

**Listening to Voiceless Stories at
the Commonwealth War Cemetery, Yokohama -3-**

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When you step in, you will find that it is always very quiet with about 1,800 graves placed side by side on fresh green lawns in this cemetery. Each grave has its own story. Have you ever tried to learn the story of the man who perished on foreign soil? We have been “listening” to their stories little by little. The following three are just for your interest.

◆ **British Section: SHAW, Ronald Francis (NA 14)**

Shaw is an A-bomb victim of Nagasaki. He was crushed to death under a collapsed building. He was a POW of Fukuoka No. 14 Camp in Nagasaki, which was only 1.7 Km from the epicenter. All the buildings were completely destroyed by the blast. 8 POWs (1 British and 7 Dutch) were killed and 30 to 50 men were injured. Shaw was an engineer in the Royal Air Force, whose plane was shot down by the Japanese near Java. He embarked Tamahoko Maru to Japan as a captive. Off Nagasaki in June 1944, she was attacked and sunk by a US submarine. Shaw was rescued and sent to No. 14 Camp.



His family discovered this fact in 2005, 60 years after the end of the war. Mr. Shigeaki Mori, who has worked for the American A-bomb victims of Hiroshima for years, researched for names in Nagasaki based on the deceased roll of our organization. With the help of the British Embassy, Tokyo, and some newspapers, he finally got to the family of Shaw. Mr. Mori advised his family to register Shaw's photo at the Nagasaki National Peace Memorial Hall to the Atomic Bomb Victims, and showed Shaw's nephew around this cemetery on his visit to Japan. Mr. Mori is the limelighter of the world because of the hug with President Obama this year in Hiroshima.

POWs of No. 14 Camp were forced to work for Mitsubishi Shipyard. More than 100 men died due to illness and accidents during the work before A-bomb. 4 British among them are buried on the same line with Shaw.

Conditions of the surviving POWs are not certain. There might be some who have after effects and health trouble. Sufferers overseas including ex-POWs had not reached out for medical assistance until 2003. Now 11 ex-POWs have got the certificate of A-bomb victims. Former Dutch POW, Mr. Willy Buchell got this and sued for reparations for not having assistance promptly. This March he got the reconciliation money, the first case for a former POW.

◆ **Australian Section: FARLEY, Robert Gerald William (AB 8)**

Bobby Farley, so called and loved by everybody, was born in Brisbane in 1921. He was enlisted in

early 1941 and arrived in Singapore later that year. The war broke out and he became one of the enormous numbers of POWs to be interned in Changi in February 1942. He worked on the Burma-Thai Railway. After the completion, Farley was taken to Japan with other POWs in late 1943. He was held captive at the Naoetsu POW Camp, Niigata. They were all in a pitiful condition due to malnutrition and illness, as well as the cold weather and the cruelty by Japanese. According to the official record, Farley died of croup pneumonia on 27th January 1944, age 23. Long after the war, his family found the record of the War Trials Court in Yokohama as follows. On 24th January 1944 Farley was caught trying to re-enter the camp where he had gone out to try to get some food for his fellow prisoners. He was badly beaten with rifle butts by two camp guards until his face was totally unrecognizable. He was then stripped naked and forced to stand in the snow for six hours till his death. After the war, his ashes, together with those of 59 Australian POWs' fallen in this camp, were interred in the Commonwealth War Cemetery at Yokohama. 8 Japanese of the camp authorities were hanged due to the death of 1 American and 60 Australian POWs. The 3 Japanese were among them connected to Bobby's death. Naoetsu was the worst camp in Japan producing the highest numbers of war criminals and nobody dared to talk about the camp since then. In 1995, however, this camp site was transformed to a Peace Park with beautiful statues and a museum to commemorate this war history and promote reconciliation. The two monuments, one for deceased POWs and the other one for 8 war criminals, were also placed. Citizens in Naoetsu (now Joetsu) strived very hard to achieve this. A letter by an Australian ex-POW started their strong desire to build this park.



◆NZ Section: **BRODIE, William Henry (CD 10)**

Brodie was at Sendai No. 5 POW Camp at Kamaish, Iwate Pref. On 14th July and again on 9th August 1945 the whole city of Kamaishi was heavily shelled by Allied warships and many citizens were killed. The POW camp near the beach was also completely destroyed and 32 POWs were killed. Brodie was severely burned and carried to Ohashi Camp (Sendai No. 4) with other injured POWs.

Frank Planton, a British POW in Ohashi, helped them. The smell was so awful, he hesitated to open the door to the ward. He recalls he gave one scoop of soup to a man whose face was all tied up with bandages. Half of his jaw was completely gone. He said, "I am a New Zealander, but my nationality is British like you." He died the next day.

Brodie was an engineer officer of M.V. Hauraki, which was captured in the Indian Ocean in July 1942. Brodie and other 23 engineers were taken to Japan. After interrogation in Ofuna, they were forced to work at a shipyard in Yokohama, then moved to Kamaishi in 1945 to avoid intense air raids. 30-year-old Brodie lost his life only a few days before the end of the war.

Downs (LA3) and Tyner (PA15) in the British Section are also victims in Kamaishi.

For more information on the POW issue, visit our site, <http://www.powresearch.jp/jp/index.html>