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Future Memories

Where Next For Far East Prisoner Of War Studies
Workshop Report

Future Memories

In March 2018, we held our first one day workshop. The atmosphere was relaxed, inclusive and reflected the mix of speakers and delegates who had a range of interests. Regrettably, due to adverse weather around the country a couple of attendees and two of the speakers, Terry Smyth and Mary Monro, were unable to get to Leeds on the day. However, thanks to technology and some stand-ins their talks were still able to be delivered. The day was broken into different panels, with Q&A sessions at the end of each session.

Speakers



David Boyne

Escaping From Japanese Camps.



Nigel Brown

Lieutenant Colonel Shigeo Emoto.



Helen Innes

Makassar: a lesser-known geography of captivity



Louise Reynolds

Making and Marking Memory



Clare Makepeace

'A happy release from an earthly existence of torment and hunger, R.I.P.'
The war graves of Far East POWs who died on the Thai-Burma railway



Mary Monro

Stranger In My Heart



Toby Norways

FEPOWs and Forgiveness: Post-war attitudes of veterans towards their Japanese captors.



Nigel Stanley

The longest Fighting Retreat: Jitra to Changi Recalled By Regimental Brush and pen



Lizzie Oliver

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Meg Parkes

The Secret Art of Survival



Emily Sharp

Syonan Civilian Internment: The Effect of British and Japanese Norms on the Experiences and Treatment of Internees in Japanese Occupied Singapore



Terry Smyth

In Search of Fathers

Panel 1: FEPOW Narratives



Nigel Stanley began proceedings with a detailed outline of the battle for Malaya using Gunner Leo Rawlings paintings. Throughout the presentation, Nigel used the paintings to illustrate the timeline of the retreat and fighting from Jitra to Changi. This was effective, providing the audience with vivid eye-witness visuals of desperate battles together with a comparison between various maps and battle plans and Rawlings' documentary artwork.

David Boyne spoke about his research into escape attempts. He noted factors that have been commonly proposed as precluding flight from Asian captivity, including the fear of execution and poor health, as well as the different landscapes that potential escapees had to traverse. Using examples of successful (and unsuccessful) escape attempts, of both POWs and civilians, David considered the importance of these elements in the Asian theatre, compared to the situation in Europe - revealing no fewer than 33 successful "home runs" from captivity.



Clare Makepeace's study of those who did not survive, reflected on the inscriptions on CWGC headstones of the 6,609 men who died on the railway whilst serving in United Kingdom armed forces. Greatest affected age range was 20-29. Highest number of deaths (by quarter) occurred from 1st July 1943 to 30th September 1943. Clare's talk was a poignant reminder of the ultimate sacrifice paid and the reverberations for the loved ones left behind.

Panel 2: Footprints of FEPOW

Louise Reynolds gave an excellent account of her publishing so far, introducing the family's children's book *Eric and Scrunchball* - a children's book based on the true story of her father's Scottie dog who waited at the garden gate for over four years for him to come home. It was written by Louise's son and illustrated by her daughter. The book offers an opportunity to make history accessible to young minds in a gentle way.



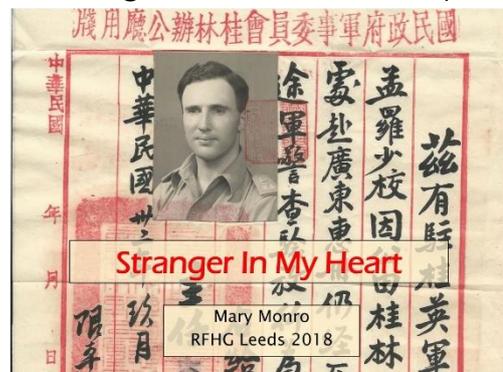
Helen Innes shared her research regarding the POW camps occupied by British, American and Dutch Naval and Army personnel in Makassar, Sulawesi (Dutch Celebes), and particularly about her grandfather's experiences in Makassar - a little-known area of captivity. Having decided to write a book



including Arthur's time as a POW, Helen felt she needed to travel to Sulawesi to hear the sounds, feel the heat, smell the smells, eat the food and see what could be seen of the land of her grandfather's captivity. It was fascinating to see the images that Helen showed side by side

photos of how Makassar looked during the Second World War, and those that she took herself in the same location in modern times.

Mary Monro was unable to attend but sent an audio talk to accompany her slides, detailing her father's successful escape through China and her trip to walk in his footsteps. Mary's father had fought in Hong Kong in 1941, had been imprisoned by the Japanese and escaped across China. He had been Assistant Military Attaché in China 1942-43 and hatched a plan to evacuate all the PoWs he'd left behind in Hong Kong; fighting in Burma 1944-45. Mary retraced his journey and her talk was based on the book she has written as a result, *Stranger In My Heart*.



Panel 3: Reconsidering Perpetrators

Nigel Brown's interesting talk presented a new perspective on one of the Japanese camp commanders, Lt Col. Shigeo Emoto. Shigeo Emoto graduated from the Shikangzakko-Military Academy and studied English at Hong Kong after a brilliant showing in the Tokyo School of Foreign language. He was a teacher of English language for army officers and became Senior Professor of English in Yokohama College. Post-war, the regard in which Emoto was held by internees is seen in the hundreds of anxious letters sent to Supreme Command for the Allied Powers (SCAP) by former POWs, wanting to know what had happened to their former



commandant. Nigel's talk also provided delegates with useful research links to Japanese studies.

Emily Sharp gave an interesting insight into her research into civilian internment in Singapore. She gave an overview of pre-war "normal" life for British civilians in Singapore and their guards - Japanese, Korean, Sikh and Kempeitai. Emily analysed how the differences in cultural norms between British civilians and IJA soldiers affected the experience of internment for those captured within Singapore.



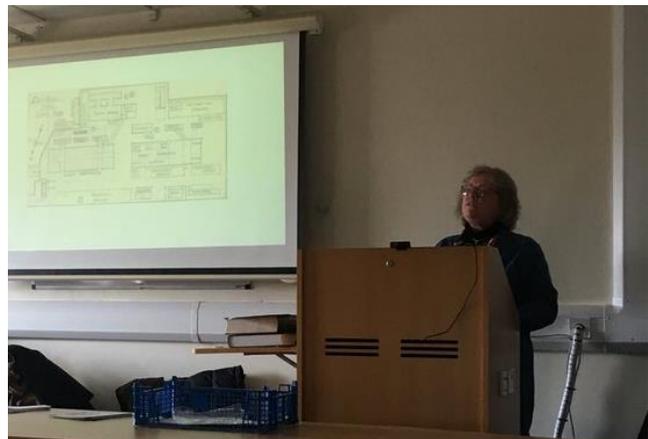
Toby Norways continued this panel's theme by sharing his father's legacy of forgiveness and reconciliation which is the basis for his PhD study in creative writing. In 2015, Toby uncovered post-war correspondence detailing the unlikely friendship between his father and one of his Japanese guards, Kameo Yamanaka. The two men never met after the war but corresponded between Cornwall and Japan until Toby's father's death in 1986. Toby travelled to Japan in search of the Yamanaka family, to discover a poem written by his father engraved in granite on their family tomb. He described his own journey - considering the 'paradox of forgiveness' and why 'forgiveness' can be such a divisive word.



Panel 4: FEPOW Legacies

Terry Smyth was unable to travel due to the weather. His presentation was read by Toby. Terry's recent PhD research set out to explore how the children of FEPOW remembered childhood, and how they then fashioned and responded to those memories in adulthood. For some, childhood was coloured by overt physical or psychological trauma; for others, a 'normal' upbringing led much later to a pressing desire to discover more about their fathers' wartime histories. By juxtaposing interview extracts with brief theoretical commentary, Terry provided valuable insight into the emotional legacy and transgenerational effects of the FEPOW experience.

Meg Parkes described how with the support of a Wellcome Trust travel grant, visits were made by LSTM researchers to UK archives, FEPOW veterans and relatives at home, and archives in Singapore and Jakarta, locating "hidden" documentary artwork. To date 44 artists, British military personnel, have been identified. Their work is largely unknown. To showcase this material Meg told delegates about an exhibition, *The Secret Art of Survival*, which will be held in Liverpool from October 2019 to mid-June 2020. Meg showed examples of artwork including that of a butterfly by Medical Officer Capt. Robert Hardie FMSVF and a blood transfusion hut by A. G. Old. Meg showed how art can verify written accounts and add depth to our understanding of conditions experienced during captivity.



The workshop was a most stimulating and successful day – and with lots of positive feedback, we're already planning the next one!