



**Chairman - Mr Keith Andrews, Treasurer - Mrs Margaret Walton, Secretary - Mrs Barbara James
Committee Members - Ms Angela Lane, Mrs Annette Hughes, Rowford Bowditch, Anthony Truett, Richard Gibbs**

BAFEPOW NEWS SHEET FOR AUGUST 2026

VJ81 – TO REMEMBER THEM IS TO HONOUR THEM!



August is here and once more we turn our attention to the calendar of events that relate to the history of WWII in the Far East and, after the wonderful commemorations of VJ80 last year, this year has returned to a quieter time of remembrance again. Above is a photo of our member, Carol, who has recently visited Java where she included a visit a FEPOW cemetery and her attention centered on the grave of a man who was unknown (known only to God). Sadly she did not take a photograph of that place but she sent me some photographs from another visit to Kranji Cemetery where she placed poppies on the graves of all those who she had traced who were in the same regiment as her Father but who didn't survive their captivity. This photo seems to signify the commitment to remembrance that we in BAFEPOW uphold and we will remember and honour those who served and returned, who died in captivity with special respect to the 'unknown', and also to the Internees and the Romusha.

And so, as we reach another anniversary of the end of WWII, let us reflect on the date August 15th 1945 and remember that this date was not the total end of that war for those who were POWs still in POW Camps spread far and wide across the territories that had come under Japanese occupation from as long ago as 1931 in China. For many POWs freedom came on a variety of dates – we in BAFEPOW recognise September 2nd 1945 as the official end but sometimes it is recognised as September 9th – my own father was finally free on 12th September.

Repatriation brought the ex-POWs new challenges as the homeland they had left so long ago had changed immensely and, for many, it was a difficult time – **WE WILL REMEMBER THEM!**

TAKING A LOOK BACK AT BAFEPOW (BJ)



For VJ80 last year the BAFEPOW committee was pleased to commemorate this special anniversary with the VJ80 badge, the VJ80 lunch on 02/09/25 at the Holiday Inn and the excellent presentation booklet that recorded the FEPOW histories of the founding members of it and also the early committee members of the association. In the booklet the story of one of our most important founders, Pat De Paeztron and it has a photograph of those present at the dedication of the bench dedicated to Pat within the area approaching the Burma Star and FEPOW memorial in Bromsgrove, Worcestershire. We have close links from our group to this memorial area and we are fortunate to have a member who lives close by who keeps an eye on the area and he has also laid a wreath there on our behalf on VJ80.

More recently we have been fortunate to have been in touch with Tony Bourne who is the son of Alex Bourne who was the treasurer of BAFEPOW for some time. Tony sent me the photos above which are also from this event and Alex can be seen third on the left in the first photo. Another of our very dedicated founders was Tom McKie and he was the association's standard bearer and also our chairman for a time. Tom must be one of the standard bearers in the second photo and is seen bearing the standard in the first one but if you can identify any of the other FEPOWs in the photographs it would be so good to make a note of them to pass on for the future so do let me know if you recognise someone.

Let us also remember that when the NMA was being established at Alrewas, Tom was very actively involved in supporting Carol Cooper while the FEPOW Grove and the FEPOW Hut were being built and he personally paid for the construction of the plaque to the National Federation of FEPOW Clubs and Associations which is now at the entrance to the FEPOW Grove. Tom also paid for the plaque's replenishment and for the sign for the stretch of the original rail from the Thai/Burma Railway and the construction of the steps up to the rail. Let us remember him with pride and hope that both his personal contribution and that of BAFEPOW should be remembered – the BAFEPOW standard was laid down within the hut for posterity and do take a moment to remember Tom and his fellow members who were actively involved when the NMA was just being established – they would all be amazed at how the site has evolved since then! (Tom also raised funds for the BAFEPOW memorial plaque which is in the Sothorn transept of St Martins in the Bullring and he was also involved in funding the VJ 70 commemorative medallion along with the then Vice chairman, Ken Coy – son of Edwin Coy.

Let us now remember and honour our founding members :-

Charles 'Pat' De Paeztron

Thomas 'Tom' McKie

William 'Billy' Brain

Walter Edward Pearce

Alfred Dennis (Nobby) Hunt

Arthur Alexander (Alex) Bourne

Edward (Ted) Watkin Millward

Edwin (Ted) William Coy

Our founding Patron – Dr Bishop John Leonard Wilson C.M.G. M.A. D.D. K.C.M.G.

YOUR INVITATION TO THE BAFEPOW AGM (BJ)

This is to confirm that arrangements are in place for the AGM to take place at the Birmingham Holiday Inn on Tuesday, September 8th. The meeting will commence at 11.30 and should be completed by 12.45 so that we can have our lunch at 13.00 and enjoy time chatting and also catching up with our Australian member, Arlene Bennett who we are so pleased to have with us again on that day.

The minutes of the last AGM will be printed out and available for you on the day as also will be a copy of the present constitution which has been discussed by the BAFEPOW committee in readiness for updating and is subject to agreement by members. If you would prefer to have a copy of one or both of these documents then please contact me and I will email them to you.

As you will have seen in July's news sheet, I felt it time for me to step back and give another member a chance to take on the role of the association's secretary and if you are interested in doing so then please let me know. At present there is a committee member who is interested in taking on this role in a shared capacity with myself but other members might also be interested. Happily Keith Andrews has told me that he is pleased to continue in his role as our chairman which is good news and, although he may not be able to join us for this AGM, he is making good progress and is hoping to come to meetings again at some point.

If you would like to talk to me about the role of secretary then do give me a call and, if you aren't able to come to the AGM, you can still put your name forward for election on the day. We are also going to add the role of Vice Chairperson (subject to approval at the AGM) and this role will be to support the Chairperson. We have previously had a vice chairperson until it was decided that it was not a necessary role but, since Keith was unable to join us in person at present, it would seem good to re-instate this role. Please do let me know if you are interested to take this on. So far we have two candidates but that does not stop you from expressing an interest even if you are unable to be there on the day of the AGM. If you are interested in joining the committee then do let me know.

I shall be preparing an agenda for the meeting and if you have items for inclusion then please let me know and I will add them.

Lunch will be provided for everyone by the Association so please do let me know if you wish to attend as I need to let the Holiday Inn know how many guests to prepare for. I need to let them know by Tuesday, September 1st and especially if you have any dietary requirements – the lunch will be of assorted sandwiches, salad and chunky chips.

I do hope that you will be able to join us and look forward to hearing from you and seeing you on that day.

On the right is the photo from VJ80 last year when some BAFEPOW committee members and friends met up at St Philip's Cathedral in Birmingham City Centre to hear the peal of bells being rung in the bell tower there in honour of our FEPOW for this important event. We are a very friendly group and so enjoy the friendship and chances to learn about WWII in the Far East from each other that we might not have had the opportunity to do if we just did research on our own.



Researching Far East Prisoners of War – Part 3.

Following on from Part 2 of this series, having now decided on which direction our research efforts should be directed, we can continue our work. For this part, I will be concentrating on researching an individual.

Obtaining your prisoners service number and unit, though not essential, will make your research easier. You may already have this from your initial gathering of data from within the family, or it can be found on any number of commercial websites. However, where names have a common usage ie John Smith, having these basic details will make your research journey much easier.

Having this information to hand, I would recommend that you now obtain a copy of the Japanese PoW Index Card, (see figures 2 & 3), for the person/s you are researching. Copies of these can be found in the series WO 345 – either at The National Archives (TNA), at County Record Offices where access to commercial databases can be seen free of charge or, of course, you could take out a subscription to one of these websites. More on this later in the series.

The Index Cards provide a wealth of information, such as:

Name; Date of birth; Service Number & Unit; Rank; Where captured; Camp Nos (these often changed on moves of camp); Parents names (deceased or alive); Place of birth, and Next of Kin.

Can you read this?

私は日本語の漢字を読みたいです。¹

(Translation - I am reliably informed by Google that this translates as “I want to read Japanese Kanji”.

Modern Japanese writing is a combination of three systems. In the 1940's, a system known as Kanji was mainly used. The Japanese PoW Index Cards are partially written in Kanji and were prepared early on in captivity and were produced for most prisoners.

Text written in Kanji is quite difficult to learn and best left to experts. There are over 50,000 characters with over 2,000 in regular use. Using GOOGLE Translate provides a 70-80% accuracy but it often just directly translates word for word. You will often need to apply context, and some English grammar to achieve a meaningful sentence.

A sample of some of the more common phrases are shown in Figure 1, Courtesy of the Dutch National Archives.

However, dates are much easier and are based on the number of years of an Emperor's reign. The Showa reign of Emperor Hirohito began when he ascended the throne in 1926, that then being year 1 of his reign. Therefore 1942 = 17th year of his reign, 1943 = 18th year of his reign, and so on.

It is written - year – month – date.

So, to translate a typical date of the 8th March 1942, it would be written as 17-3-8.

A red diagonal line across the whole card indicates that the person died while a PoW. Similarly, a red diagonal line through a parent's name would generally indicate that they were also deceased.

However, an element of caution is needed as some of the information on these cards does not match up with other records, and when you get such a mismatch, you will need to carefully evaluate the information available before deciding which piece of information you wish to retain. Recording the other information as an alternative, is also good practice.

Figure 1: Some typical Kanji words or phrases. (© Dutch National Archives)

收容所 Camp	爪哇 昭和 17 年 8 月 15 日	番 號 No.	爪本 3274
姓 名 Name	HALL, Alfred. ハル. アルフレッド	生 年 月 日 Date of Birth	1915. 5. 6
國 籍 Nationality	英	所 屬 部 隊 Unit	No. 557219 3rd Hussars, Royal Armoured Corps.
階 級 身 分 Rank	Trooper. 陸軍兵卒	捕 獲 年 月 日 Date of Capture	昭和 17 年 3 月 8 日
捕 獲 場 所 Place of Capture	爪哇	母 ノ 名 Mother's Name	HALL, Sarah.
父 ノ 名 Father's Name	HALL, Alfred.	職 業 Occupation	軍人
本 籍 地 Place of Origin	Bargoed, SOUTH WALES.	特 記 事 項 Remarks	
通 報 先 Destination of Report	Mrs. Sarah HALL, 1 River Row, Pontlottyn, Bargoed, South Wales.		

Figure 2: Japanese PoW Index Card for Trooper A Hall (by kind permission of The National Archives)

This Index Card is a good example of where information on the card is incorrect. Note that it gives his mother's name as 'HALL, Sarah', with a red diagonal line through which indicates she was deceased. It also shows the Destination of Report, (ie. Next of Kin), as a Sarah HALL. This may lead you into thinking that his next of kin could either be his wife, or another female relative with the same Christian name as his mother. In this case, it's neither. Further research proves that his mother was very much alive and was correctly recorded as his next of kin but incorrectly recorded as deceased.

What this illustrates is that you must always research all details until you have sufficient evidence to support your findings.

補修欄 Other Informations
昭和17年10月21日 内地へ移管(福岡収容所第八分所へ移管) 昭和20年4月14日 広島収容所へ移管(大分派遣所)
追加補修
昭和17年11月26日 本山分遣所到着
昭和20年8月10日 広島俘虜収容所第八分所へ移管
昭和17年10月21日 内地へ移管(福岡収容所第八分所へ移管) [18.3.1ト改稱ス] Showa 17th Year 10th Month 21st Day (1942 October 21) Moved internally (Fukuoka POW Camp 8th Division) [Renamed on Showa 18th Year 3rd Month 1st Day (1943 March 3)]
昭和20年4月14日 広島収容所へ移管(大分派遣所) Showa 20th Year 4th Month 14th Day, Moved to Hiroshima 6th Branch
[追加補修] Supplementary Information
昭和17年11月26日 本山遣所到着 Showa 17th Year 11th Month 26th Day (1942 November 26) Arrived in Motoyama for a transfer
昭和20年8月10日 広島俘虜収容所第八分所へ移管ス Showa 20th Year 8th Month 10th Day (1945 August 10) Moved to Hiroshima POW Camp 8th Division
昭和20年9月2日 山口縣小野田市大字小野田本山二於テ R.A. Major
EARLE ROBERT JAMES SAVI = 31歳
昭和20年9月2日 山口縣小野田市大字小野田本山二於テ R.A. Major Earle Robert James Saviニ引渡ス
Showa 20th Year 9th Month 2nd Day (1945 September 2) Yamaguchi Prefecture, Ono City, Ōaza Onoda Honzan, Transferred to R.A. Major Earle Robert James Savi

Figure 3: Reverse of a Japanese PoW Index Card (by kind permission of The National Archives)

The reverse of the card will contain supplementary information. This can often show moves between camps, dates of arrival at camps and, usually, an indication of what happened to the prisoner at the end of the war, and, in the example at Figure 3, it shows that on the 2nd September 1945, the released prisoner became the responsibility of Major R J S Earle, Royal Artillery (RA), the senior British Officer at Hiroshima PoW Camp.

The next document I would recommend you obtain is the Liberation Questionnaire. (see Figure 4). These are available from The National Archives in the WO 344 series. These were completed by the individual after their repatriation to the UK. Only about 66% of returning PoWs, (including those freed from German Camps), completed these forms and it is possible that not all of them have been digitalized, so some may not be available online. The front page is also available, free of charge, from the Children of Far East Prisoners of War (COFEPOW) website². Ancestry has more complete versions, and these are viewable by subscription.

<https://www.cofepow.org.uk/research-database>

WRITE IN BLOCK CAPITAL LETTERS IN PENCIL

No. 557219 Rank TROOPER Surname HALL
 Christian Names ALFRED Decorations _____
 Ship (R.N., U.S.N. or Merchant Navy) _____ Unit & Div. 3rd K.O. HOSSARS
 Squadron and Command (R.A.F., A.A.F.) _____
 Date of Birth 6/5/1915 Date of Enlistment 15/10/37
 Private Address and Telephone No. 1 RIVER. ROW. PONTOLETTYN. BARGOED.
 Place and Date of Original Capture JAYA 8/3/1942
 (Aircrew R.A.F. to give place and date of a/c crash).
 1. What camps, detachments or hospitals were you in? Give dates and names of the British Camp Leaders, Detachment (or Block) Leaders or, in the case of hospitals, the Senior British Medical Officers.

Camp or Hospital.	Dates.	Camp Leader.	Detachment or Block Leader (if any).
Tanjong Pagar Baharia	8.4.42-16.4.43	Col Lane (Ind Army)	Major Paul H.M.C. 3 rd K.O.H
Amboine	16.4.43-15.5.44	Major Gideon R.A.	Capt Bentley Taylor M.C. etc.
Cycle Camp Baharia	15.5.44-8.1.45	Wing. Com Ramsey. R.A.F.	
Singapore	11.1.45-18.9.45	Capt Dorman R.D.F.	

2. ESCAPES OR ATTEMPTED ESCAPES. (Additional paper will be supplied on request if required).
 (a) Give full description and approx. date of each attempt you made to escape, showing how you left the camp, and from which camp each attempt was made. State whether there was an air-raid in progress at the time or not. If an escape was made from a train or vehicle the approx. speed and how it was guarded should be included.
No
 (b) Were you physically fit when you made these attempts?
 (c) Give Regimental particulars of anyone who accompanied you on each attempt.
 What happened to them?
 (d) Give briefly your experiences during periods of freedom.

Figure 4: Liberation Questionnaire for Trooper A Hall. (by kind permission of The National Archives).

Because these were completed by the returning prisoner themselves, as well as being completed in their own handwriting, something they had hardly used during their imprisonment, and sometimes illegible due to them being written in pencil, they remain a fruitful source. The Liberation Questionnaire is also useful to verify such details as their enlistment date, their home addresses and the camps where they were imprisoned and the camp leaders. In some cases, they also provide interesting detail about escaping and acts of sabotage. However, they were reliant on the memory of the person completing them and remembering events or dates over 3 years since their capture would be a difficult task for someone who had not been through the experiences of these men. They sometimes give inconsistent data against other known records. Again, a judgement must be made using the preponderance of evidence as to which piece of information you wish to record as fact.

But what of those prisoners who didn't survive and died while imprisoned?

An excellent source of information on deceased FEPOW's can be found at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission website. Though the archives may be visited, by appointment, at the Commission's Head Office in Maidenhead, Berkshire, by far the easiest way to view these records is online. Registering for access is free. The database list all known war dead and records where and when they died, where they are commemorated or interred, and often give a great deal of useful supplementary information.



With just these three pieces of information added to our knowledge, we now have a significant amount of data to record. If at this stage you have still not found any evidence to support your case, you will need to broaden your research activities and in the next part of this series, we will explore other sources of information to support our research.

To be continued:

WELFARE GRANTS FOR FEPOW AND 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

