



COFEPOW Quarterly

October 2026 edition · Issue no. 114

COVER STORY

Members bear VJ-Day heatwave

The mid-weekend of August again brings round COFEPOW's most significant commemorative event of the year. The modern-day Services, close to August 15th, represent a solemn oath of remembrance, made both by descendants of those who didn't come home from the Second World War in the Far East, and of those who returned, only to endure physical and mental consequences for the rest of their lives.



Alongside the vicious fighting in the jungles of Burma, Thailand, Singapore, Borneo, Malaya, the Philippines and the islands of the Pacific, many of those forced into the 1940's empire of Japan's POW camps were subjected to immeasurable cruelty. Thousands died unnecessarily. Thousands were permanently damaged. Thousands came home bitter and resentful, and haunted forever by that to which they had borne close witness.

The unrelenting campaign on all fronts eventually brought about victory over a most determined, cruel and depraved foe. To mark that enemy's surrender, the trustees of COFEPOW organise a service of remembrance and accompanying wreath-laying on the Sunday nearest to August 15th each year, ensuring that

those brave souls who died and those who were scarred, but came home, will not be forgotten.

COFEPOW was set up to help and remember Far East Prisoners of War. But its initials stand for 'Children' of FEPOWs and it exists to provide some comfort to those who, in childhood, lost their father, and to those who were unaware of their Dad's fate. To children whose fathers returned, often unable to process the loss of comrades who were worked and starved to death, or to those kids whose early years often meant being the target for their father's rage. And now to those who experience guilt as their fathers pass on, having failed to understand, acknowledge - even notice - the far depths of their father's psyche, twisted by all they'd endured.

COFEPOW is a different charity: it provides perspective to descendants, however their father's struggle impacted them.



This human tragedy and its impact, even through to the 21st century, cannot be forgotten. It is for this reason we sustain everlasting remembrance and the trustee board and the charity's officers encourage and welcome all to its organised remembrance ceremonies, however limited or large in scale.

Held at defined locations and monuments, they are living testament to the evil that war brings to society, but also to the undaunted hope of the human spirit. Most of all, they are a solemn reminder that the sacrifices POWs made in the defence of the life we live, must be honoured forever.

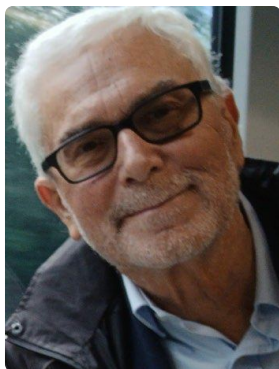


Lest we forget.

THIS QUARTER

Chair's Notes

At the recent Annual General Meeting, I announced my decision to step down as Chair of COFEPOW at the time of the 2027 AGM. I've had a brilliant time since becoming Chair, rather unexpectedly I might add, so it will be a wrench to step down.



"However, it is now a year since the VJ80 commemoration events and services, and therefore four years away from the next significant anniversary of VJ-Day 85. So when the new Chair formally takes over next year, there will be only three years to help co-ordinate the remembrance services at that time: the new Chair will have a considerable amount to do in engaging with the National Memorial Arboretum (now the Royal British Legion National Remembrance Gardens), the RBL itself, the Department of Culture, Media and Sports and our sister organisations across the country, to create an event that's worthy of the importance we all invest in the event. The discussions we've held over the last couple of years with the Royal Family and the government, assured us that this commemoration was now a significant item in their

calendars, and so will be respected. However, there is no substitute for raising the issue well in advance, so we can be assured of their commitment and gain a 'vision' of, and agreement on, what the anniversary commemoration will look like.

"By VJ-85 in 2030, I will also have passed my 80th birthday, so it will be appropriate to let someone else take the reins. I will still be happy to continue as a trustee and act as Secretary to the charity, no longer on an interim basis, and continue with other duties such as arranging the Cenotaph March on Remembrance Day in November.

"We're advertising the post of Chair (see [Applications for post of COFEPOW Chair](#)), so if you're interested in the role, please get in touch for a preliminary chat.

David Brede

COFEPOW Chair

THIS QUARTER

VJ Day at the FEPOW Building

National Event Co-ordinator, Chris Wills, reports on the VJ-Day commemorative service at the RBL National Remembrance Gardens (NMA), held on August 16th this year. Following last year's magnificent turn-out for the 80th Anniversary, this year would always understandably represent a challenge in ensuring a good level of attendance by members. Chris was, in fact, delighted with how many people actually came and reports on the day...



"Not only did we have a pleasing level of attendance at both the service and the AGM, but some members had

travelled from far afield, such as Walter Tuttlebee, who came all the way from Romsey, Hampshire and Nigel Peters from Wells-next-the Sea in Norfolk. We all thank them for making the journey.

"The AGM was attended by at least 50 members and the content and discussion was very broad, lively and interactive. There were several questions asked and suggestions made, and all of them will be given serious consideration by the trustees. We value the opinions/points raised by members at these meetings.

"The wreath-laying service at the FEPOW Memorial Building and Grove was attended by around 70 people. There were a few drops of rain but fortunately, it came to nothing and the afternoon remained very warm. Wreaths were laid by David Brede, Chair of the charity, on behalf of all COFEPOW members. Alan Wills laid a wreath for FEPOW Scotland, with one by Barbara James for BAFEPOW (Birmingham Association of FEPOWs) and another by Bec Harding, on behalf of her family.



"When we got back to the Aspects Conference Suite for the VJ-Day service, our numbers were back to about 50.

"The new COFEPOW Padre, Rev. Richard Brooker, gave his first service, which included a very poignant extract from the book - 'Churches of the Captivity of Malaya.'



"This book was used as the basis for the service for VJ80 last year. I would like to thank Richard, who did a wonderful job and will make a splendid Padre following David Childs' stepping down last year. I would also like to thank David Brown for carrying the COFEPOW Standard, Bugler Antonio Socci for the 'Last Post' and 'Reveille' and John Rutherford for the readings.



"On behalf of the trustees, I would like to thank all our members for their continued support. We, the trustees, will continue to keep the charity relevant and make sure that our FEPOWs are never forgotten."

Lest we forget.

Chris Wills

EVENTS

Remembrance Sunday, November 8th, 2026 at 10.15am

National Remembrance Gardens (NMA)

Attendances at the FEPOW Memorial Grove at the Royal British Legion National Remembrance Gardens, for this particularly important day in the remembrance calendar, have been impacted by several world events over recent years. The trustees believe, however, that it's important as many COFEPOW members and their families as possible, make the effort to attend the NRG's Annual Remembrance Service, held on the 8th November and afterwards a small, private wreath-laying at the FEPOW Memorial Grove. Many attend both, especially those who live locally. With the weather and Services on TV providing challenging alternatives, it's understood that the prospect of a drab, rainy, cold day has little appeal as an alternative activity on a Sunday morning. However, It's our solemn duty to remember those who suffered in the Far East and it should not to be left solely to those hardy volunteers who put on a warm coat and gloves, to attend on other members' behalves.



So please join us, as you will be made very welcome. We meet at 10.15 a.m., in readiness for when the general Service of Remembrance commences at 10.30 a.m. Following this, we move together to the FEPOW Memorial Grove, lay our wreaths, after which, if you wish, you can rejoin the main congregation at the main NRG Building (NMA).

If you would like to come along to all or any part of the Remembrance Service/Parade or wreath-laying, please contact Chris Wills at events@cofepow.org.uk

Please remember it's easier and cheaper to pre-book your car parking space online at [the Remembrance Gardens parking booking page](#) especially on days when there is likely to be significant activity. On busy days, the overspill car parks are used and the NRG car park is reserved for disabled parking only.

EVENTS

Scarborough's 'Esplanade Hotel' - an extra weekend reunion in a fresh location



Photographs courtesy of Daish Hotels.

COFEPOW has organised another weekend reunion, this time in Scarborough. This popular north Yorkshire east coast location retains all the old world charm of an English seaside resort and is perfectly located for COFEPOW members to enjoy a Spring break with old and new friends, over a relaxing few days.

After a trial weekend at the Esplanade Hotel to assess the hotel, Chris Wills is delighted to confirm the trip will go ahead...

"The Esplanade Hotel has picture-postcard views, charming Victorian elegance and the warmest of welcomes, and is the perfect place to enjoy a traditional weekend break.

"It overlooks the sweeping sands of the South Bay, and is the ideal spot to take in the idyllic scenery around this resort. Situated in a quiet part of town, with little or no through traffic, the hotel offers nightly entertainment in the Belmont Suite, featuring some of the best live acts around, including singers, bands and comedians. With such scope, there is always something to entertain guests - enjoy a drink from the bar and take a spin around the dance floor!



"The three-course meals are simple, traditional fayre with the menu changing daily, including usually a roast dinner, with options. The dining room has been refurbished to a high standard and the helpful, courteous, friendly waiting staff are delightful. The hotel has received excellent reviews and is complimented on its cleanliness and comfort. If guests

experience any problems whatsoever, the hotel staff will be only too happy to help put things right.

"If you are interested in joining us on this break, please let me know. The full amount will be required to be paid to COFEPOW by 10th January 2027. Payment details are below."

Where

Esplanade Hotel, Belmont Road, Scarborough,
North Yorkshire YO11 2AA.

When

Friday 12th March 2027 to Tuesday 16th March
2027.

Price

**Four nights' dinner, bed and breakfast @ £179.00
per person.**

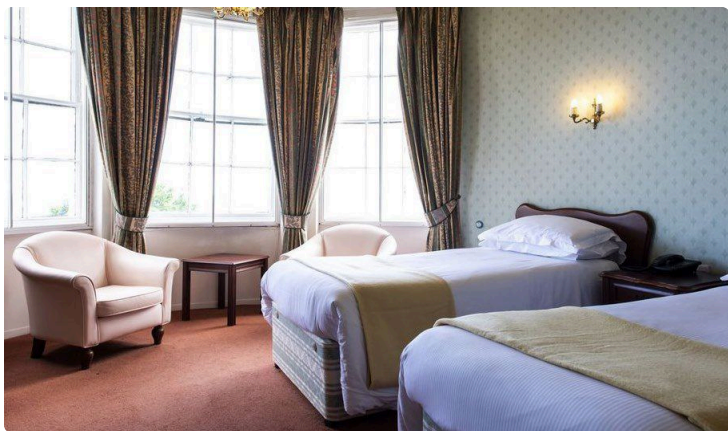
No supplement for a sea view or single room. If
you wish to stay for only 1, 2 or 3 nights, the price
will remain the same at £179 per person.

Reservations are on a strictly first come, first
served basis.

For those who have paid a deposit of £30 per
person, the balance is now due to be paid by 10th
January 2027. Any rooms booked from now, will
be booked also only on availability. If you wish to
have a chat about the trip, please contact **Chris
Wills** on **0121 244 7263** or by email at
events@cofepow.org.uk.

**Please send your payment by cheque, made
payable to 'COFEPOW,' to Chris Wills, 74 The
Greenway, Sutton Coldfield B73 6SG or by bank
transfer to A/c name COFEPOW. Bank: Lloyds**

Bank. Sort Code: 77-66-08. Account number 3915726. Please indicate it's for Scarborough and include your name. When payment is made by direct debit, please let Chris know that it has been made. Thank you.



Chris Wills

National Events Co-ordinator

AREA NEWS

Getting the message across in Northampton

Northamptonshire COFEPOW enjoyed running a very successful stall at the Armed Forces Day event in the town Market Square on the 27th June. Chair and pro-tem Northants Area Co-ordinator, David Brede, reports on local efforts to fulfill the charity's primary objective by being out in the heatwave on a busy Saturday afternoon! He takes up the story...



Sussex Area Co-ordinator Jill Robertson takes an afternoon break.

"We were busy all day doing interviews with local media, meeting celebrity guests, including our local MP and the Lord Lieutenant, but most importantly welcoming local members of the public who had

interesting stories to tell of their ancestors, relatives or acquaintances who'd been involved in the Far East war in the dark days of 1941 to 1945.

"As far as the event's arrangements were concerned, it was particularly well run right from the very beginning. The way we were met and greeted on arrival at the market square, the material provided and the care in checking how things were going during the day (including the offer of water, and at the end, ensuring we left the site safely).

"The space and furniture provided was more than enough, as it enabled us to set up a merchandise area with space for visitors to sit and have extended conversations in comfort - particularly heartening to me as a retired Chartered Health and Safety consultant! Having divisions to separate us from the other occupants of the marquee meant we were able to make full use of the space and have a little privacy from the activity going on elsewhere. The only issue was that we were not made aware of the running order of events on the stage, which would have been nice to observe. So, many thanks to Northampton Town Council for arranging the event."

David Brede

The COFEPOW quarterly newsletter is available either as a printed multi-page A4 magazine, or as a digital PDF, emailed to your on-line address.

Published at the beginning of January, April, July and October, the newsletter is edited and assembled by Chris Wills and Steve Riley, who are keen to receive all material from members to contribute towards the content of the newsletter. Please send all photographs, illustrations, articles, notices and event information to either:

events@cofepow.org.uk or
cofepow.editor@gmail.com

EVENTS

Remembrance Day Service and Parade

Whitehall, 2026 - Sunday November 8th

Each year, COFEPOW Chair, David Brede, receives applications from members who would like to march at the Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday in November. He's received confirmation of the proposed allocation of places, and now has candidates' names in hand to progress the formalities.

For interest, anyone related to a FEPOW may be allowed to march with our group. If the quota of tickets isn't taken up, the quantity allocated by the Royal British Legion is reduced the following year. So if you would like to be considered for a place in the future, please register an interest with David Brede, COFEPOW Chair, by post at 3, Blossom Way, Little Billing, Northants NN3 9ET, by email at cofepow.chairman@gmail.com or by phone on 07930 960241.

Please include your connection/relationship to the FEPOW you wish to represent. Tickets received will be distributed on a first come, first served basis. Expressions of interest will not guarantee a place, however, until numbers are confirmed at the time by the RBL.

For those who wish to apply for consideration to join the procession along Whitehall each November, you should be aware of the following:

- Those who wish to join us must be on Whitehall by 9.00am: time is needed to go through security, so it is an early start on what could be a cold and wet morning.
- There is a great deal of standing about, from assembly, through the 11.00 Silence and Service on until the final march-off. The parade is usually dismissed at about 12.45 p.m.
- Once COFEPOW is able to confirm the number of tickets and allocate them, personal details have to be submitted to the RBL for security checks.
- Tickets are strictly non-transferable as they are issued to people by name and proof of ID will be required.

FUND-RAISING

Extraordinary play/exhibition fund-raiser for VJ80 in Heacham

The unique approach to the commemoration of the VJ80 weekend in 2025 in Heacham, Norfolk makes great reading and collected a significant donation through its activities for the COFEPOW coffers.



The Royal Norfolk's at War Exhibition.

Jim Race, who devised the events of the weekend, was delighted with the outcome, having used various novel ways to raise the funds.

VJ80 Day was commemorated over the weekend of Friday 15th, Saturday 16th and Sunday 17th August

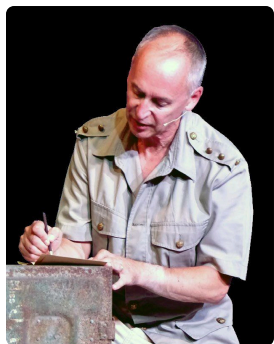
2025. On Friday evening in Heacham, the villagers lit the special beacon at the designated time, which was followed by the Service, including the 'Last Post' played by local man, Jef Hatton, and a talk by Jim about his Dad, Captain Jack Race and his time as a FEPOW.



The play: wives and girlfriends discuss their men.

The evening concluded with members of the local drama group, called the 'Pocahontas Players', singing their excellent rendition of 'Blood in the Earth', written by the Scottish FEPOW Trust and dedicated to those on the Thai/Burma Death Railway. On Saturday the 16th August, a docu/play/musical, written, directed and narrated by Jim himself, and entitled 'At The Going Down Of The Sun', was performed by members of the 'Pocahontas Players', with two performances in the day, at 2.00pm and 7.00pm.

The play told the true story of Captain Race of the 6th Battalion Royal Norfolk Regiment, through from his time training in Weybourne, North Norfolk, to the voyage to Singapore, fighting in Malaya, through to the defence of Singapore, including the Alexandra Hospital massacre and eventual capture.



The play: Captain Race writes home aboard ship.



The play: Alexandra Hospital incident.

The play neatly channelled its way round the 3½ years' of captivity, including working on the 'Death Railway', and wove into the story the lives of other Royal Norfolk Regiment men; Captain Hugh Pilkington and Private Richard Wing, also of the 6th Battalion; Lance Corporal Cyril Bix and Private Bert Grimes, from the 5th Battalion and from the 4th Battalion, Private Horace Chilvers (actually portrayed by his great grandson, Ryan Chilvers). The wives and girlfriends of all concerned were May, Phyllis, Joice, Daisy (portrayed by Jack's granddaughter, Jemma Greef), Rotha and Ruby, respectively.



The play: Action in Malaya.



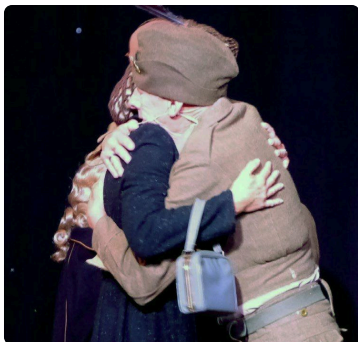
The play: working on the 'Death Railway'.

Two actual letters that Jack wrote to May, the first of which was written on the Mount Vernon troopship a couple of weeks before docking in Singapore, and the second being his letter home from Rangoon Hospital on his release from captivity, were read as part of the story line.

Each performance was met with a standing ovation at the final curtain, with not a dry eye in the house as Jim asked for a moment of reflection. Everyone thought it important to remember those that did not return to tell their story, and those that did return to tell theirs but who were sadly no longer with us.



The play: The narrator remembers all who suffered and those no longer with us.



The play: Jack and May re-united.

Jim wishes to offer a personal thank you to all concerned, and helped make the show possible, especially the Pocahontas Players, his wife Janet, family and other close friends.

On Sunday 17th, an exhibition was established in the same hall as the previous day's show. Jim would again like to offer his thanks to all those who stayed after the evening show to help clear the hall, and to his family and friends for all their help on the day. The exhibition, entitled 'The Royal Norfolk's at War: 1939-45', told the story of all the Royal Norfolk Battalions that saw active service from 1939-45.



The exhibition: welcome board.

The event was attended by in excess of 250 people, and from the proceeds of the show and exhibition, a donation of £2,000 was able to be made to COFEPOW.

A big debt of gratitude is also owed to the local Heacham Youth and Community Trust whose sponsorship guaranteed the money required, to ensure the events went ahead.



The play: The full cast take their bow.

NOTICE

Applications for post of COFEPOW Chair now invited

The COFEPOW Board of Trustees is looking to recruit a new Chair, to assume responsibilities currently held by retiree, David Brede, after his five years' dedicated service and significant contribution to the work of the charity.

The role is entirely voluntary, but brings enormous rewards to the successful applicant.

The principal responsibility is to act as team leader to the trustees, whose job it is to fulfil the objectives of the COFEPOW charity and ensure the services it provides run smoothly. It is also the job of Chair to act as the representative of the charity wherever possible within the confines of one's available time, and to act as part of a committed Board which provides generous support in both time and advice, particularly from those within it who have been in position for some time.

The new Chair will be expected to host four regular meetings of the trustees annually, and attend and Chair the AGM on the same day we hold the VJ Day Service. Occasional one-off events will also require attendance. Full support is provided by the team of knowledgeable officer trustees.

You will be expected to respond to various requests for information about FEPOWs and the work of the charity, and to field enquiries from interested parties, including the media.

If you're interested in applying, either as a current member or someone new to the charity, we would like you to present a vision of where the charity should be in 5 years' time. Please write or email with reasons why you might fulfil the role, to **David Brede (Chair), 3 Blossom Way, Little Billing, Northampton NN3 9ET, or chairman@cofepow.org.uk by the 31st December, 2026.** Those applying for the above post will be expected to serve as a trustee of COFEPOW for a period of 12 months, prior to being voted in as Chair. Thank you.

CORRECTION

Thai/Burma Railway Centre's Rod Beattie corrects reports

The July 2026 COFEPOW Quarterly newsletter carried a story entitled "Part of 'Death Railway' emerges after dam works." The basis of the story came from posts on the internet of locals exploring the newly exposed railway formation of the Ni Thea area.



Rod on the north east spur line.

The AP journalist contacted Rod Beattie, Founder and now Research Director of the Thailand Burma Railway Centre in Kanchanaburi, Thailand, who gave him the correct version of the story.

Unfortunately, the story as published was not entirely accurate, whether in the drive for sensationalism or simply through misreporting. Regrettably, that article was also unknowingly used as a source by the Quarterly and many other publications, and for that we offer our apologies to Rod for any errors transcribed into our story. Rod, pictured with a spike unearthed from the remnants of the railway, clarifies the situation with his version...

"It had been widely reported in both print and electronic media, that the wartime Japanese railway

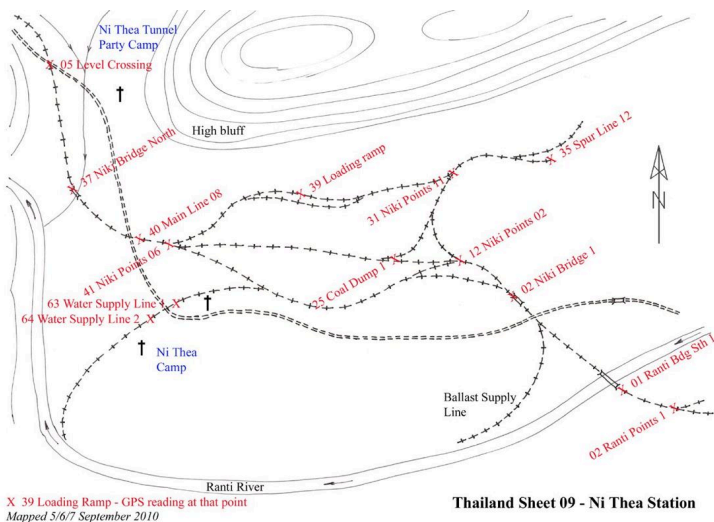
station of Ni Thea had become visible for the first time since the Khao Laem Dam was completed in 1984. This is not accurate, however, and I believe the facts should be made clear, particularly to those who had relatives working on the Thai/Burma Railway as POWs of the Japanese. The Vajiralongkorn Dam (formerly Khao Laem Dam) serves as a multi-purpose water storage facility to control flooding down river, and provides water for irrigation during the dry season and to generate hydro-electricity. As such, the level of the water varies considerably during the year. The dam is usually full by the end of the annual wet season (October) and then slowly falls as water is released to produce the aforementioned electricity and irrigation. The level continues to drop until inflow from the next wet season (June to October) is greater than the outflow.



Picture 1, on the water supply line.

"In a normal year, the level will drop about 10 to 12 metres by May/June. This exposes much of the Ni Thea Station area and other sections of the abandoned railway route every year. In the 30 years that I have been exploring the railway, the annual wet season has produced little rain on only three occasions. During these years, water is still drawn from the dam to produce electricity and provide irrigation, so consequently the dam may fall as much as 20 metres below full level, exposing all of the station and many more kilometres of railway. Every year from 1996 (see Picture 1) until recently, I would explore, photograph and map areas of railway as they became exposed as the water receded.

"For those who attended the POW Research Conference in 2010, they would have seen my Powerpoint presentation with images of Ni Thea Station and the map drawn from three days of GPS mapping of the entire complex (see Picture 11). The only difference of this year's exposure is that the water level fell more rapidly than normally, allowing people to see the railway formations before vegetation grew."



Picture 11. Thailand Sheet 09 - Ni Thea Station, mapped 5/6/7 September 2010. Tap or zoom to see detail.

Ballast line.

Loading ramp line.

Rod Beattie, MBE, OAM, OON

Founder and Research Director, Thailand Burma Railway
Centre, Kanchanaburi, Thailand.

"Out of the mouths of babes..."

I was waiting in a railway station to meet my 7 and 5 year old granddaughters coming to stay for a few days. I was utterly thrilled when the elder of the two alighted from the train and ran over to us, excited to tell us of her latest news. A week or so earlier, her father, my son, had described to her what his grandad, my Dad, had endured during his service in the Far East.

To encourage her curiosity about life, but careful to sanitise and simplify the story, he explained the genetic implications of my Dad's survival in the Far East. She got it straight away, and I was delighted she had...

Daddy told us about his Grandad and how my sister and me wouldn't be here if he hadn't come home.

My young granddaughter's insight came on the heels of my discovery of the June 2025 sighting of the 'Hōfuku Maru' wreck by marine archaeologists. This fragmented 'hell-ship' lay beneath 160 feet of water, two miles west of La Paz, Zambales Province, in the Philippines.

Left: the ship before the war. Right: the first seabed sightings.

Used to transport POWs from Japanese labour camps to be worked to death elsewhere, the men had been penned in the battened-down holds aboard this dilapidated vessel, in Manila port, whilst its ancient engines were fixed. There, amidst tons of Bauxite cargo and with only enough room to sleep in shifts, many of these ragged men would die from thirst, heat, beatings and executions in port.

Once at sea, those who fought to stay alive witnessed desperate army medics remove a soldier's appendix with a razor blade; others, meanwhile, descended into despair as they learned their chaplain had used his privileged minutes on deck to toss his bible overboard.

With no identifying markings, the ship had become an anonymous merchantman, easy pickings for Allied planes and submarines. On September 21, 1944, US Navy aircraft bombed the ship. 1,287 Allied servicemen were thought to be on the manifest, as the old freighter was swallowed up by the sea in less than three minutes. Over a thousand of those trapped in the holds were killed.

As time passed, and through government NDA's, the ship's location was lost. Skimpy Japanese archives had revealed an estimated 95 men had died in port during repair delays; a couple of hundred or so were thought to have been washed ashore and recaptured in the Philippines; a possible 50 were picked up and brought

to Taiwan, and maybe a dozen made land, to be sheltered by Filipino guerillas.

My father, Walter Geoffrey Riley, was aboard that ship. He survived, just, as when the bombs split the ship in two, an almighty surge of sea water thrust him from the ship's bowels. Struggling aboard a makeshift raft with three other POWs and a small live pig, they drifted for days, eventually being washed ashore and recaptured at bayonet-point and thrown into Cabanatuan camp, from where he escaped in "The Great Raid" of January 1945.

Marvelling at my granddaughter's reflections and the coincidence of my own discovery of the ship's location, gave me a new sense of wonder. I pondered how my Dad might have received the news of the wreck. He died 28 years ago, in a non-internet world where information was scarce. Had 21st century technology arrived earlier, I fear he might have thrown himself into hours of haunted contemplation.

My grandchild told me her thoughts eagerly and with reverence, even at her age. The very objectives of COFEPOW lay here, I believe, and keeping the FEPOW story alive, by recounting it to the young, is an imperative.

My father wrote a book about his experiences in the war, including his time on the 'Hōfuku Maru.' Although

not dense in research, the events were nevertheless burned vividly into his memory when compiled six decades previously, and faithfully transcribed to the work. His ferocious exposition of the fears, the improbable twists of chance and the sheer resolve needed to assure his personal survival are plain to see. I would be happy to email extracts from the chapter on the ship's sinking, to COFEPOW members whose relative(s) were also aboard the ship. If you would like a copy, please email me at cofepow.editor@gmail.com

A new film charts the adventures of those who located and verified the identity of the wreck. Expedition Unknown: "Hunt for the Hellships" was initially aired on the Discovery Channel on June 24 and July 1, 2026. The report of the find of the wreckage, now a war grave, may be a priceless comfort to many.

Steve Riley

Co-editor, COFEPOW Quarterly.

Area Co-ordinators use Zoom to get busy

Following on from the John Rutherford decision to hold more regular and productive sessions between all Area Coordinators and the COFEPOW A.C. Officer, John Rutherford, an encouraging number of participants from the charity in the regions have responded to the call to carry out the tasks of their roles with renewed enthusiasm. The trustees are eager to develop the charity's work, by building a larger regional network, to promote coverage in all areas at home and further afield.

John has indeed got off to a flying start. Regular meetings are now being held at which there is every opportunity for ACs to bring ideas, complaints, suggestions and initiatives to the table. It's hoped these meets will improve or enhance the daily business of the charity and work towards an increase in members and local ACs.

At all times, the continual and overriding theme of the work of anyone who represents the charity is to fulfil the objectives set out by COFEPOW in 1997 when it was first established, which are:

The principal objectives of the COFEPOW charity

- 1)** To provide and maintain a memorial in memory of all British Servicemen, women and civilians who were prisoners of war in South-East Asia under Japanese occupation during WWII.
- 2)** To advance the education of the public about prisoners of war in South-East Asia, whilst under Japanese occupation in WWII from 1941-1945.

John reports on progress during the quarter...

"We are now three meetings into the new era and so far, the renewed vigour is being met with overall approval. I'm hoping to get more of our Co-ordinators out in the field to attend, now that modern technology facilitates access and saves cost. A WhatsApp group is also being set up immediately between existing Co-ordinators, to help inform them more readily with news, initiatives, events, aids and contact with new members, etc.

"One particular advance I'd like to mention is that of the role of Hilary Cunningham in New Zealand. Hilary has participated in COFEPOW activity for a significant number of years and apart from other contributions to the cause, is responsible for emailing out the thousand or so digital newsletters each quarter to various places

around the world. This complements the printed versions of COFEPOW Quarterly distributed to those who prefer to read it that way. The distribution of the email to the number on our database is a major challenge, and Hilary, originally from Scotland, has the grit and determination to handle the whole job with enthusiasm and energy.

"Hilary has been asked to become an officer of the charity, too, and has activated a Zoom account in her country, proposing a virtual gathering for the New Zealand members. She is also preparing individual newsletters to email to members in Australasia and any that might occur in South East Asia. She has also requested visual aids from the trustees to help her carry out talks in various locations such as retirement villages, schools and so on.

"In the United States, Jan Slimming, Area Co-ordinator for Eastern USA and Eastern Canada has produced a specific newsletter, tailored to more local issues, known as "COFEPOW, USA and Canada 2026." This has largely been introduced to help cover the remaining area, as Sharon Cusamano's region (Western US and Western Canada) is 'temporarily vacant' on the Co-ordinator list. Sharon is unable to fulfil the role currently, but remains on the mailing list and hopefully may return in due course.

"Efforts are also being made to accommodate payment in international currencies, as there are a number of members around the world who would like the annual renewal fee to be debited without fuss. Work is being carried out on the COFEPOW website to provide multi-currency payment options, which will hopefully also reduce foreign membership fees.

"The agenda and post meeting minutes are circulated to all with action points indicated. Other items discussed include Area Co-ordinator recruitment, as through retirement etc., there are a number of vacancies around the UK.

"Three possible new AC's have been identified from members who have volunteered for the role in their region. We are currently discussing the possibilities of all three taking on the challenge and helping to enlarge our coverage across the country. By doing so we can bring a greater spread of contact for members. We hope to announce their names, limited contact details and short CVs in the next issue, following their appointment. Please review the [Area Co-ordinators list](#) for more information.

"I'm looking forward to the next meeting (I will inform ACs when) to help move on the cause once again!"

John Rutherford

Area Co-ordinator Officer, COFEPOW.

MEMBERS' RESEARCH

The UK POW and the US Capt. Doc.

COFEPOW member, Alan Eric Leech recently presented an extended version of his research, entitled 'Bataan Diary,' to the Derbyshire Area Group. Those present found the talk so relevant that John Rutherford, Area Co-ordinator Officer, asked Alan to submit the story to the newsletter for our wider audience to appreciate. Here's Alan's precis'd re-presentation of the talk...

Leech, Pte. Eric, 3859157. 18th Recce Corps.

A photo of Dr Ashton in a family album. The Ashtons visited the UK with daughter Yvonne.

"This story is about two soldiers, my father, Pvt. Eric Leech and US army Cpt., Dr. Paul Ashton. Eric came into Dr. Ashton's care at a life-critical time when the doctor saved my father's life. This event later developed into a friendship, recently examined between myself and Yvonne Ashton, Dr. Ashton's daughter. In my research, I'd discovered that one of the doctor's books, 'Bataan Diary' was available for purchase, and included some of my father's wartime experiences as a POW.

"I wrote to purchase a copy, intrigued by the section on Bilibid Prison, Manila, where my Dad had been in the hospital and came under the care of Dr. Ashton. In reply

to my request, Yvonne sent me the book free of charge, as a generous gift. I offered to pay, but she replied, "Please don't worry about the gift; Dad would absolutely insist on it."

'Bataan Diary' relates the story

The cover of the book.

of the invasion of the Philippines

by the Japanese, and the Americans' fight against it. It's a detailed, heavy read in parts, and describes the horrifying cruelty of the Japanese military. Bataan was at the southern part of the peninsular of Luzon and, with the island of Corregidor, guarded the bay of Manila. The infamous 'Death March' where many US soldiers and Philipinos perished, is also described.

'Hell or Slave Ships': "In my account, only aspects that touched upon my father's life are addressed, namely from references in the volume regarding Hell Ships' (Slave Ships to Americans), British Prisoners and Bilibid Prison.

"After surviving the bombing of the 'Empress of Asia', off Singapore, Changi Prison and hard labour on the Thai/Burma Railway from Chung Kai to The Khanun, my father was shipped off to work in Japanese mines in a vessel called the 'Hofuku Maru'. As COFEPOW Researcher, Keith Andrews documented, the Hofuku Maru arrived in Manila on the 19th July 1944. There she sat for two months, the conditions on board going from bad to worse."

'Bilibid Prison': Dr Ashton writes from the hospital in Bilibid prison in Manila.

"A major and menacing event on the ward was the arrival on August 24, 1944, of the British and Dutch prisoners. The Japanese off-loaded 66 British and five Dutch other ranks. We worked constantly trying to save these men who had severe dysentery and were toxic and dehydrated, some unconscious. The British had been in the war years longer than we, and suffered chronic food privation of an increasing degree since the start. The first really acute restriction for them had occurred on the ship, with dysentery accounting for the intense exacerbation they now showed. The scurvy was controlled by vitamin C in Red Cross supplies. The surviving British and Dutchmen in our care quickly improved which became good for the morale of the whole section."

"My father endured the Hofuku Maru slave ship, but survived. The Japanese suspected the ship was carrying cholera amongst the POWs, so not wishing to export the disease to Japan, they disembarked many of them in Manila before sailing. Keith Andrews continued: "A new convoy from Manila to Japan was formed, sailing on the same day that aircraft from Allied Task Force 38 arrived. The Hofuku Maru was hit and sank and only 242 survived."

An impression of the POWs in the hold of the ship.

"Following the Japanese defeat, those eligible for repatriation, including my father, were released from Bilibid. Early in 1945, many embarked on the 'Lurline', a troopship that took them via New Guinea, Port Moresby, to San Francisco.

"There's much more to say from the pages of 'Bataan Diary.' The frontispiece showing the samurai warrior is meaningful, in that their Bushido Code was honourable but corrupted by the Japanese military to excuse heinous crimes and manic fanaticism, in a 'no surrender' mindset. Kamikaze exemplifies this.

"My thanks to Yvonne Ashton for her friendship and generosity, and to Keith Andrews, for his research into my father's war-time enslavement."

Alan Eric Leech

MINUTES

Annual General Meeting at the National Memorial Arboretum

Alrewas, Staffs., Sunday 16th August, 10.30am - 12.00am.

Present

David Brede

Chairman and Interim Secretary

David Brown

Trustee and Treasurer

Karen Brown

Trustee

Nick Bullen-Bell

Trustee and Merchandise Secretary

Sylvie Bullen-Bell

Trustee and Merchandise Secretary

Guy Metcalfe-Hume

Trustee and Website/Social Media Management

Graham Robertson

Trustee and Membership Secretary

John Rutherford

Trustee and Area Co-ordinator Officer

Chris Wills

Trustee, National Event Co-ordinator and newsletter co-editor

Alan Wills

Trustee

1. Apologies

Lt. Col. C. Stallard (Rtd); Sir T. Waite; General Sir James Everard (Rtd); Sir Henry Every (Bt); Peter and Melanie Martin; Christina O'Leary; Ian Trollope; Steve Riley.

2. Minutes from the 2025 AGM

The minutes from the meeting held on Sunday 17th August 2025 were upheld as being a true record of the meeting. *Proposed by Graham Robertson and seconded by Jill Robertson.*

3. Matters Arising

3.1. Sumatra Railway Chris Wills (CW) told the meeting that she had been having difficulty contacting Andy Steele, who had organised the refurbishment of the Thai/Burma Railway at the FEPOW Grove. She found that he had left Volker Wessel and she now no longer has his phone number. She has tried to contact VW but with no success and has emailed one of those who worked on the railway last year, who initially responded but now is not

replying. The Sumatra Plinth is also being considered for re-build.

3.2. Changi Shutters and Bars Alan Wills (AW) told the meeting that the application for Lottery Funding had failed unfortunately. Other avenues for funding are being investigated.

3.3. VJ80 School Badge Competition David Brede (DBre) told the meeting that, regrettably, the distribution of the VJ80 badges didn't work out for a number of reasons. Badges were available for members if required, after the meeting.

4. Chairman's Report - D. Brede

4.1. After the Lord Mayor's Show We are still getting over the events of last year, which was a stunning achievement compared to preceding anniversaries. Going forward, we will have to ensure that future events carry the story of the FEPOWs for future generations.

4.2. Meeting the Royal Family Several of us had the privilege of attending a reception at Windsor Castle and meeting the King, Queen, Prince of Wales and the Prime Minister. These dignitaries had already met and taken tea with many veterans and their guests and helpers. It was good to feel that the sacrifices of the FEPOWs was being recognised and actively discussed at long last

4.3. The Cenotaph March The march is a constant reminder of the sacrifice of the FEPOWs and it is

encouraging that our contingent is still at 60 attendees, comprising marchers old and new, to represent us at the Cenotaph. This year will be slightly different, as the lunch after the event is moving to a new venue with a more extensive menu, so everyone attending can catch up with friends and colleagues and recount stories and experiences

4.4. New Event at Scarborough CW has created an exciting new event in the Spring for members to attend. This is in addition to the existing event at Torquay.

4.6. Fall of Singapore We will be holding a service to commemorate the 85th Anniversary of the Fall of Singapore, to be held on 14th February 2027.

4.5. Area Co-ordinators One of the big success stories of this year has been the transformation of the Area Co-ordinator team by John Rutherford, to give support, share best practice and make them better able to support COFEPOW members in their localities. We are always looking for new co-ordinators so please speak to John or David (Bre) if you would like to give it a go.

4.6. Thanks to the trustees and officers The trustee and officer team are absolutely amazing and again I am proud to recommend their re-election to their roles.

4.7. Notice that 2026/27 will be my last year I am announcing that I would like this to be my last year as Chair of the trustees. We had the major events last year for VJ80 so are now 4 years out from VJ85. A new chair needs

a period to settle into the role and define their vision for the future and to take the charity forward. It is a very rewarding role, so anyone interested in stepping forward please do. I have been Chair and Secretary for a few years, so I will continue as Secretary, while someone else takes up the role of Chair.

5. Re-Election of current officers/trustees

5.1. Trustees: David Brede, Nick Bullen-Bell, Graham Robertson, David Brown, Sylvie Bullen-Bell, Alan Wills, Karen Brown, Guy Metcalfe-Hume and Chris Wills.

Proposed en bloc by Barbara James and seconded en bloc by Paul Watson

5.2. Officers re-elected: Chair - David Brede: Webmaster - Guy Metcalfe-Hume: Treasurer - David Brown: Interim Secretary - David Brede. *Proposed en bloc by Jill Robertson and seconded en bloc Brian Hume*

5.3. New Trustee Appointment John Rutherford. *Proposed by Jill Robertson and seconded Karen Brown*

5.4. New Officer to be appointed Area Co-Ordinator Officer - John Rutherford. *Proposed by Jill Robertson and seconded Karen Brown*

6. Treasurer's Report

David Brown (DB) provided an overview of the 2025 Accounts to everyone attending the AGM. The Trust's total assets, as at 31st December 2025, were £150,060. The Membership A/c stood at £31,363. Membership Fees

Received were £11,023. The Memorial A/c totalled £118,697, Donations received were £144,151 and Expenditure was £209,641. This includes the £165,232 paid to the NMA to maintain the FEPOW Building in perpetuity, the majority of which came from a legacy. DB commented that it's difficult to identify what is 'membership' and what is 'merchandise', as all amounts come in from 'Stripe' on the Memberstack system. Details of the accounts are published in the newsletter and anyone requesting a copy, please contact David Brown. *Proposed by Jill Robertson and seconded by Rev. Richard Brooker.*

M Horwell asked what was meant by "in perpetuity" and what happens if the NMA changed. DB replied that for the lifetime of the NMA, even if it changes, the contract will be honoured.

K Hewitt asked what were the annual costs and what did it cover. DB replied £8,000 per annum and rising each year, which covers insurance, heating and cleaning. The NMA have just replaced the veranda and COFEPOW was not asked to contribute.

Karen Brown (KB) added that our costs now are only for the items inside the FEPOW Building.

T Jowett asked what happens after 20 years. **DB** replied that the agreement continues.

B James asked if there is going to be any recognition given to the lady that made the donation. **DB** had a copy of the Will and there was nothing to say they wanted

publicity. He will find out and the trustees will investigate recognition of the donor.

7. Membership Report

Graham Robertson (GR) stated that membership has now increased to 1,207. It's still difficult to identify who has paid by Bank Transfer. Most people now pay by cheque or through Memberstack. GR added that Guy Metcalfe-Hume is a big part of the membership system, and he "weaves his IT magic."

B Harding enquired why couldn't they get a family membership, as there are three of them. **GR** answered that this will be brought up at the trustees meeting.

R Bushnell stated that NT has increased it's membership because of more children's events.

A Stemming asked how COFEPOW markets itself. **GR** answered that GM-H handles all social media.

John Rutherford (JR) suggested that the Area Co-ordinators will hopefully take up the matter of promotion within schools. This is currently a 'work in progress'.

DBr commented that, at the Southampton event, 30 to 40 children attend and read poetry.

W Tuttlebee stated that opportunities are out there. There are different FEPOW memorials all over the country, and perhaps in local churches with people getting involved in their own communities.

8. Events - Chris Wills, read by Alan Wills

8.1. 2025

1. **Torquay** 26 people attended and the food and service was excellent.
2. **Remembrance Sunday** on 9th November only a handful of members turned out to lay a wreath at the FEPOW Building and Grove, NMA.

8.2 Events to come 2026

1. **Weekend 2nd - 5th October** This year we only have 14 people attending the weekend. Although the food is excellent, the hotel is in need of refurbishment. We will be looking at other hotels while in Torquay this year.
2. **Remembrance Sunday 8th November** If anyone wishes to join us at the NMA, we attend the main service and when others go to the main memorial to lay their wreaths, we visit the FEPOW Grove to lay ours.

Events for 2027

- 1) **85th Anniversary of the Fall of Singapore, Sunday 14th February.** A service will be held in the Chapel, followed by lunch of either soup or a sandwich, followed by cake and tea/coffee at a cost of £12 per person.
2. **Scarborough 12 - 16 March.** To be held at the Esplanade Hotel. At the moment we have 32 people attending. The food is simple and hot. The cost is £179 per person for bed, breakfast and evening meal for 4 nights, so whether you

stay 1, 2 or 3 nights, the price is still the same. If interested, please contact Chris Wills.

3. **Torquay 2027** To be arranged.

4. **Event at the 'Rocks By Rail' Living Ironstone Museum**

The Singapore Locomotive is on display for the VJ Day Memorial on 30th and 31st August.

S Barnes commented that there is sometimes a service for the Kachadoki Maru on 12th September.

N Peters stated that last year, P. Simpson held a service at Norwich Cathedral on 15th August, so it wasn't possible to attend the one at Lichfield Cathedral as well. The question was asked why COFEPOW and NFFWRA can't work together. CW replied that we try and have our event as close to VJ Day as possible. The service in Norwich is in the east of England where as COFEPOW's service is in the centre of the country.

9. **Merchandise Report - Nick Bullen-Bell (NB-B)**

This year has been very productive, with the following monies raised:

Period	Raised
VJ80 Weekend	£1,396.79
Torquay 2026	£70.87
Quarter to 18/10/25	£695.11
Quarter to 31/01/26	£403.15

Period	Raised
Quarter to 25/04/25	£343.67 plus Aus\$ 56.00
Quarter to 25/07/25	£129.01
Total	£3,038.60

Thanks to all who donated.

Carol Cooper's family have given all her books to COFEPOW to sell. These will go on sale on ebay.

FEPOW Ted - Limited teddies have been made, with each one individual and sold for £25 on a first come first served basis. When they're gone there will be no more. Thanks to CW and Sue (NB-B sister-in-law). NB-B would also like to thank Sylvie, without whose support he would not be able to do what he does.

10. Area Co-ordinators Officer

John Rutherford informed the meeting that in October 2025, he was invited to join the team of trustees with special responsibility for Area Co-ordinators. Together with some Senior Area Co-ordinators, a 'Role Guidance' has been drafted to help them, by showing what has been working in other areas, which has brought some clarity to the role. There have been two meetings via Zoom already and a WhatsApp Group is to be set up. Priority is to have publicity to promote groups locally and a regular feature about their meetings will be put into the newsletter, courtesy of Steve Riley (Co-Editor).

11. AOB

11.1. NMA Name Change Chris Wills informed the meeting that from September, the NMA will be re-named The Royal British Legion National Remembrance Gardens. This has been carried out with the blessing of David Childs, who is pleased that the RBL are taking it under their control. We have been assured that everything will operate just the same.

11.2. COFEPOW Quarterly Newsletter The trustees have had complaints about the online version of the newsletter. Evidently, it is difficult to read using a mobile phone. GM-H has tried to convert this to a one column format, but it consists of a lot of pages and misses out the photographs. When GM-H can do this easily and include the photographs, this will replace the current online newsletter. Until such time, Hilary Cunningham, will continue to send out the newsletter in it's current format.

11.3. British Nurses raised by Barbara James, who has brought this up many times before and wanted to know why the British Nurses weren't remembered, particularly Vivienne Bulwinkle and Dame Margot Turner. She appreciated that Keith Andrews was working on a database, but as he is ill and unable to do this, she wants to know what is happening. Karen Brown told BJ that she was actually in the process of compiling the list of British Army Nurses, but it takes time.

Queries from members

W Tuttlebee wanted to know what was happening to research, as there seemed to be a gap. CW told the meeting that Keith Andrews was still able to do research. DBre told the meeting that Mike Rogers from the National Archives would help us with our archives.

S Barnes asked if we could have sticky labels with our names on at the next AGM, so we know who we are talking to. It was agreed that this was a good idea and this will be done for next year.

L Carter has written a book about her father and would like to donate some books so they can be sold with the funds going to COFEPOW. CW thanked LC and would speak to her after the meeting to arrange for collection/receipt.

K Hewitt offered to go on to the 'Helpful Contacts' for 1st Battalion Leicestershire Regiment (Malaya Campaign and Captivity 1941-45) both in the newsletter and the website. CW asked for KH to provide his details and she would make suitable arrangements.

12. Next AGM

To be held on Sunday 15th August 2027 - 10.30 a.m. in the Aspects Conference Suite, at the RBL National Remembrance Gardens.

The trustees would like to pay tribute to Carol Cooper, who sadly passed away on 10th November 2025. She would have been thrilled to know that COFEPOW had been honoured by the invitation of some members to Windsor Castle, to meet the King and Queen. She was a lady with great insight and determination and we have a lot to thank her for.

End of minutes.

Synopsis of performance

The tables below are a summary of the management accounts of COFEPOW for the year 2024 - 2025. Adjustments have been made to occasional individual figures from previous years, where additional costs or savings have arrived after the cut-off date at which the audit was finalised. These are minor amounts and do not materially affect comparisons. *Scroll the tables sideways to see every year.*

Profit and loss account: income (£)

Income	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Donations	3,567	95,201	40,437	25,716	144,000
Membership fees	28,251	12,932	11,756	11,997	11,000
Merchandise/Book sales	3,063	4,577	2,232	2,417	6,000
Investment income	13,226	(8,229*)	(7,556*)	0	0
Memorial weekends	5,320	2,325	750	550	8,000
Gift Aid	640	800	2,232	825	4,000
Total	54,067	107,606	49,851	41,505	171,000

Profit and loss account: expenditure (£)

Expenditure	2021	2022	2023	2024
Cost of merchandise	569	120	374	210
Printing and duplicating	-	1,735	5,044	2,082
Memorial events/weekend	5,320	2,325	750	550
Wreaths/poppies/crosses	5,613	205	398	81
Burma railway	10,205	-	1,450	-
Sundry expenses	320	-	759	-
AGM/Room hire	16,086	3,467	2,557	2,424
FEPOW Building maintenance	8,668	-	-	930
Postage and Stationery	2,543	3,277	2,271	2,082
NMA	220	3,000	3,000	3,000
IT support/equipment/website	5,320	5,027	10,265	5,684
Committee meetings	128	57	270	-
Accountancy	0	0	0	0
Total	54,992	19,156	26,868	17,779

Operating surplus/(asset reduction) (£)

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Surplus/(Asset reduction)	(925)	88,450	22,983	23,726	(41,467)

Total net assets (£)

Year	Net assets
2021	197,654
2022	220,320
2023	260,757
2024	337,568
2025	150,060

Note: the asset value is reduced by the payment made to the NRG for maintenance in perpetuity, shown here as one payment in its entirety.

Accounts appraisal

This financial year has produced a set of satisfactory audited accounts. Certain comparative highlights have been extracted here alongside, to give members an overall feel of the income and expenses of the charity during its normal day-to-day operation.

Within the last couple of years, COFEPOW has received the remarkable, largest ever donation given to our charity. This significant bequest has enabled us to negotiate with the RBL National Remembrance Gardens' trustees, a contract, whereby they maintain the FEPOW Memorial Building and Grove, in perpetuity.

This not inconsiderable figure has, in effect, taken an enormous weight off the shoulders of COFEPOW's Board of Trustees, in knowing that the building and

grounds will be cared for long into the future. As far as the accounts are concerned, this has the effect of showing a once-only liability number in the chart alongside in a single year form. Conventionally, the cost of such a commitment might ordinarily be amortised across a period of years in the accounts, helping to spread the cost impact of the purchase. The effect of this would reduce the loss figure shown for the year.

The amount received is shown as a one-off asset, against the one-off liability paid for the new contract. Combined with the coincidental yet significant expenditure shown for the special 80th anniversary commemoration services, always valued by COFEPOW members, a large deduction in the asset value is therefore illustrated.

In conclusion, the trustees of COFEPOW remain satisfied that the financial performance matches the aims and supports the objectives of the charity, into the future.

From Exeter and Encounter, to the Tamahoko Maru...

The story of the Macassar Lieutenants

Above, the Tamahoko Maru 'hell-ship'. Following its sinking, 560 POWs lost their lives. Only two of the three lieutenants survived. Photograph courtesy of POW Research Network Japan.

Tom Jowett tells the story of three Royal Navy Lieutenants, held in various POW camps after the sinking of their ships in the Second Battle of the Java Sea, and of their subsequently horrific passages aboard Japanese 'hell-ships' in the Far East war.

Known as the 'Three Macassar Lieutenants', they are Lt. J. A. V. Hickley of HMS Encounter, Surg. Lt. D. N. Ryalls and Surg. Lt. P. G. Cranefield, both of HMS Exeter. Their fearful trials against an iniquitous enemy are described and catalogued here in chronological order, and give a detailed insight into how British POWs' callous treatment aboard these ships shaped their chance of survival.

"Lieutenant Hickley and Surgeons Lieutenant Ryalls and Cranefield survived the sinkings of HMS Exeter and HMS Encounter on 1st March 1942. They were collected from the sea by the Japanese navy and eventually interned at a POW camp at Macassar.

"In October 1943, they were moved to the island of Java with the majority of the other Macassar officers, where they were placed in the Bicycle Camp near to Batavia (now Jakarta). In May 1944, they became part of "Java Party 20" and were taken to Singapore on board the Kiska Maru. There, they were placed in the Havelock Road POW camp and subjected to the 'Glass Rod Test' (a humiliating inspection by guards to screen for disease by inserting said undisinfected rod into each POW's rectum: in the simplest terms, on retrieval, blood signified dysentery or cholera. If clear, they were deemed fit to work).

"On 2nd June 1944, they were marched down to the docks and placed on board the Miyo Maru, as part of the 795-strong 'Japan Party 1', which was scheduled to go to Japan via Manila. The party consisted of 41 officers and 737 men, comprising 197 British, 42 American, 258 Australian and 281 Dutch. The party included a medical team of 90, with two POWs nominated as padres. The Miyo Maru was part of a convoy of five cargo ships, most of which were carrying bauxite (the ore from which aluminium is taken).

"On reaching Manila, the convoy was joined by the Tamahoko Maru, which, on 14th June, proceeded towards Takao (now Kaohsiung, Taiwan). The following day en voyage, the convoy ran into a typhoon, causing damage to the Miyo Maru. Three days later, after

arriving at the destination, the Miyo Maru withdrew and all 774 British POWs were transferred to the larger Tamahoko Maru, and accommodated 'for'ard tween decks', under the supervision of four Korean guards. Approximately 500 Japanese Army soldiers also joined the manifest and the convoy departed Keelung and headed for Moji, Japan.

"US Navy submarines had been following the convoy on 24th June and, whilst the Tamahoko Maru was passing approximately 40 nautical miles south-west of Nagasaki, the subs attacked just before midnight, even though they knew there were Allied POWs on board. USS Tang fired two torpedoes at the Tamahoko Maru, both of which struck the ship, blowing holes in the holds. As the ship's cargo was predominately heavy copper ore, the vessel sank in a couple of minutes, leaving little time for the POWs to escape into the sea. Those that could, formed loose Balsa 'rafts' from debris, to which those who escaped clung until daylight. The crew and the Japanese army survivors were rescued from the water at dawn by the escorting corvettes and a minelayer. Later that morning, around 200 further surviving POWs were pulled out of the water by a whaling ship which was part of the convoy. Seven men were also collected from the sea but once identified as POWs, were thrown back into the water to swim to the whaler. Two of the seven couldn't swim.

"Surgeon Lieutenant D. N. Ryalls didn't survive and was one of the 560 Allied POWs lost. 211 POWs were landed at Nagasaki that evening, where they were transported to Fukuoka 14B POW camp in trucks. The camp was part of the Mitsubishi factory, where they were given food and warm clothing. Those who'd survived lived in crowded conditions, but were eventually allowed to join the rest of the POWs in the camp and work in the factories. Lieutenants Cranfield and Hickley were eventually moved to Manchuria, where they stayed until US Forces landed, shortly after the atomic bombs were dropped and Japan surrendered."

Tom Jowett

tomjowett54@gmail.com

NEW SERIES, PART ONE

A search for family history: Ambon 2026

Following Nick and Penny Hamilton's eight-week round-the-world trip in Spring, which included exploring the war history of Nick's father, RAFVR Corporal Richard Hamilton, COFEPOW is delighted to feature the first part of Nick's in-depth report. Parts 2 and 3 continue the story in January and April.

"Having researched my father's experiences as a FEPOW after completing his War Office compensation claim in 1998, I obtained some information from him and other sources, then very limited. Dad died in 2003, aged 95.

"One focus of our trip was to visit the island of Haruku and the old POW camp and airfield, where my father was part of the Haruku draft of 2,061 POWs, mostly RAF ground crew, shipped to the Southern Moluccan Islands to be slaves, building airfields for the Japanese. They first arrived in 'Hell ships' at Ambon, located 1,500 miles east of Java.

"We allowed eight nights to find a local guide to interpret and help us with transport, which couldn't be arranged before the trip. Tourism on Ambon is limited,

mainly to Indonesians, following the UK FCDO travel ban.

"Continuing sectarian conflict on Ambon and Haruku prevented our visit until the ban was lifted in 2021. Only essential travel to the region is still advised. Our day trip around Ambon to visit Liang POW camp and airfield was restricted due to conflict between a Muslim and a Christian village.

Arriving on Ambon, as we came out of air conditioning, we could almost chew the humidity.

"Two impressions on the way to the hotel were, a) the amount of vegetation and b) the number of army bases. The hotel had seen better days but contained all we needed, and was full of local Indonesian families, there for Ramadan and the celebration of Eid.

The Natseapa hotel.

"On the first night, we were hoping to enjoy the large Indonesian buffet. But it looked as if it had been attacked by a plague of locusts on steroids! Hardly surprising, our fellow guests had fasted since 4.00am! We persuaded the staff we liked spicy food and any service complaints were recompensed by Magnum ice cream bars - excellent!

"The hotel had contacted Norris, who was to be our guide. He became completely engaged with the planning, advising us that we could visit in a day if we hired our own boat. I sent him a copy of the POW camp plan and location, and he confirmed the site using Google Earth adding it was now a Christian village. He said although he was Christian, our 'chauffeurs' would be Muslim, so they may not want to go there because it was partly destroyed 4 years ago by local Muslims.

"We needed to consider the weather for the 45/60 minute boat ride across a rough channel to Haruku, so we agreed to go on Wednesday, leaving Thursday as a reserve day. He requested we bring 3.5 million Indonesian rupees to cover transport, fees, etc. We blinked at this, until we worked out it was £160!

"On the Monday, our round island trip went up to Liang, through several villages proclaiming themselves as Christian settlements. We stopped to see the freshwater Moray eels at the Waii village sacred eel pond. These are believed by the locals to be their ancestors' spirits. There was no evidence or knowledge of the old POW camp there.

The sacred eels of Waii.

Domestic arrangements in Waii.

"Next, we arrived at Liang, site of a notoriously fearful POW camp with inmates used as slave labour to build an airstrip next to the sea.

"The remains of a jetty and a watchtower were by the beach. We couldn't think, even after 80 years, of any other reason they were there. Victor, our driver, confirmed the road was the old airstrip, but no one could remember where the POW camp had been. It was a reminder that the beach, with Muslim families having fun, had a darker history. My Dad would have been there after Haruku camp was wound down and closed in 1944. Liang camp closed in early August 1944, as POWs were sent to Ambon Town to unload ships, clear bomb damage and await transport to Java.

Liang Beach Rd - the ex-airfield.

An old watchtower next to the sea.

Liang Beach old supply jetty.

"We returned to Ambon Town, to the CWGC cemetery, which should have been open, but was padlocked. Eventually, someone turned up and unlocked the gates.

"The Cross of Sacrifice was destroyed in 1999, during religious conflict and not replaced because of local sensibilities. Ironically, we found graves of Muslim and Hindu soldiers peacefully sharing the space with their Christian comrades, a stark difference to the rest of the islands. The cemetery started in 1946 with bodies brought back from different locations. Due to conflict, work had to be abandoned several times, and was not

completed until 1968. The wide range of ages was remarkable. It was clear from the inscriptions of those aged 30 to 40 years, they were family men. The younger ages were mourned as lost sons. Most inscriptions reminded us that relatives hadn't visited to say farewell. The register confirmed that the bodies of 493 RAF men, including from the Haruku island POW draft, rested there. We located some graves of men, who, like my father, had been RAFVR. These were men who would have been his fellow prisoners and, perhaps, his pals.

The cemetery is overlooked by a Mosque.

An RAF grave.

Entries in cemetery book.

The cemetery register.

Figures from the register photograph, as legible in the printed edition

Nationality	Known	Unknown	Known
United Kingdom	93	39	493
Australian	597	311	183
Canadian	0	0	2
Indian	30	0	0
New Zealand	0	0	0
South African	0	0	0
Entirely Unidentified	0	3	0

Nationality	Known	Unknown	Known
American	0	0	1

"Of the 415 graves of POWs transferred back from Haruku, 375 are unidentified due to the use of mass graves there. Most of the 1,091 Australian graves were of Australian infantrymen who died defending Ambon or in the camp.

"The Visitors' Book had no British entries, and we were proud to be able to acknowledge these men, forgotten by the world, remembered only by their families from a distance. Graves with dates after the Japanese surrender on 15th August 1945 were a reminder that peace did not prevent the death of diseased and starved POWs. The cemetery, like all CWGC sites, was beautifully landscaped and kept.

"After lunch, Victor found a route avoiding the conflicted villages. Identifying the side a village supported in the conflict was easy - Muslim areas displayed crescents hanging from lamp posts and on the Christian ones, crosses.

Christian village crosses.

Muslim village crescents.

The issue in these coastal villages was the amount of plastic rubbish on the shoreline and swept in during stormy weather. The culture of throwing away natural items that biodegrade has not changed with everything

plastic. The Tsunami warning signs showed how violent nature is here. The storm worried us, as it might prevent us getting to Haruku later.

"Back in Ambon Town, we saw large commercial banners with the words 'Idul Fitri' (Festival of Breaking the Fast), celebrating Eid at the end of Ramadan. Our favourite was 'Idul Fitri' above 'Happy Easter'. An admirable sentiment in an island riven by sectarian conflict.

"Victor revealed over coffee that his family were in the Netherlands. Following the declaration of independence by the Southern Moluccan Republic in 1950 and invasion by the Indonesian army, guerilla warfare lasted until the early 1960s. The peace deal allowed 12,000 of the Ambonese ex-colonial army soldiers and their families to be taken to the Netherlands".

Nick Hamilton

The full account of this trip is available at cofepow.org.uk. **Parts 2 and 3 of Nick's fascinating account of the journey through to Haruku appears in January.**

The inheritance of shame

Nick Hamilton recounts a story which may be familiar to many COFEPOW members who've operated in the international business world since the end of the Second World War. He recounts a short anecdote from his and his brother's lives as Chartered Accountants, in partnership together, some years ago.

Nick expands the story...

"This is a memory I have only just learned from my brother Tony, who is 87 years old this year. When we were in practice together, he had a client who ran London Dayori, a Japanese language newspaper in the city. The client, who was also a friend, came to dinner in the 1980s with his Japanese bank manager, a pleasant and charming individual with excellent English. Tony's friend, who knew about our father's war history, had inevitably said "Don't mention the war"!

"However, much later in the evening, when the friend had disappeared after too much drink, Tony and the Japanese bank manager were chatting whilst polishing off a few more glasses. His Japanese guest asked Tony whether his father had served in the war. Tony mentioned that our father, Corporal Richard Hamilton of the RAFVR, had been a 'guest' of the Japanese during

the conflict. The Bank Manager asked where, and Tony replied "Ambon", whereupon the visitor looked suddenly stricken, and instantly confessed:

"My father was a Camp Commandant on Ambon", he retorted quietly, whilst bursting into floods of tears and apologies. Getting up from his seat, he rushed around the table, threw his arms round my surprised brother, hugged him, still sobbing apologies, and then left".

Nick Hamilton, London.

Ed note: If any COFEPOW members have similar anecdotes from their lives in dealing with the Japanese since the war, please forward to cofepow.editor@gmail.com with permission to reproduce.

EVENTS

Memorial diary for the year

A comprehensive calendar of forthcoming commemorative/remembrance events for the coming months. Hope it helps!

17th October 2026, 12 noon, Malayan Volunteer Group (MVG) Annual Reunion Lunch and AGM

at the Royal Air Force Club, 128 Piccadilly, London W1J 7PPY. Speaker: Gautam Hazarika, author of 'The Forgotten Indian Prisoners of World War II', published last year. Gautum acquired the 'We Published in Prison' manuscript - a series of newspapers published by Straits Times Journalists while in Changi during 1942. Membership of MVG £30 year. Lunch £60 each. Contact Colin Hygate. Email: secretary@mvg.org.uk

5th November 2026, 11.00am, Cross Planting Ceremony

at the FEPOW Plot in The Garden of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey, cared for by the RBL. Members can place remembrance crosses at the plot. Contact Rev. Pauline Simpson. Email: pauline761@btinternet.com

**8th November 2026, Remembrance Sunday, 10.30am,
RBL National Remembrance Gardens (formerly NMA).**

Contact Chris Wills, Event Co-ordinator. Email:
events@cofepow.org.uk

**8th November 2026, Remembrance Sunday Cenotaph
Parade, Whitehall London.**

Contact David Brede, Chairman COFEPOW. Email:
chairman@cofepow.org.uk

**18th November 2026 FEPOW Repatriation Memorial
Ceremony**

(where the ships arrived with FEPOWs in 1945 and 1946). 11.00am Wreath-Laying Service next to the plaque, Town Quay Park, French Street, Southampton SO14 2DY. Contact Rob Golding (previously Walter Tuttlebee). Email: golding.associates@gmail.com. New attendees are very welcome.

**10th December 2026, Commemoration Service for
the sinking of HMS Repulse and HMS Prince of Wales**

at the Royal British Legion National Remembrance Gardens, Croxall Road, Alrewas, Staffordshire DE13 7AR.

14th February 2027, 12 noon, 85th Anniversary of the Fall of Singapore

- a service of remembrance to be held in the chapel at the Royal British Legion National Remembrance Gardens, Croxall Road, Alrewas, Staffs DE13 7AR. The chapel holds 125 people, so please let Chris Wills know early if you wish to attend. Soup and a sandwich lunch will be £12.00 pp. If you wish to attend please contact Chris Wills at events@cofepow.org.uk

6th March 2027 HMS Exeter.

The plan for 2027 would be very similar to 2026, with the Guildhall being open at around 10am (to be confirmed) to view the model of HMS Exeter, and to be in the (our) North Chapel for the service at 11.00am, followed by the obligatory refreshments and chat at a local hostelry. Aiming to ease the bottleneck at the hostelry by arranging a buffet lunch in a ground floor private room (with bar!). Please contact Tom Jowett at tomjowett54@gmail.com

Friday 12th March 2027 to Tuesday 16th March 2027, Esplanade Hotel, Belmont Road, Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO11 2AA.

An extra weekend reunion in a fresh location. For details of availability, rates, etc contact Chris Wills on 0121 244 7263 or by email at events@cofepow.org.uk.

**1st March 2028. 'Early Warning'. The 80th Anniversary
of the Dedication of the 'HMS Exeter' window.**

If you've any thoughts on what should be done for the
occasion, please contact Tom Jowett at

tomjowett54@gmail.com

CALL FOR ENTRIES FOR ALL MEMBERS

The FEPOW Book of Remembrance

The COFEPOW Book of Remembrance is open for visitors to view within the FEPOW Memorial Building at the RBL National Remembrance Gardens (formerly the National Memorial Arboretum) at Alrewas in Staffordshire.

There are two dates per page and it is turned over to the next leaf every fourth day, when the FEPOW Building is opened to visitors.

If you haven't yet submitted an entry for your FEPOW, the cost from the 1st April 2026 to the 31st March 2027, is £17.50 for the full name (1 line) and £12.10 for rank and service number (2nd line), making a total of £29.60. The date of entry is generally chosen to be on either the date of birth, or the date of death of the FEPOW.

The trustees would like to accumulate as many FEPOW names as possible and include them. If you're interested in commemorating your FEPOW's name in this way, to appear alongside the many that are already honoured here, please contact:

Chris Wills by phone on **0121 244 7263** or by
email at **events@cofepow.org.uk**

EVENTS

85th Anniversary of the Fall of Singapore

A Special Service of Remembrance will be held, Sunday 14 February 2027, NRG Chapel, 12 noon

Photo: courtesy IWM.

COFEPOW is proud to announce that an important date in the FEPOW commemorative calendar will be marked with a special service to be held at the Millennium Chapel, within the RBL National Remembrance Gardens (formerly NMA), at Alrewas, Staffordshire. Commencing at 12.00 noon, on Sunday 14th February 2027, this 85th anniversary service will be followed by a laying of wreaths at the FEPOW memorials within the grounds of the NRG. Attendees will then return to the Founders' Room at the main building at approximately 1.30 p.m., where a light lunch will be available for £12.00 per person. A voucher will be provided for either soup/sandwich and a piece of cake plus a hot or soft drink (any food purchased on top of this will be charged to you by the NRG).

Photo: courtesy NMA.

The Chapel is the only place in the country where an Act of Remembrance is observed every day, with

people of all faiths and none welcomed.

The aim is to provide a quiet, reflective space, during whichever service you are attending. Please bear in mind seating space is limited, so ensure you have reserved your place by following the booking process detailed below.

Should you wish to attend, please contact Chris Wills, as shown below. Should you wish to join us for the lunch, please forward a cheque, made payable to 'COFEPOW,' to Chris Wills, 74 The Greenway, Sutton Coldfield B73 6SG or transfer directly by bank transfer to:

Bank: Lloyds. Account name: COFEPOW. Sort Code: 77-66-08. Account No: 39157268. If you choose to pay by bank transfer, please make sure you include your name and title '85th Anniversary'.

If you have any queries with regard to the above, please do not hesitate to contact Chris Wills by email (shown below) or by phone on [0121 244 7263](tel:01212447263). The event is some time away, but it is important that a measure of potential attendance is obtained early, to organise catering needs. We look forward to joining you in February 2027.

Chris Wills, National Events Co-ordinator
events@cofepow.org.uk

NOTICES

Embroidered tablecloth now framed and mounted

At long last, the embroidered tablecloth that's spent the last 20 years folded up in a showcase in the FEPOW Memorial Building, has now been carefully framed, so that all the signatures are there for everyone to see. The autographed tablecloth was made by Clara Harris and her daughters, Helen and Eileen, who were interned in Changi Jail, Singapore during the war.

The cloth was signed in pencil by fellow internees and buried for safety until liberation. Following release of all prisoners and internees, Clara recovered the hidden cloth before they travelled home to safety. It was then embroidered by her and her daughters after the war ended. Their story is told in the FEPOW Building.

Your help required

Shirley Ann Smith, (née Gregory), 88, seeks photo of FEPOW father

Granddaughter Kerry starts the search...

88 year-old Shirley Ann Smith is the only surviving child of Herbert James Gregory, who served with the 5th Battalion, C Company, the Suffolk Regiment.

Shirley Ann was two years old when her father was sent to the Far East and sadly, doesn't have any photographs of him. Her granddaughter, Kerry Caswell, would like to enquire whether any FEPOW relatives of members also served in the same regiment and whether anyone has any photographs of the Suffolks before or during the war. One might contain Herbert within it, or better still, do you have any individual or small group pictures you may have in your family files that might include him with mates?

If you think you may be able to help Shirley Ann, please contact Kerry by email at kerrycaswell1981@gmail.com. Thank you very much in anticipation.

Donations

Many members, old and new, contribute an additional amount to the charity at the time of joining or when renewing their membership. Our thanks go to the following donors who can be identified:

Over £100

£150 from Pat DeTisi, of which £29.60 is for Trooper John Holcroft's entry into the Book of Remembrance and the remaining £120.40 as a donation to COFEPOW.

Between £50 and £100

Brian Buick, Caroline Aston, Margaret People and Kathleen and Idris Booth and Sally Stringer.

Between £25 and £50

Dianne Williams, Margaret Hall, Marian Lowe and Mary Boswell.

Up to £25

Henry Langley, Barbara James, Christine and Archie McLaughlan, Anne Wilson, Deborah Byam, Gordon Bestwick, Michael Seager, Marion and William Thompson, Ann and Roger Powles, Frances Wingfield, Enid Jones, Mr. and Mrs. Tomlinson, Barry Townley, Edward Hale, Karen and Bernie Ingrams, Raymond Thorogood and Ann Graham.

On behalf of the trustees of COFEPOW, thank you for your generosity. Every penny donated to the charity goes towards funding the increasing cost of revitalising displays and exhibits of the FEPOW Memorial Building and Grove and for the upkeep of other FEPOW memorials around the country.

This is also a reminder to those members who have not yet forwarded their cheques for renewal. You may wish to donate a few extra pounds towards the continuation of COFEPOW's work, alongside your renewal fee, which is now overdue!

Hacking/scam warning!

Shirley Barnes has urgently advised the editorial team that she may have been victim of an email hack and warns members to be on the look-out. Shirley received an email with a subject/title that read 'CAROL COPPER COFEPOW' (sic), asking if she was available to receive some emails that day.

After deleting, Shirley wondered if it had been sent to many other COFEPOW members, who might not realise it's a scam.

Please be warned!

MEMBERSHIP

New members

A warm welcome to our new members, listed with their FEPOW connection where they have chosen to share it.

Email addresses are printed in the members' edition only. To contact a fellow member, please ask your Area Co-ordinator or the Membership Secretary.

(Ed: Spike has been re-listed, as his email address was incorrectly reproduced in the newsletter, during the transfer of his initial membership details. Our apologies.)

Spike Elliott

Cheshire

Father - James Elliott - 5th Sherwood Foresters

Karen Snook

Wiltshire

Father - Walter Pugh - Loyals

Jackie Swindells

Stoke on Trent

Gt Uncle - Clifford B Elsmore - Royal Navy "Prince of Wales"

Peter Berkeley

Southampton

Father - Sydney Berkeley - RAF

Emma Cumberbatch

Cheshire

Gt. Grandfather - Joseph Laithwaite - 18th Reconn.
Corps.

Grenville & Rachel Cooper

Norfolk

Father - Harry Cooper - Royal Norfolk Regt.

Andrew Pearson

Cheshire

Step Grandfather - George Edward Minor - RIMU RAF

Linda Cessford

Scotland

Father - John Crichton Reid - Recce Battalion, 18th
Division.

Sarah Knight-Markiegi

Yorkshire

Grandfather - John Smalley (aka Jack).

Sarah Earl

Suffolk

Father - Leslie George Edward Pusey - 4th Suffolk
Regiment.

Gillian Melton

Gt Manchester

Uncle - William Patrick McCall.

Kristie Duchesne

USA (Central)

Grandfather - Frank Lauri Torkidsen - 40th Coy., R.E.

Jan Slimming

USA (East Coast)

Father - Stanley Moore - 18th Div., RASC.

David McNulty

Berkshire

A. Farrel - no information supplied.

Lindsay Johnston

London

Grandfather - Richard Price - Civilian

Bartosz Paluch

London

No information supplied.

Alec Milligan

Surrey

Father - Alexander Milligan - RAF.

Sarah Wilkinson

Nottingham

Grandfather - Edward Vernon Barnett 78/35 Lt. AA., R.A.

Paul Watson

Birmingham

Family friend - George Wills - R.A.

Robert Cosby

Sussex

Father - William Edward Cosby - 85th A/TK., ATT.

Nigel Bullen-Bell

Essex

Father - Denis Bullen-Bell

Garry Mumford

Essex

Father - David Henry Mumford - 4th Suffolk Regt.

David Townsend

Switzerland

None - James Henry Wood - Unknown

Jasmine Huxtable

Dorset

Uncle - Adrian Anthony Huxtable - 88th Field Regt., RA.

Colin Mitchell

Cambridgeshire

Uncle - Jack Mann - 2nd Btn., Cambridgeshire Regt.

Julie Bampton

Suffolk

Father - Dennis Algar - 1st Cambridgeshire Regt.

Michael Wales

Berkshire

Father - Peter Edwards Wales - 153 Maintenance Unit,
RAF.

Jill Cross

Norfolk

Father - Frederick William John Cross - 4th Btn., Royal
Norfolks.

Charlie Bacon

Somerset

Gt. Uncle - Cyril Reginald Bacon - 5th Royal Norfolk
Regt.

This quarter, 10 extra new members have joined who did not wish to have their details published in the newsletter. Total membership is now 1,212.

Data protection: COFEPOW tries to publish brief details of new members in each newsletter, thereby providing

email addresses should one member wish to contact another in full confidentiality (one of the original benefits of COFEPOW). In order to remain within the guidelines of GDPR, members can stipulate whether their name, general location, email address and FEPOW relationship is to be included or withheld. If included, only your local Area Co-ordinator and officers of the charity will be informed, all of whom are conversant with data protection legislation. All new memberships listed here are up to and including 11th September 2026. Any bylines, credits and contact details within articles are also included with the originators' approval.

Payment reminder to COFEPOW members

COFEPOW pays for the upkeep and daily running of the FEPOW Memorial Building and Grove at the NMA, to help ensure our FEPOWs are never forgotten. The trustees of the charity welcome each new member, therefore, and offer thanks for the financial contribution each membership fee and donation provides in continuing our work. We also hope you will feel able to continue with your membership into the future.

Paying on-line

The simplest means of payment is via the COFEPOW website at www.cofepow.org.uk where an easy guide to joining and donating is available. Once you join online, you will automatically create a Direct Debit for renewals a year later.

Paying by Direct Debit or Bank Transfer

Could you please ensure your bank Direct Debit or BACs mandate indicates your name or the name of the person on whose behalf you are submitting payment, and that you indicate what your payment is for, e.g., 'Membership and John Smith'. Thank you.

Paying by cheque

Please note, if you pay by cheque, please forward your payment of £15.00 for single membership and £21.00 for joint, made payable to COFEPOW, with a note of who the payment is for, to **Graham Robertson, 1 Curlew Close, Watton IP25 6TQ. Tel. 07786051573. Email: membership@cofepow.org.uk**

Paying by PayPal

Regrettably, following a number of administrative issues, PayPal is no longer accepted.

Become a member or renew online

Graham Robertson, Membership Secretary.

HELP US RAISE THE REVENUE

Merchandise

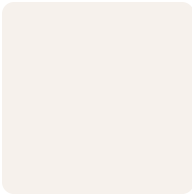
COFEPOW produces a range of merchandise to promote the charity, out in the community. The profit from all sales goes directly to COFEPOW to maintain its work, in line with its original objectives.

How to order

For further information or to order any of the items shown here, please visit the COFEPOW website at www.cofepow.org.uk.

Details of ordering/payment methods are also available by emailing Merchandising Officers, Sylvie and Nick Bullen-Bell at merchandise@cofepow.org.uk or by phone on 01245 222 604 / mobile 07721 067501. Thank you.

**Postage to anywhere in mainland Europe will cost £6.00. Elsewhere in the world will cost £10.00. All items are not to scale.*

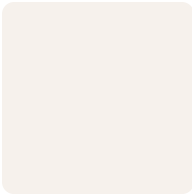


NEW!

More Poems of Hope

A new glossy hardback book, oversized A4, which features over 50 poems written by FEPOWs and their families. The anthology was launched on the VJ Day 80th anniversary, and incorporates almost 60 pages, including numerous accompanying pictures and illustrations, supplied either by members or by the Imperial War Museum library.

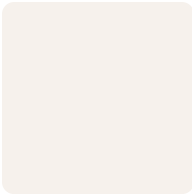
£12.99 plus £4.25 p&p



Poems of Hope

The original anthology launched in 2020 and featuring over 80 poems by FEPOWS, many of which were written in captivity. Additional poems by FEPOW family members are also included. VJ70 medallion FREE with every sale of either of the 'Poems of Hope' books!

£11.99 plus £4.25* p&p

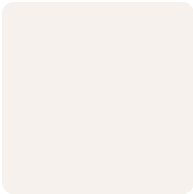


NEW!

Smart casual sweatshirt

Featuring the chest-borne emblem of COFEPOW and the 80th anniversary of VJ Day. Unisex sizes S, M, L, XL and XXL, manufactured in washable 50%/50% polyester/cotton. Navy blue.

£25.00 plus £4.25 p&p

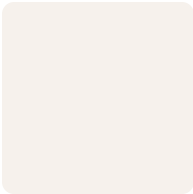


NEW!

High Quality polo shirt

Featuring the COFEPOW VJ Day 80th anniversary emblem on the left chest position. Unisex sizes S, M, L, XL and XXL, in washable 50%/50% polyester/cotton. Pale grey.

£20.00 plus £4.25 p&p

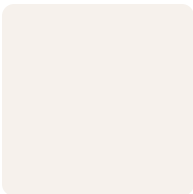


NEW!

Branded wooden pens

Individually handmade in differing woods, so no two are the same. All are inscribed with 'VJ80 - 2025' in white on the barrel, with gilt decoration, gold coloured nibs, clips and tips. Parker refillable, 'biro'-effect action, with dark blue ink.

£35.00 plus £4.25 p&p

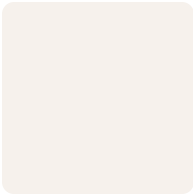


NEW!

White china mug

With red and blue VJ Day 80th logo to the front and the tale of a FEPOW's arrival at Heaven's Gate on the reverse. Each weighs 11 ounces.

£3.50 plus £4.25 p&p

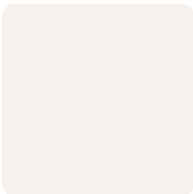


NEW!

Fridge magnet

Sunset picture with motif which reads: 1945-2025: At the going down of the sun And in the morning "We will remember them" plus the VJ 80 and FEPOW logos.

£3.50 plus £1.55 p&p

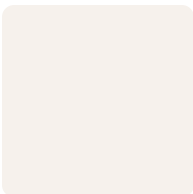


NEW!

Coaster/beer mat

In compacted, water-resistant card, featuring the Union Jack and VJ Day 80th logo. Stocks for both are limited.

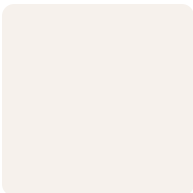
£2.50 plus £1.55 p&p



Trolley coin

Featuring general logo and key ring connector.

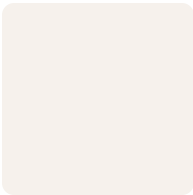
£3.25 plus £1.55 p&p



Cloth shopping bag

Sized at 37cms (14½") x 47cms (16") and manufactured in hard-wearing linen, printed one side only. The bag is in a neutral beige to reflect the house colour of COFEPOW, with a red and dark blue logo image and website/charity. Help save the planet!

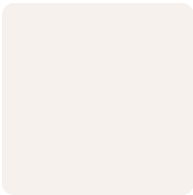
£2.50 plus £1.55 p&p



Notelets

A small selection of handy paper notelet pads. Two different packs of 10 are available, featuring the FEPOW Memorial Building or the Thai/Burma Railway memorial including envelopes.

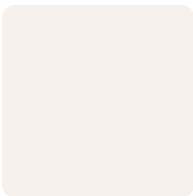
£2.50 plus £1.55 p&p



Key ring

Featuring metal logo attached to a black, quality leather fob.

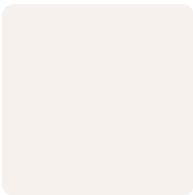
£3.50 plus £1.55 p&p



Car Sticker

Plastic suction-adhesive sticker for the interior of a car window.

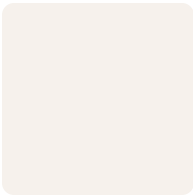
£1.00 plus £0.91 p&p



Lapel Pin Badge

Pound-coin size, metallic badge with rear connector for lapel.

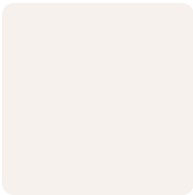
£2.00 plus £1.55 p&p



FEPOW Teddy

Individually hand-made FEPOW Teddy Bears. Knitted by members and family and stuffed with safe materials. White, brown or tan. Approx. 15 to 18 inches (38 - 45cms) high. Only three left.

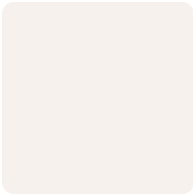
£25 each plus £4.25 p&p



Polo shirt

Unisex polo shirt in Medium (both black or white) and Extra Large (white only), manufactured in washable 50%/50% polyester/cotton and featuring a COFEPOW logo to the left chest area.

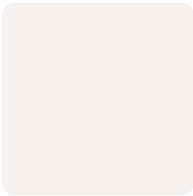
£16.00 plus £4.25 p&p



Poppy woven badge

Featuring the COFEPOW name.

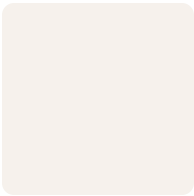
£2.50 plus £0.91 p&p



Woven COFEPOW badge

Can be attached to clothing.

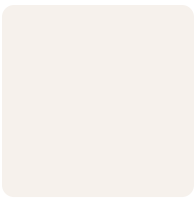
£3.50 plus £0.91 p&p



Tie clip

The logo on a brass effect clip.

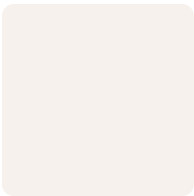
£3.00 plus £1.55 p&p



VJ 70 mugs

Produced to commemorate the VJ Day 70th anniversary, these mugs feature both COFEPOW and FEPOW logos.

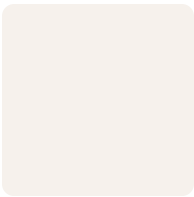
£8.50 plus £4.25 p&p



Tie

High quality, blue and red with small logo repeat and stripe.

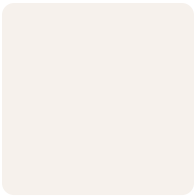
£12.99 plus £1.55 p&p



Enamel pin badge

75th anniversary of VJ Day special enamel 'keepsake' pin badge, in attractive display box.

£4.00 plus £4.25 p&p



Blue pen

'Biro'-effect ink, with replaceable cartridge and printed logo and website.

£1.00 plus £1.55 p&p

VJ70 medallion

VJ70 medallion FREE with every sale of either of the two 'Poems of Hope' books!

£7.50 plus £4.25 p&p

Cards for Christmas

Designed by member, Louise Cordingly, with all sales made via COFEPOW offered at a reduced price. The cards feature a FEPOW Christmas, in three festive colours, plus one of 'Scrunchball' and an angel figure in wood, sculpted in the camps. £5 for a variety pack of 5 cards, including envelopes. The overall folded size is approx. 15 cms x 10.5 cms.

£5.00 per pack plus £1.60 p&p

Books

A wide range of books written by FEPOWs or their families over the last 80 years and available to COFEPOW at a reduced price. All plus £4.25 p&p.

Title	Price
'From Shanghai to the Burma Railway'	£12.00
'Echoes of Captivity' by Louise Reynolds (normal retail price £12.99)	£9.50
'Eric and Scrunchball' by Louise Reynolds (normal retail price £12.99)	£4.90
'Surviving the Japanese Onslaught' (normal retail price £19.99)	£6.50

Title	Price
'Escape from the Japanese' (normal retail price £19.99)	£6.50
'When You Go Home'	£5.00
'Nagasaki'	£20.00
'In the Shadow of the Rising Sun'	£9.00
'Fighting Back'	£10.00
'Under the Heel of the Bushido'	£10.00
'Unsung Heroes of the British Army'	£10.00
'Unsung Heroes of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines'	£7.50

[Visit the online shop](#)

WHO'S WHO

Patrons, trustees and officers

COFEPOW: Children (Families and Friends) of the Far East Prisoners of War incorporating FEPOW. Registered address: 3 Blossom Way, Little Billing, Northampton NN3 9ET. Tel: [07930 960241](tel:07930960241). Email: cofepow.chairman@gmail.com. Website: www.cofepow.org.uk. Registered charity, number 1074474.

The charity was founded by

Carol Cooper

Patrons

Sir Terry Waite CBE, Lieutenant Colonel C.G. Stallard (Rtd.), Sir Henry Every Bt. DL FCA., General Sir James Everard KCB CBE.

Trustees

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Vacant at time of going to press.

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Padre

Rev. Richard Brooker

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Martin Prechner: roquefort44@hotmail.com

Membership fee per annum - £15 per single or £21 per joint (for 2). Please visit the COFEPOW website at www.cofepow.org.uk for easy online payment. Cheque payments can also be made for annual membership, which will need to be renewed in August. Cheques to be made payable to 'COFEPOW' and posted to the Membership Secretary as above, with your membership details.

Donations are also welcome and can be made to the Membership Secretary by cheque, payable to COFEPOW, or at the COFEPOW website at www.cofepow.org.uk

Help and information

While researching personal information, the following members have accumulated data which they are happy to pass on and share with others.

Amanda Johnson

Haruku/Ambon and Moluccas (Spice Islands)

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3rd Heavy Anti-Aircraft Saigon Party
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Steve Mockridge

Jesselton, Sandakan and Kuchin
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Ken Hewitt

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captivity 1941-45)
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Keith Andrews

Singapore Coast Regiments and A.A. Artillery and Thailand
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Colin Docketty

Rabaul and Ballalae Island
colin.docketty@gmail.com

Frank Clark

Saigon
paghamfrank@gmail.com

Thailand-Burma Railway Centre

All things related to the Thai-Burma railway. Thailand-Burma Railway Museum, Kanchanaburi, Thailand.

admin@tbrconline.com · www.tbrconline.com

Michael Hurst MBE

Director, Taiwan POW Camps Memorial Society

society@powtaiwan.org · www.powtaiwan.org

Hong Kong: Tony Banham

Hong Kong War Diary

tony@hongkongwardiary.com · hongkongwardiary.com

David Tett

The subject of 'mails'

www.fepowmail.com may be useful.

Welfare Grants: Grants are available from the FEPOWs' Central Welfare Fund for all FEPOWs, wives and widows. It covers hospital stays, carers, care homes, sheltered accommodation, etc. For further information contact: **Stephen John** of the Java FEPOW Club, stephen.su.47@gmail.com, or **Pauline Simpson** of NFFWRA, pauline761@btinternet.com

Area Co-ordinators

This list of Area Co-ordinators is provided to facilitate access to a local group for members. If you live in an area where there are a number of COFEPOW members and you would be interested in becoming their Area Co-ordinator, please contact John Rutherford to learn more about what the role involves. His [article in this newsletter](#) provides an example of what the role can offer members on a regional basis. The trustees are also keen to recruit co-ordinators for overseas territories.

The areas where '**vacancy**' is shown indicates an established COFEPOW area group, but which unfortunately no longer has a co-ordinator as a result of the former volunteer retiring from the role, for instance.

1. Birmingham and the Black Country

Annette Hughes · cranedriver1964@live.com

2. Cambridgeshire

Andrew Sharpe ·

Cofepowcambridgeshire@hotmail.com

3. Derbyshire

John Rutherford · oac@cofepow.org.uk

4. Devon and Cornwall

Vacancy

5. Dorset

Ann Whiteside · Whitesidelouise197@gmail.com

6. Essex

Vacancy

7. Gloucestershire

Diane Vear · dianevear@yahoo.co.uk

8. Greater Manchester and East Cheshire

Vacancy

9. Hampshire

Robert Golding · golding.associates@gmail.com

10. Herefordshire and the Wye Valley

Vacancy

11. Kent

Brian Faulkner · faulkner2021@btinternet.com

12. Leicestershire

Shirley Barnes · shirleyb60@virginmedia.com

13. Lincolnshire

Vacancy

14. Merseyside and Lancashire

Vacancy

15. New Zealand

Hilary Cunningham · hilarycunningham1@gmail.com

16. Norfolk

Thelma Johnson · tjohnson4@btinternet.com

17. Northamptonshire

David Brede · davidbrede@yahoo.com

18. Oxfordshire

Mike Clarke · mikejclarke27@hotmail.com

19. Scotland

Jackie Sutherland · skyscape96@gmail.com

20. South Wales

Vacancy

21. Suffolk

Tony Sawyer · email TBA

22. Surrey

Jill Robertson · cofepow.surrey@yahoo.com

23. Sussex

Elizabeth Hallett · cofepowsussex@gmail.com

24. Central USA

Gillian Leggett · gkleggett@att.net

25. Eastern USA and Eastern Canada

Jan Slimming · jslimming@comcast.net

26. Western USA and Western Canada

Temporarily vacant

27. Wiltshire

Bryan Neaves · bryanneaves123@gmail.com

28. Yorkshire

Vacancy

If you have a co-ordinator near you, they would welcome you making contact, with a view to meeting and sharing knowledge and memories about your FEPOWs.

COFEPOW Quarterly is the official newsletter of the Children (Families and Friends) of the Far East Prisoners of War and FEPOW Associations. It is a review magazine which informs members of events and opinions expressed over a previous three-month period.

COFEPOW is a charity, registered in England, no. 1074474. Please visit the COFEPOW website at www.cofepow.org.uk and our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/cofepow for regular updates.