



Honorary Chairman - Mr Ron Mockford  
 Treasurer - Mrs Margaret Walton  
 Committee Members - Mr Keith Andrews, Mr James Whiskens

Vice Chairman - Mr Kenneth Coy  
 Secretary - Mrs Barbara James

### BAFEPOW NEWS SHEET FOR SEPTEMBER 2020

#### VJ Day - JAPAN OFFERS TO AGREE TO AN UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER - FEPOW DAY!

As a group, BAFEPOW has always regarded the end of WWII, in reality, as being the day that Japan actually signed the documents agreeing to accept the terms of the unconditional surrender aboard the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay. Therefore we usually commemorate this on September 2nd and have usually made our way to St Martins in the Bullring to hold a small 'service' of remembrance. Sadly, this year we are unable to do this but we will, I'm sure, have kept our FEPOW in our hearts and our minds again on this date. I understand that VJ Day was the day/date chosen by the FEPOW themselves for it to be known as the official end of WWII - do any of you know about this decision? I had been in touch with St Phillips Cathedral to see if I could arrange to lay a wreath there on behalf of BAFEPOW for Bishop Leonard Wilson who had been a member of this group during its early days. Sadly I never received a response from them, but I will endeavour to see if the present day staff at the cathedral know of his significance and possibly do something for him on VJ75+1 in 2020.

#### VJ75 COMMEMORATIONS - MEMBERS' REPORTS

From:- Ken Coy:-

RBL service on Saturday was kept to a small group as there was no advertising allowed about the event due to the pandemic. Therefore we numbered around 25, all well spaced out and there were 5 members of BAFEPOW.

*(Ken sent me two videos - one of the service and last post and one of him laying the BAFEPOW wreath)*

From Tony Truett:-

Saturday it was pouring with rain I went to the Village War Memorial at 11.00 clock Some body had put some poppies there.

Said the FEPOW Prayer and Kohima Epitaph.

I placed the wreath on the bottom step but passing it yesterday it had been moved to the top step.

I was a bit disappointed there was no one else there but at least the POW's named on the memorial were not forgot.

The card was the same as my sister put on the one laid in Deal

Tony

*(Tony also very kindly sent me a photograph of the wreath after he had laid it on the memorial on behalf of BAFEPOW)*

From Annette Masters:-

Dear All

I hope you all enjoyed the tributes paid to the 75th anniversary.

On Saturday evening I attended the Burma Star Memorial Service in Deal. The journey down was horrendous – only ever seen rain like it in Singapore.

We finally arrived in Deal to bright sunshine.

There were quite a lot of people present in spite of it being invitation only.

The service was conducted by the Revd. John Lines OBE Padre for the Downs branch of the RBL.

Several poems, written by Burma Star service men, were included and read by family members.

Reference was also made to those taken prisoner in the Far East.

Wreaths were laid by the Chairman of Kent County Council and local mayors from the boroughs within Thanet. It was with great pride that I was introduced as representing the Birmingham Association of Far Eastern Prisoners of War.

The Last Post was played by a Member of the Royal Marines.

Deal was the home of the Royal Marine School of Music until it moved to Portsmouth.

The Service ended with reading of the Role of Honour for those who had died in Burma together with those who had passed recently.

Thank you Margaret for sourcing the beautiful wreaths they were a very fitting tribute.

Stay safe and well and I look forward to seeing you all soon.

Kindest regards

Annette Masters

*(Annette also very kindly sent me some photographs of the memorial and the BAFEPOW wreath that she laid on our behalf)*

From Barbara James:-

As we were going to the NMA for the VJ75 service there, I went out early to our local Royal British Legion to leave a wreath at the memorial there on behalf of BAFEPOW as they were holding a service there. George and I arrived early at the NMA and the car park was already very busy but I have to say that the staff had all worked hard to get the site ready for this special occasion and we were soon able to make our way to the designated area where 'socially distanced' tables (with sun parasols) and chairs had been set out for us watch the service on a giant screen in comfort. There was even a facility for us to buy refreshments! We were joined by Ken Aldridge and Penny Grant who will be joining us as a new member when we are able to meet up again. The service in the FEPOW grove was very well produced by the BBC, it told of the Forgotten Army and the involvement of the Commonwealth forces, it included the FEPOW and the Internees and also the Romusha. Prince Charles made a very touching speech about this part of history in WWII and included mention of his father, Prince Philip, who was a Naval Officer at the time and was on board HMS Whelp in Tokyo Bay when the surrender was signed aboard the USS Missouri. There was a fly past by 4 WWII planes and it brought everyone to their feet - very emotional! After the service I went and chatted with a number of other people that were wearing COFEPOW badges and we talked about our FEPOW links which was so interesting. I then made my way up to the FEPOW Grove to lay the BAFEPOW wreath at the FEPOW Memorial. The flowers that had been placed around the whole Far East area were so beautiful and represented flowers from all over the Commonwealth - Prince Charles had laid a wreath on the Railway and that was very impressive. As I wandered around the Far East area, again I met and chatted with other FEPOW descendants including Pauline Simpson who many of you will know and the whole event far exceeded my expectations.

The BBC programme in the evening was also a great tribute and we may have at last made inroads into establishing the date as the true end of WWII. However, once events fade from the public's attention, we know that it is so easy for history to be forgotten again, so we must focus on VJ75+1 and by then the Covid pandemic will possibly be fading so we can commemorate this again!

(I understand from Keith Andrews that he had the honour of meeting Prince Charles as one of the representatives of COFEPOW along with David Brede, the acting chairman of COFEPOW. The FEPOW Hut was closed during the service but reopened later that afternoon. The BBC programme seems to have engendered a growth in public interest in the NMA, and I would also like to think in the Far East in WWII, and visitor numbers have seen an increase since VJ Day)

#### FEED-BACK ON THE FINAL BAFEPOW NEWSLETTER AND VJ75 BADGES

Ken and I received many messages of appreciation for the final newsletter and badges that we posted out prior to VJ Day. This was the last time that we will be communicating with FEPOW who are not specific members of our group as numbers have dropped dramatically. I only had contact from one very nice lady to say that her husband, George Corderoy had passed away earlier in the year and I had several very pleasant chats with her. George had been held prisoner in Borneo and she believes that he had taken part in a march there. I have also been contacted by George's grandson and he has promised to send me the information about his grandad and also the experience that his grandad talked to him about.

I had contacted my MP about the VJ75 commemorations and invited him to meet me for a walk around our local churchyard where there is over a dozen CWGC headstones. I was surprised when he took up my request and wanted to do the walk on the actual VJ Day which I declined but we met on the following Monday. I was pleased to also invite another local resident who I have known since we were children, he was a previous Lord Mayor of Birmingham and had been interested in raising interest in Birmingham for a VJ75 commemoration until the pandemic intervened. It was a very interesting visit and I was quite surprised at the MP's interest in the people that the headstones commemorate and also the lack of tribute to VJ Day in the city. I gave both of them a BAFEPOW badge and was really pleased when our MP put his badge straight on and then recorded a video (which

I opted out on taking part in) about the visit which was on Facebook later that day. I hope to get back in touch with them both in the New Year to see if I can start to get something going for VJ75+1.

### SENDING BEST WISHES TO OUR HONORARY CHAIRMAN

We heard from Maggie Anson a few weeks ago to say that her Dad, Ron had sadly had a fall and has been in hospital. I have been in touch with her again and Ron has made good progress. Ron is at present recuperating in a unit adjoining the hospital and there is a possibility that he may be able to return home subject to the outcome of an assessment. Understandably, Maggie has found this time very difficult as visiting is almost impossible due to Covid-19 restrictions and it is so difficult for her to be with him as much as she would like to be. On behalf of us all I have sent Ron our very best wishes via Maggie and hope he knows that we are all thinking of him and wishing him a speedy recovery. Our thoughts are with Maggie too during this difficult time.

( Just to say that Ann has had an operation on her arm and is undergoing further treatment - we wish you a speedy recovery, Ann, and hope all goes well!)

### \*\*THE BAFEPOW CHRISTMAS LUNCH\*\*

The committee needs to know if you would consider joining us for the annual BAFEPOW Christmas lunch that we hold on the second Tuesday in December. We totally understand, due to the situation with the Covid-19 restrictions, that it may not be possible to be booked and many of us will feel anxious about travelling on public transport into Birmingham. However, we would very much appreciate it if you could let us know if you would be willing to come to the Holiday Inn for the lunch or if you think it should be postponed. Please let me know as soon as possible if you feel that you would like to attend - it would take place on Tuesday, December 8th, subject to Government restrictions allowing such events and the Holiday Inn being able to cater for us as a group.

Please email me on:- [bmjames142@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:bmjames142@yahoo.co.uk) or ring me on:- 07954104857

*Well, strangely, I held back from emailing out the news sheet this morning and then this afternoon came the news of new measures to control the spread of the Covid-19 virus. I think that this means that it will be most unlikely that our Christmas lunch will be able to proceed. Therefore, please can I ask you to let me know what you think - we would need to confirm a booking very soon - shall we postpone it until 2021? We would need at least 20 of us to make it worthwhile, is it better to wait and be able to celebrate together safely?*

### FACEBOOK VJ Day GALLERY OF HEROES

If you are a follower of the various FEPOW sites on Facebook, just to say that there is a new page that has been set up as a tribute to the FEPOW. The purpose of the page is to show the faces of those who were POWs plus a very small snippet about them. The idea is to illustrate them pictorially as they were before they became prisoners. So far there are over 300 photos in the 'album' and they look so young, so smart, so unaware of what was lying ahead of them and it has taken off rapidly with so many lovely, handsome, young faces forming the gallery. I can't begin to imagine how busy the admin behind the page have been and I have to pay tribute to them - it is a fabulous idea!

### ROLL OF HONOUR

Les Cherrington aged 101 - although not a FEPOW, I was so sad to hear that Les had passed away - we met Les at the RAF Cosford Museum when we had our day out there together in 2019. He stood with us in the entrance hall while we waited to start our guided tour and he talked about his amazing escape on 26/03/19443 from a Sherman tank that had been destroyed in an attack in Africa. His comrades were all killed and Les spent more than a year recovering in hospital. Our condolences to our members, Roy and Peggy who used to take Les to RAF Cosford and also helped look after him. He will be missed and is fondly remembered.

### WE WILL REMEMBER THEM!

Are you aware of the Roll of Honour that is on the FEPOW Family site or the COFEPOW files that have been restarted? If you haven't seen the site that Ronnie Taylor set up, then take a look at it on:- [www.roll-of-honour.org.uk](http://www.roll-of-honour.org.uk) or why not consider creating a FEPOW file that can go on to the COFEPOW site so that your FEPOW's story will be remembered and seen by future generations - you don't have to be a member!

The BAFEPOW News Sheet is collated and distributed by Barbara James. If you have any items or messages for inclusion, please do send them to me. If you just want a chat, do ring me, I think we have all missed being able to meet up at our monthly meetings during the pandemic.

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**WELFARE GRANTS FOR FEPOW, WIVES AND WIDOWS**

If you need help with a grant towards hospital stays, Nursing Home Costs, alterations to the home, mobility aids etc, then please get in touch with:-

Mrs Margaret Martin, 6, Stanley Avenue South, Portslade, Brighton, BN41 2WG

or by email:- [margaretmartin1944@sky.com](mailto:margaretmartin1944@sky.com) or by phone:- 01273 424686

Pauline Simpson, NFFWRA, White Rose Cottage, King Street, Neatishead, Norwich, NR12 8BW

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