

Listening to Voiceless Stories

at the Commonwealth War Cemetery, Yokohama -5-

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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.

■ Canadian Section: GOODENOUGH, Murray (AB 12) 22 December 1943 (Age18)

In the Commonwealth War Cemetery at Yokohama, you may notice that most of the soldiers are in their 20s, with only some in their 40s; it makes one ponder how their parents, wives, fiancées, and children reacted to the grim and tragic news of their untimely passing. Have you ever wondered about the youngest man in this graveyard? In the Canadian Section, you will find him: Murray Goodenough was only 18 when he died.

On November 16th, 1941, 1975 Canadian soldiers arrived in Hong Kong to assist the British army in its defense. They were untrained, unprepared, and poorly equipped. First in Jamaica, and then on the deck of their war vessel, the training was hasty and shabby at best. Murray Goodenough, then 16, was as ill-prepared as his troopmates to face the assault to come. On December 7th, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. Shortly thereafter, the Canadians faced a fully trained, highly skilled, and well-equipped Japanese army. The holiness of Christmas Eve melted into a savage and cruel battle; surrender came on Christmas Day. Two hundred and sixty-four Canadians fell; the survivors were captured as Japan’s prisoners of war.

On January 19th, 1943, Murray and approximately 660 Canadians—with some British—were sent to Japan by Tatsuta Maru. It was three-day sail. Murray and nearly 500 Canadians were then sent to the Tokyo 3D POW camp to work at a shipyard in Tsurumi, Yokohama. It was here that Murray contracted, and was killed by catarrh pneumonia.

Liberated POWs subsequently spoke of Murray’s courage. Indeed, his bravery at the Fall of Hong Kong earned him the Military Medal, an honour bestowed upon enlisted men for "acts of devotion to



**Murray's Memorabilia
Displayed in Hong Kong**

duty and gallantry under fire. " Its equivalent for officers is the Military Cross. The honour seems more poignant when one considers the date of his enlistment: in October of 1939, Murray was only 14.

The sorrow of Murray's death was too great for words, and as a terrible consequence, existing family members know little of him. They are honoured to keep his memory alive with the shadow box of memorabilia that is now displayed in the museum at St. Stephen's College in Stanley, Hong Kong.

■ Yokohama Cremation Memorial: HAROLD, Edgar (Panel 3) 12 February 1943 (Age45)

Edgar Harold was a son, husband, father and grandfather of 2. He was born in 1897 in England and died in 1943 in Japan. In 1939 he became a soldier at the age of 42. He had already lost two daughters in 1920's to disease and about to lose his 21 year old daughter in childbirth. His 7th child, a son, was born as he enlisted into the Royal Artillery 35thLAA regiment 85th battery.



Edgar just enlisted

After basic training, his regiment were kitted out and travelled up to Greenock in Scotland to embark 'The Empress of Scotland', which was part of convoy bound for Basra in Iraq. They travelled to Durban and whilst there news came of the attack on Pearl Harbour. On 21st December 1941 the units were divided up and Edgar's unit

boarded a ship which belonged to convoy of 4 ships and 2 escort ships for Singapore to defend, but they had little to defend with as their equipment and other supplies went to Basra. The 35thLAA evacuated Singapore for Sumatra to defend the oil refinery at Pladjoe.

As fighting had escalated the men were advised to surrender at Tjikijap, Java. From here they were crammed onto trains and taken to Jakarta then marched to Tanjong Priok on 8 March 1942. They were held here as prisoners for 7months. In October just over 1000 men shambled 3 miles under a hot sun to the docks where they were packed onto the 'Yoshida Maru'. Conditions and food were very poor. The destination was Singapore. They arrived there three days later, on 26th October.

Before sailing this time on the 'Singapore Maru' they were tested for dysentery and cholera, but sailed before any results were given. A pointless exercise but complying with POW regulations. They were headed for Japan. This boat was dirty with cockroaches and rats. The men had very little room to move in and very little food, also no drugs to help alleviate diseases. 1081 POWs started this last journey on 30th October 1942, only 677 disembarked when their ship arrived at Moji on 25th November 1942 via Taiwan. Edgar was one of the 35 sick men taken to Moji Quarantine Station.

He died there on 12 February 1943 aged 45. He was cremated and his ashes were interred in a common grave at Daio-Ji Temple. The ashes were re-interred in a shrine along with 334 other soldiers, sailors and airmen of different nationalities in the Yokohama Cremation Memorial at the Commonwealth War Cemetery Yokohama.

Up to this day, no-one from his family has had the opportunity to visit this site. Edgar's youngest

son now Age 79, is still living and gives his blessings to everyone reading about his father.

----by Marilyn, Edgar's granddaughter

■ Post War Section: HATFIELD, Anthony John (AA 12) 28 January 1948 (Age one day)

Have you ever visited the Post-War Section? It is located on the upper area of the Indian-Pakistani Section. Interred here are those who passed away after the war whilst working in Japan as diplomats, as well as the war dead of the Korean Conflict. You may come across some graves of babies of a few days or weeks old. Whose babies are they? Why did they lose their lives so early? One reason came to be unveiled in October 2012. It was by Mrs. Elsa Hatfield who came to Japan by the grass root program run by our Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Together with some other Australian ex-POWs and ex-Internees, she was invited to Japan and came to visit this cemetery. She at last could visit her son's grave.

Mrs. Hatfield was born in Shanghai, China in 1923 and grew up there. In December 1941, aged 18, apart from her family, she set sail to return to Australia. Enroute, the war broke out. She was captured and duly interned in a camp in the Philippines. She found camp life to be very harsh. Because of malnutrition and the dreadful conditions, the detainees became very ill from many illnesses like beri-beri, scabies, and ulcer, many dying, one after another. One man who escaped from the camp, mainly because he just yearned for food, was found and immediately shot dead. This camp experience gave Elisa absolute abhorrence to Imperial Japanese Army. In February 1945, the camp was released by the US Army's recovery. Elisa finally could go back home in Australia.

After the war, Elisa joined the Australian Army and was dispatched to Kochi of Shikoku Island as part of BCOF (British Commonwealth Occupation Force). She soon met an Australian serviceman and married. Her newly-married life in Kure, Hiroshima Prefecture, was splendid and she made some Japanese friends. Gradually she came to know all about the disaster of the atomic bomb in Hiroshima and found the Japanese also suffered terribly in the war. Now being pregnant, she dreamed of a happy life with her baby-to-be. However the newborn baby, named Anthony, only lived 10 hours. Anthony's body was laid in a cemetery in Shikoku.

Having been invited to visit Japan on this occasion, Mrs. Hatfield found Anthony's grave had been moved to the Commonwealth War Cemetery. She placed some flowers and a photograph of her family, including her granddaughters, on his grave and said, I don't have any grudges towards the Japanese now. You have established such a wonderful country. May you continue to live in this happy and peaceful country forever."



Elsa visiting her son's grave

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