



VJ Day (Victory over Japan) and one of our own**Mr. Adam Houston**

Mr. Adam Houston was born in 1921 in Scotland; he is 99 years of age. He deserves to be acknowledged for the life he has lived and the journey that life has taken him through. He has been too frail to attend our Social functions but has always kept up with our club's business and a generous supporter of Simcoe Chapter charity causes.



In 1956 Mr. Houston immigrated to Canada. He started working in the Post Office in 1957 as a postal clerk. He studied to further himself over the course of nine years by taking evening classes after work. He attended all his management courses at Ryerson Polytech before it became a university. Mr. Houston worked his way to the position of Superintendent of Operations. He was one of the first management representatives that opened the South Central Letter Processing Plant in 1979; until he retired. Mr. Houston and his wife Agnes went to Taiwan in 2005, attended a week of remembrance events sponsored by the Taiwan POW Camps Memorial Society there. They were able to visit the sites of the former camps where Adam was held as a POW and also attend a Remembrance Day service on the site of the old Kinkaseki Camp.

Mr. Houston served for Britain in World War II. He was captured in Singapore and sent on the hellship England Maru to Taiwan (part of the Japanese Empire back then) and held as a Prisoner of War in Taiwan for three years from 1942 to August 1945.

Here I am attaching a letter I which I received from Michael Hurst MBE Director, Taiwan POW Camps Memorial Society

Hello Anna,

Nice to hear from you and it is good that you are doing an article on Adam. He worked for the post office for many years and was instrumental in making changes and implementing new systems which are still in use today. We have been friends for many years, and I am currently in touch with his daughter as he is currently not well.

Yes, Adam and his wife Agnes visited Taiwan in November 2005 as part of our annual Remembrance Week program where we take former POWs and / or their family members on visits to the camps and hold memorial services in their honour.

A brief description of his time as a POW - Adam was captured at the fall of Singapore in February 1942 and spent the following nine months there as a prisoner at Changi and doing work for the Japanese - cleaning up bomb damage, repairing the infrastructure etc. Then in late October 1942, he was put on a 'hellship' with 1,100 other men and sent to Taiwan.

He was first sent to Kinkaseki (Japanese for Jinguashi) to work down the terrible copper mine in horrendous conditions. In some places the temperatures were over 40C and other places were very cold and damp. The men were required to produce so much output of ore in a day or they were beaten with the hardwood handles of mining hammers.

As in all the Japanese POW camps there was so little food and much sickness, and disease was rampant as the Japanese gave the POW doctors so little medicine to work with. Men died from starvation, overwork, diseases, and beatings from the guards. There were 14 Japanese-run POW camps in Taiwan, and in all over 10% of the more than 4,350 Taiwan POWs died.

Later Adam became too sick and weak to work down the mine, so he was transferred to another camp in Taipei (where I live) and forced to work at various hard labour jobs there as well. Finally, in March 1945, he was moved again to a sort of hospital camp in the southern part of the island, where he managed to regain some of his health and survived.

On the surrender of the Japanese in August 1945, the men in the camp were moved back to Taipei to await evacuation by American and British navy ships. They were first taken to Manila in the Philippines for medical care and treatment and then were sent on their way home again - most arriving back in the UK in November and December 1945. Some men however, who were too sick to send home right away were sent to Australia and New Zealand for further medical care and Adam was one of those sent to Australia. After several months there he returned home to Scotland in January 1946.

I hope this helps to fill you in a bit on Adam's story. As the 75th anniversary of VJ Day is coming on August 15th, this is certainly an appropriate time to do an article on a very brave and courageous man who later immigrated to Canada and served the country so well.

I am attaching a photo of Adam in WWII from our website. I suggest that you check out the site for more information. It is located at www.powtaiwan.org. If you click on the CAMPS page in the menu you will see a map of the POW camps in Taiwan. You can use that in your article if you wish. Then click on the names in the camps listing and a new page will open with details of the camp. You can look at Kinkaseki, Taihoku Camp #6 and Shirakawa.

OK, I hope that helps and if you have any further specific questions, let me know and I'll do my best to answer. Take care, stay safe in the virus and good luck with the article. When it is finished and published in your newsletter please send me a copy of the article or newsletter for our archives.

With best regards,

Michael Hurst MBE

Director, Taiwan POW Camps Memorial Society Please visit our website at:
www.powtaiwan.org