

COFEPOW Scotland : Occasional Newsletter

February 2026

Small Acts of Remembrance

Last year, the 80th since the end of the Second World War, was marked by many major events throughout the world. At the local level, services and parades were attended for VJ Day in August and Remembrance Day in November.

This year, I invite you to take part in 'small acts of remembrance'.

This initiative was prompted last year by a chance encounter at the Spittal of Glenshee, Grampian Mountains, where I planned to meet a hillwalking friend. Having arrived early, I wandered into the small graveyard adjoining the Kirk where one gravestone immediately caught my attention.



One of only two CWGC stones there, it commemorates the death of James Grewar, Private, Black Watch, who died on 6 March 1943. His younger brother Andrew served in Malaya with the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders and died on 7 January 1942. It was only after the War ended that Andrew's parents were notified of his death and his details added to his brother's gravestone at this small Kirk.

(Andrew is also commemorated on the Singapore Memorial within CWGC Kranji Cemetery, Singapore, where over 24000 service personnel with no known grave are named.)

Many military and civilian personnel who died overseas do not have a CWGC headstone in this country but might have been honoured here on a private family headstone. For example, William Nisbet is commemorated at Girvan Doune Cemetery and also at Douglasbank Dunfermline.

Many thanks to Ritchie and Lorna Conaghan, Girvan and District Great War Project, for this photo





Often family stones contain details not easily found elsewhere. This stone at Macduff Cemetery East Wemyss, Fife, commemorates Gnr. Eli Westwood who died at 'Shaumpuiso' Camp Hong Kong. Maybe this was Sham Shui Po?

Many thanks to Dave Dykes, CWGC, for this information.

How can you help?

I am writing now to ask for help in identifying other Second World War Far East casualties who may be named on family headstones in Scotland. Perhaps you have a family stone, or maybe, walking through a cemetery, you have noticed such a headstone. If so, please would you get in touch with me.

I am very pleased to report that this initiative is supported by volunteers from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC). Many have already sent information including notes on Muriel Gregory who is commemorated on a family stone - she was on HMS Vyner Brooke when it was attacked by the Japanese and died as a POW at Muntok Camp, Banka Island. The Commanding Officer of HMS Prince of Wales (sunk by the Japanese 10 December 1941) is also commemorated on a family stone.

August 2026 - Small Acts of Remembrance

With support from local COFEPOW members and volunteers, it is hoped, in early August, to place a small cross at many of these headstones around Scotland. This is a simple act of remembrance to raise awareness and to recognise the contribution made by so many during the Second World War in the Far East.

In anticipation of your interest and support, thank you.

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STOP PRESS : This morning I received an email from IWM - their website has records of 141 Records of Far East Prisoners of War recorded on family gravestones. As the email says 'there are likely to be many more'. We can help!

