885e6f6a77d&rlz=1C5CHFA_enGB902GB902&sxsrf=AHTn8zrBuLgF9eRmCoOLs9LGJ_IDCi5T)

APRIL 25TH - THE AUSSIES AND NEW ZEALANDERS COMMEMORATE ANZAC DAY



The one thing that always comes across to us is how well other countries do remembrance and very prominently it's Australia in particular that seems to excel. So, why the two pictures above? I am a big fan of the artwork of Des Bettany and he was a Pom from South Shields who took his family over to Oz and started afresh. His son, Keith Bettany is one of our Australian members and has been very generous in letting me use some of his Dad's drawings in a number of our news sheet but the picture on the right is quite special as it is a verse written by his daughter, Amy, for VJ50 and which Des, was so moved by that he wrote it out in perfect calligraphy and had it framed - it must have meant an awful lot to him (I do hope that you can enlarge it sufficiently to read it). I have chosen the drawing on the left as it depicts the skeletal image of a POW as they must have been looking from soon after captivity - more like old men than the young ones they still were when VE Day was being celebrated 'back home'. Our FEPOW were possibly starting to hear of the end of the war in Europe and wondering if they would survive to be free and return home. Most of Des's cartoons use some comedic images to convey his message but this one is quite haunting.

Here are some very touching words that accompany this picture of the FEPOW in the gallery and I hope that you will read them as I am sure you will agree that with VJ80 on the horizon, these are what the general public should be reading /hearing about so they learn what happened to our loved ones.

“As you looked at them, the flesh dropped off their bones, the light of youth from their eyes, the life from their faces. Boys of twenty became suddenly, in physique and expression, old men – shrunk and desperate. ”

“Our doctors urged us, with good humour and resignation, to do as little as possible each day because the calorific content of our full ration was - they had discovered - only sufficient to enable one to breathe. If one moved or worked then, if pre-war medical standards were to be believed, we must all surely die”.

“The amount of work done by the men who now weighed about eight stone instead of their usual eleven or twelve (and who sank to as low as five or six) was remarkable. The heat had no effect on them. They worked without headwear, they wore only G stings, they ate less each day than international pre war scientists had declared to be the amount on which a man could continue to live, and yet they contrive to plug along for ten or twelve hours on end, shifting tons of obstinate tailings in that time.”.

“The prisoner - of - war life for these four years was an object lesson in living together. The three things that could, at any time kill us all off were work, disease and starvation.”

Source: The Naked Island by Russell Braddon; 1955 edition Pan Books Ltd, Pg121, 131, 181, 252

‘When we were reunited with F Force, there was no doubt that we at Changi had been to some degree deprived of necessary nourishment and it showed in our appearance, but the appearance of the survivors from F Force was such that we were absolutely shocked. They all looked like walking cadavers and gave the appearance of skeletons over which a yellowish – green skin, translucent and almost glowing, had been stretched. And these were the healthiest of the survivors. They were in good spirits at having arrived back to the comparative luxury of Changi, and told amazing stories of death and survival in the various camps along the railway. Huge numbers had succumbed to tropical ulcers, meningitis, dysentery, dengue, malaria, fatal accidents and plain starvation. One of the major killers was cholera, and they told stories of comparatively healthy men contracting the disease and dying within twenty four hours before they eyes of their comrades. In some camps, fires were kept going twenty fours hours a day so that those who died from cholera could be burnt immediately in order to help prevent the spread of the disease.’

Source: You’ll Never Get Off The Island by Keith Wilson; 1989, Pg 89

‘Counting their actual years these men are young, mostly around twenty two or so. But in their shrunk physique and haggard bearing they look to be in their fifties or sixties, undernourished and in the poorest health at that.

They cannot hold themselves properly upright. Their walk – if indeed they are able to walk – is shaky and pain-ridden. They talk only when there is a need to do so. Their speech is slow and difficult, the effort too tiring.

Only in their eyes do most of them show defiance and grim, stubborn determination not to give in. In some, though, there is only despair beyond the reach of friends, and defeat that will surely lead only to longed – for release in death.’

‘We are not in disgrace for letting Singapore be captured so easily, as we have feared we might be. Possibly it is now accepted that we were never given a chance to fight properly, never had the weapons and support which we should have had. To that we would add that political interference and ineptitude, coupled with military incompetence at high level in certain places, is a combination which the ordinary soldier cannot overcome. All he can do is fight and die or, as in our case, become a prisoner, while those responsible retire on undeserved pensions.’

Source: One Fourteenth of an Elephant by Ian Denys Peek, 2005, pg 307 -308; 490 (relating to the condition of POW's on Thai Burma Railway).

ANNUAL SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE AT THE FEPOW CHURCH, WYMONDHAM

The annual service will take place at the National Memorial Church of Far East Prisoners Of War (FEPOW) at the Church of Our Lady and St Thomas of Canterbury, Wymondham. Arrangements are in place for the ecumenical FEPOW Memorial service on Sunday 11th May 2025 at 12:30pm. No invitation is needed and all are welcome.

We are very pleased to have our member Tony and his sister, Annette, attending on our behalf and a BAFEPOW wreath will be laid there. If you have not had your loved one's name entered into the Roll of Honour there, we have been reminded by Peter Wiseman to get in touch with him to have them included. If you want to know more, then do contact me - Barbara

On the topic of remembrance services, more excellent news from Tony - there will be a VJ80 commemoration service at the American War Cemetery, Madingley as they have been granted permission for it to go ahead from the White House in Washington. More details to follow as soon as the arrangements are finalised.

ANOTHER LOCAL FEPOW AND FORMER BAFEPOW MEMBER IS DISCOVERED

It's always a pleasure to receive an email from someone with a link to a FEPOW, especially one with a link to Birmingham, and so it was an extremely pleasant surprise to hear of the second one to come to light in a couple of weeks. I had been contacted by a fellow COFEPOW member who had met a lovely lady and her grandson at the NMA and she had alerted me that she had given my email details to them as they were from the Birmingham area. I was therefore very pleased to receive the following message sent by the grandson, Nick, to myself and I replied and invited them to come along and join us at a meeting.

"Good morning,

Hope you are well.

I was recently at the National Memorial Arboretum with my Grandmother who's Father was a POW in the Far East and we got chatting to a couple who were on the tour with us and they provided me with your email address and said you were the best person to ask regarding Membership and upcoming events. We live in Birmingham and wondered if there were any upcoming meetings or events for COFEPOW?

I look forward to hearing from you."

.....and so on Tuesday, March 25th we were very pleased to welcome Maureen and her Grandson, Nick to our discussion group meeting at the Holiday Inn in Birmingham. Maureen is the daughter of FEPOW Brinley Ivor Cutler, 79808, Lance Bombardier, 5th Field Regt RA and she grew up in the family home in Selly Oak, not all that far from where I live. The name 'Cutler' was known to me as a work colleague and good friend of my own Dad and I was keen to discover if there was a link but sadly not. However, we had been joined by Richard, our other FEPOW grandson, and there was a link in that both FEPOW had worked on the City transport network although not at the same garage.

Well, it was such a lively meeting as Maureen had attended many of the BAFEPOW meetings with her Dad and Mom back when the association was not long established and she actually knew so many of those FEPOW that we only know of by name alone. She had also gone with her parents to FEPOW reunions in London and also attended the RBL Services of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall when Bishop Leonard Wilson used to lead the religious service there. Maureen told how she used to sell raffle tickets etc at the reunions and how her parents were good friends of Bishop Wilson and his wife. She described to us the kimono that her Dad brought home that had been made from parachute silk and she has promised to bring it along to a future meeting when she can. She also told us about the Samurai sword that her father had with him when he came back. Her mother had refused to have it kept in the house because it might have been used in the beheading of someone and maybe even a POW which we could all understand. She does wonder what became of it. It was a very lively and interesting meeting and we do hope that Maureen and Nick will join us again soon.

Just to add that Richard showed us the photographic copies that he has made of his Grandad's memoirs and we hope that we might be able to have a copy of them as the writing is quite easy to read and which might negate the need to type them all out.

ROLL OF HONOUR

Elizabeth van Kampen - civilian child internee. With very great sadness Elizabeth passed away peacefully in her home city of Tilburg, Netherlands aged 97 in the loving care of her family on 06/02/2025.

Elizabeth was aged fifteen when the Japanese captured Indonesia and her idyllic family life on a plantation came to an end as her mother and fellow siblings were all interned. Her father continued to work as an internee receiving a minimal wage from the Japanese until he was imprisoned in the prison in Malang. Elizabeth, her mother and siblings had been removed from their plantation and kept in a camp in Malang. For her sixteenth birthday she was allowed to see her father in the prison for ten minutes and she never saw him again - the family never discovered what fate befell him at the hands of the Kempeitai or where he was buried.

Elizabeth's story is well worth reading and below there are two different links to it. The first takes you to her story on Ronnie Taylor's FEPOW Family and the second was Elizabeth's personal web page that she kept adding to until she was quite elderly- very interesting!

https://www.far-eastern-heroes.org.uk/How_I_Lost_My_Best_Friend/

<https://www.dutch-east-indies.com/index.html>

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:-

Mr Stephen John, the Java Club by email:- stephen.su.47@gmail.com

Mrs Pauline Simpson, NFFWRA by email:- enquiries@nationalfepowfellowship.org.uk

The BAFEPOW news sheet is put together by the association secretary, Barbara James, and, hopefully, it contains items of interest to all members. You are very welcome to suggest future topics or to submit items for future inclusion. You can contact me via email:- bmjames142@yahoo.co.uk or by phone:- 07954104857

