



Service of Remembrance

On 12th February, a Service of Remembrance in commemoration of the men who were taken POW on the fall of Singapore seventy years ago this month was held at St. Brigid's Centre, Newmains.

Of the veterans of the Regiment still with us, Pat Campbell from Dumfries, Tom Hannah from Blackwood, Tom McKie from Birmingham, (formerly Thornhill) and John Marshall from Bellshill, were able to attend. Sadly our old friends, Andy Coogan, Les Puckering and Tom Laird were unable to join us owing to ill health. We were particularly touched by the presence of two veterans from the 156th, Geof Storey from Norfolk and Derrick Mant from Basingstoke, who had made the long trip north to join in the Service with their former comrades of the 155th.



The Service was sensitively and movingly conducted by Father Hugh Kelly of St Brigid's Newmains, and the Rev Paul Grant of St Ninian's Parish Church, Stonehouse and we would like to thank them.

We know from speaking to them that they both felt it a privilege to be asked to conduct the Service in the presence of such amazing Men and in the memory of others who have sadly passed on. (We were asked by a good number of those attending if Paul would allow his words to be circulated and we have attached them to the newsletter).

John Marshall slaved in the bowels of the Kinkaseki Copper Mine on Taiwan while the other three men toiled on the Death Railway. During the Service, a little was told about what they, and the others, had endured during their time as POWs. Not surprisingly, tears were shed by many of those present.

Helen Caldwell, granddaughter of POW Dick Gwillim, read the poem 'A Soldier Died Today' and Christine Thomson sang the beautiful hymn 'Lay Your Hands Gently Upon Us'.

Tom Hannah later admitted that he had been holding things together up until that point!

After the Service, refreshments were served and we would like to offer our thanks to the ladies who helped out.

We were heartened by the sheer number of folk who took the trouble to attend and we know from the Veterans that they were most appreciative of the interest shown in what happened to them so many years ago. Later in the afternoon Tom Hannah, Pat Campbell and Tom McKie told something of their experiences. Those listening were spell bound in their admiration of the courage of the three and, indeed, of all the other POWs who had to endure such barbarity and cruelty. It says much for the character and personality of the Men that they even managed to make us laugh on occasions!



Thanks and Apologies

During the Service at Newmains, several people approached Campbell Thomson during the break and gave him envelopes. It was only later that evening that Campbell, on retrieving the envelopes from his pocket, discovered that they each contained various sums of cash, one in particular being substantial. Unfortunately, not a single envelope contained any indication as to who had made the various gifts. As a result, we are in the embarrassing position of not being able to personally thank those involved. We would therefore like to express our sincere appreciation and thanks to those who made the generous gifts which will be put to the Memorial Fund.