

**Canadian Hong Kong Veterans and Allied POWs
in the Asia-Pacific War: Wounds and Closure
Prezi Full Script**



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Accompanying Handouts

- Asia-Pacific War Student Backgrounder
- Geneva Convention
- Black Christmas Testimonies of Canadian Hong Kong Veterans
- Testimony of Canadian Hong Kong Veteran George MacDonell
- POW Camps/Work Sites Handouts:
 - Hell Ships
 - Fukuoka POW Branch Camp 26 in Japan
 - Bataan Death March in the Philippines
 - Thailand-Burma “Death Railway”
 - Sandakan POW Camp and Death March in Borneo

(All the above materials can be downloaded [here](#).)

Notes About Script Format

Each frame of the Prezi is titled in this script to represent the content covered therein, and includes a snapshot of the corresponding frame as seen on Prezi. Key information to be included in the presentation of each frame is provided in either paragraph or bullet-point form. Further information can always be found at www.alpha-canada.org. Teachers will also note that colored boxes appear with some frame descriptions. The pink boxes highlight important resources that BC ALPHA highly recommends that teachers peruse. The green boxes provide instructions for classroom activities. The blue boxes contain questions to be asked to students for either large- or small-group discussion. The orange boxes contain special advisories for teachers about sensitive content or topics.

Introduction

NOTE: It is recommended that the introduction take 2-3 minutes.

[Frame 1] Home Screen



Use the backdrop of the home screen to introduce the topic of Canadian Hong Kong Veterans and Allied POWs in the Asia-Pacific War: Wounds and Closure. Suggested points to include:

- During the Asia-Pacific War, as in any wars, many people were taken as POWs. But how the POWs were treated by the Imperial Japanese Army contravened international norms and standards
- Some of these POWs were Canadians who fought in the Battle of Hong Kong as part of the Commonwealth
- The presentation is about both what happened to the Canadian and Allied POWs during the war and how their lives have been defined by that experience ever since

Section A: The Asia-Pacific War Background

NOTE: It is recommended that Section A take 5-7 minutes.

[Frame 2] Map of Asia-Pacific During War (1931-1945)



Students require a background on the Asia-Pacific War (1931-1945) to understand the historical context for Canadian Hong Kong Veterans and Allied POWs. If the students read through the Asia-Pacific War Student Backgrounder, then this frame is an opportunity to review the information in that handout. If students haven't read the Backgrounder, then you will need to briefly explain the concepts and events highlighted in that document.

[Frame 3] Reasons for Imperial Japan's Expansion and Expansion Strategy

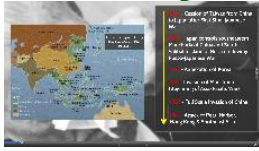


Use this frame to review the following information with the students:

- Reasons for Japanese imperial expansion
 - Trying to establish itself on world stage following over two centuries of isolation
 - Small country with limited natural resources
 - Threatened by Western colonialism in the region
 - Japan's native religion of Shintoism fostered the belief of Japan's divine origin, its Emperor as a direct descendent of the sun goddess, and the destiny of the Emperor to rule the world
- Imperial Japan's strategy for expansion
 - Develop capitalist economy
 - Bolster its military
 - Acquire foreign markets and territories through imperial expansion

RESOURCE FOR TEACHERS A more comprehensive background of the historical and socio-political reasons for Japan's Imperial expansion is provided in the [Teacher Backgrounder](#) of the BC Ministry of Education's Teacher's Guide, *Human Rights in the Asia-Pacific 1931-1945: Social Responsibility and Global Citizenship*.

[Frame 4] Japanese Imperial Expansion



Use this frame to review the progression of Japanese imperial expansion, and to highlight that Japanese imperialism began long before the start of the Asia-Pacific War. The following markers of imperial expansion are included on the frame.

- China's cession of Taiwan to Japan in 1895 came as a result of the peace treaty between Japan and China (Treaty of Shimonoseki) at the end of the First Sino-Japanese War
- Following its war with Russia, Japan gained control over southeastern Manchuria of China and southern Sakhalin Island of Russia in 1905
- Japan officially annexed Korea in 1910, although Korea had already been a protectorate of Japan since 1905
- In 1931, Japan invaded northeastern China (Manchuria), marking the beginning of the Asia-Pacific War
- On July 7, 1937 Imperial Japan launched a full-scale invasion of China
- On December 8, 1941 Japan simultaneously attacked Pearl Harbor, Hong Kong, Philippines and other parts of Southeast Asia

[Frame 5] Timeline of British Imperialism in Asia



NOTE: This frame requires clicking one-by-one to make the location markers appear on the screen.

It's also important for students to recognize that many Western countries, including Britain, already had imperial colonies in Asia by the time the Asia-Pacific War started. In fact, the increasing threat of Western imperialism was one of the major factors in Japan's decision to modernize and expand its own empire.

For the purposes of understanding why Canada, a British Commonwealth country, was involved in the Asia-Pacific War and the Battle of Hong Kong, this frame includes a timeline of some of the markers of British imperialism in Asia:

- **[Click 1]** In 1757, Britain gained political sovereignty over Bengal (Ganges River delta region, now part of India and Bangladesh)
- **[Click 2]** In 1824, Singapore was ceded in perpetuity to British rule by the Sultan of Johor (southern part of Malaysian peninsula)
- **[Click 3]** In 1841 Hong Kong was ceded to Britain by the Qing Dynasty as a result of the First Opium War
- **[Click 4]** British crown rule was established in India in 1858
- **[Click 5]** Burma lost sovereignty to Britain in 1885 after its defeat in the Third Anglo-Burmese War

Section B: Canadian Involvement in the Asia-Pacific War

NOTE: It is recommended that Section B take 8-10 minutes.

[Frame 6] British Request for Reinforcement at the Hong Kong Garrison



NOTE: This frame requires clicking once to make the date appear on the screen.

Canada, as a British Commonwealth nation, was involved in World War II in Asia, most notably in the battle of Hong Kong. **[Click 1]** In September 1941, the British government requested the reinforcement of two battalions from the Commonwealth of Canada for the Hong Kong garrison. Although the British government knew that the likelihood of Japanese invasion was high and that the island was largely indefensible if attacked, they wanted to try and deter Japan from invading Hong Kong by reinforcing the island with more troops.

[Frame 7] The “C” Force – Canadian Forces in Hong Kong



Canada agreed to send the two requested infantry battalions to Hong Kong. They were the Royal Rifles of Canada (a bilingual unit from Quebec City) and the Winnipeg Grenadiers. Together they were referred to as the “C” Force (Canadian Force).

Here are some facts about the “C” Force:

- It was commanded by Brigadier J.K. Lawson, who was killed in the battle
- The two battalions totaled 1,975 soldiers
- The “C” Force also included: two medical officers, two Nursing Sisters, two officers of the Canadian Dental Corps with their assistants, three chaplains, two Auxiliary Service Officers and a detachment of the Canadian Postal Corps

NOTE: Students may or may not realize that more than just soldiers are involved in war efforts, even on the battlefields

- They joined the Hong Kong garrison, which consisted of British and British Indian troops and also local Hong Kong Volunteers Defense Corps as well. Together they formed a total defending strength of about 14,000 troops.

[Frame 8] The Battle of Hong Kong



Inevitably, the Imperial Japanese Army, with the strength of about 52,000 troops, attacked Hong Kong and the Battle of Hong Kong ensued. Here are some key dates in that battle:

- On Dec. 8, 1941 (local time for Hong Kong and Asia), Imperial Japan launched an attack on the British Crown Colony of Hong Kong on the same day that it launched simultaneous attacks on Pearl Harbor (US local time was Dec. 7), Guam, Wake Island, the Philippines, Thailand, Burma and Malaya (included present-day Malaysia and Singapore)
- On Dec. 8 (US local time), in reaction to the Pearl Harbour Attack, the United Kingdom and the United States declared war on Japan
- On Dec. 13, a Japanese demand for surrender was rejected by the British Hong Kong government and defending garrison
- On the morning of Dec. 25, the Japanese overran a field hospital in Hong Kong Island, assaulting and murdering nurses and bayoneting wounded soldiers—including Canadian soldiers—in their beds. On that same day, only hours later, the British Army surrendered to Japan. This day is known as Black Christmas.

[Frame 9] Massacre at St Stephen's Hospital on Black Christmas



The image in this frame is a sketch by a survivor that depicts the atrocities committed against nurses and unarmed, wounded soldiers.

Read excerpts of survivor testimonies by nurse Kay Christie and Canadian veteran James Barnet contained in the Black Christmas Testimonies of Canadian Hong Kong Veterans handout.

[Frame 10] "C" Force Casualties in the Battle of Hong Kong



NOTE: This frame requires clicking once to make the items appear on the screen.

This frame includes the following information about the Battle of Hong Kong:

- On Dec. 25, Major General Maltby, commander of the British Forces in Hong Kong, surrendered
- As a result of the Battle of Hong Kong, approximately 290 Canadian soldiers were killed and 493 wounded in battle. Approx. 1,689 Canadian Prisoners of War were held by the Imperial Japanese Army for more than 3.5 years and approx. 267 of them died in the POW camps

Section C: International Norms and Standards on the Treatment of POWs

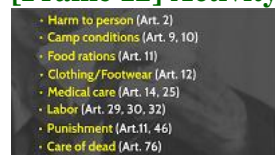
NOTE: It is recommended that Section C take 7-10 minutes.

[Frame 11] Activity Break – Analysis of 1929 Geneva Convention on the Treatment of Prisoners of War



Before learning about how the POWs were treated by the Imperial Japanese Army, it's important for students to understand the international norms, laws and standards about the treatment of prisoners of war that were in place at this time in history. Then students can compare Imperial Japan's treatment of the POWs to these standards, and determine if war crimes or crimes against humanity were committed.

[Frame 12] Activity Break (Continued) – Analysis of Geneva Convention



NOTE: This frame requires clicking one-by-one to make the categories appear on the screen.

ACTIVITY PROCESS

- Divide students into small groups. Each group will be assigned 2 or 3 categories.
- Have students read through the 1929 Geneva Convention Handout or even better if they can read it before coming to class. Each group will especially dwell on the articles of their assigned categories. Click one by one to show the categories for assignment to the groups:
 - **[Click 1]** Harm to person (Art. 2)
 - **[Click 2]** Conditions of camp (Art. 9, 10)
 - **[Click 3]** Food rations (Art. 11)
 - **[Click 4]** Clothing and footwear (Art. 12)
 - **[Click 5]** Medical care (Art. 14, 25)
 - **[Click 6]** Labor (Art. 29, 30, 32)
 - **[Click 7]** Punishment (Art. 11, 46)
 - **[Click 8]** Care of dead (Art. 76)
- Remind students to focus their discussion on what they perceive as the essence and spirit behind the articles assigned to their group.
- Each group or some of the groups would share briefly with class the essence of their assigned articles.
- Make students aware that Japan had not ratified the Convention, but that it was a signatory.

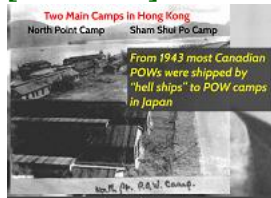
NOTE: It is recommended to give the students 3 minutes to read their assigned section(s) of the Geneva Convention.

Section D: Treatment of Canadian Prisoners of War Captured in Hong Kong

NOTE: It is recommended that Section D take 10-15 minutes. If time is limited, then Frame 15-19 are the frames suggested to be taken out.

This section of the presentation investigates the treatment of the Canadian POWs and the conditions in which they were interned. The purpose of this section is to determine whether their treatment was in line with the Geneva Convention and to determine what, if any war crimes occurred.

[Frame 13] POW Camps in Hong Kong



NOTE: This frame requires clicking once to make more information appear on the screen.

Following the surrender of the Hong Kong garrison, 1,689 Canadians, along with thousands of other British, Indian and local troops, were taken as POWs by the Imperial Japanese Army.

Two main POW camps were established in Hong Kong following the surrender, Sham Shui Po Camp and North Point Camp. British, Indian, Canadian and Hong Kong Volunteers Defense Corps were interned in these camps. *[Click 1]* Starting in 1943, 1,184 of the Canadian POWs were transferred on what were called “Hell Ships” to other POW camps in Japan. The conditions of the POW camps described in the following frames apply to all Japanese POW camps, varying only in severity.

For the next few frames, students will hear testimonies about the POW camps from survivors. Pause here to point out that most of what we know about conditions in the camps and how the POWs were treated comes from testimonies of survivors and eyewitnesses. These firsthand accounts give us valuable insight into the ways that the Imperial Japanese Army treated and regarded enemy prisoners of war.

[Frame 14] Canadian Hong Kong Veteran Gerry Gerard Testimony (2 min.)



[Excerpt from BC ALPHA interview: <http://www.alpha-canada.org/testimonies/about-canadian-hong-kong-veterans>]

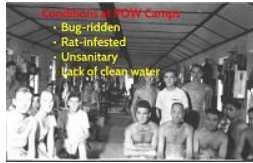
This testimony is by Canadian Hong Kong Veteran Gerry Gerard who describes conditions in the POW camps in Hong Kong and Japan. It is advisable to ask students to listen for ways that the conditions described by Gerry Gerard violated the 1929 Geneva Convention.

For teachers' reference, Gerry's testimony referred to the following violations:

- *Food provided was neither edible nor sufficient*
- *Lack of medical provisions and adequate medical care*

- *Forced to perform labor in harsh conditions, for long hours, and without appropriate clothing*
- *Unhygienic conditions, including bed bugs*

[Frame 15] Conditions at the POW Camps



The conditions of both North Point Camp and Sham Shui Po Camp were very poor. The POWs stayed in rudimentary, bug-ridden, rat-infested, damp wooden shacks with no heat and slept on wooden planks or the cement floor. Holes were dug in the ground as latrines, sometimes near where the food was cooked. Clean water was scarce and there weren't many opportunities for bathing. The conditions of the camp were in violation of the Geneva Convention's basic standards for POW camps.

[Frame 16] Food and Malnourishment



Extreme malnourishment was common in the POW camps. Meals consisted of mainly rice with some vegetables. Portions were very small and of very poor quality. In addition, the POWs were given decreased food rations if they didn't perform slave labor, even if it was due to being ill or being in the infirmary.

[Frame 17] Physical Effects of Malnourishment



NOTE: *This frame requires clicking once to make excerpt of Canadian Hong Kong Veteran George MacDonnell's testimony appear on the screen.*

If time allows you can read to them (or have students read aloud) the student handout Testimony of Canadian Hong Kong Veteran George MacDonnell. The purpose is for students to understand the various physical ailments the POWs suffered while in the camps.

[Frame 18] Increased Vulnerability to Diseases



NOTE: *This frame requires clicking twice to make the names of the diseases appear on the screen.*

As mentioned by George MacDonnell, malnutrition results in increased vulnerability to disease. This, combined with the poor conditions of the POW camps, meant that disease was rampant. The more common types of disease reported by POWs in Hong Kong include:

- **[Click 1]** Dysentery
- Diphtheria
- Malaria
- Pneumonia
- **[Click 2]** Beriberi, wet & dry

NOTE: For those unfamiliar with this condition, beriberi is a severe thiamin deficiency that impairs the nerves and heart. Symptoms of wet beriberi include shortness of breath, a rapid heart rate, and swollen lower legs. Symptoms of dry beriberi include decreased muscle function, tingling or loss of feeling in the feet and hands, mental confusion, difficulty speaking, vomiting, involuntary eye movement, and paralysis. Beriberi was a very common disease amongst Canadian and Allied POWs of the Imperial Japanese Army.

[Frame 19] Medical Care



NOTE: This frame requires clicking once to make the items appear on the screen.

[Click1] As heard in the testimony by Gerry Gerard, there were few medical supplies in the POW camps and few medical services provided. According to all of the collected testimonies of POWs, only the most severe medical cases would be treated by camp doctors working with very limited supplies. Gerry gave the example of being operated on without anesthesia, a situation that has been reported by other survivors. Thus, despite the Geneva Convention requiring that POWs have access to medical care, this was rarely the case.

[Frame 20] Slave Labor for Japanese Corporations & Military



NOTE: This frame requires clicking once to make the items appear on the screen.

Many of the POWs in Hong Kong were used as slave labor for the Japanese military and Japanese corporations. **[Clicks 1]** Canadian POWs of the Hong Kong POW camps reported working 12-hour days, 6-7 days per week. They did hard labor, often in hazardous conditions, and despite not having adequate food and appropriate clothing. For those Canadian POWs who were transported by hell ships to Japan, they labored in work sites like coal mines, shipyards, etc. owned by Japanese corporations. At all of the sites, whether in Hong Kong or elsewhere, surviving POWs have reported witnessing or being victim to physical abuse while doing hard labour. The use of the POWs for slave labor and the conditions of their labor were thus in violation of the Geneva Convention.

[Frame 21] The Beating, Murder and Torture of POWs



Canadian POWs from the Hong Kong POW camps have reported experiencing or witnessing beatings and torture, or witnessing the murder of other prisoners. The artist of this drawing is Leo Rawlings, a British POW captured in Singapore who personally suffered or witnessed these punishments for minor offences.

[Frame 22] Lifelong Effects on Canadian POW Survivors

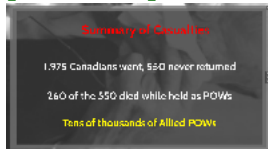


NOTE: This frame requires clicking once to make the categories appear on the screen.

The poor, unhygienic conditions of the POW camps, chronic malnutrition, a lack of medical care, and the psychological and physical abuse have had both short- and long-term effects on the POWs. Some of the long-term effects have included:

- **[Click 1]** 30 percent of Hong Kong vets suffer from deteriorating eyesight and blindness
- 46 percent have psychological problems, from anxiety-caused sleep disturbances to psychosis
- 50 percent have gastrointestinal illness
- 50 percent have oral and dental ailments.

[Frame 23] Summary of Casualties of the Canadian Forces in Hong Kong



NOTE: This frame requires clicking one-by-one to make the facts appear on the screen.

Here are some basic facts and figures to summarize the section on the POW camps in Hong Kong and lead into the next section on other POW camps/sites in Asia during the war:

- **[Click 1]** Out of the 1,975 Canadian soldiers that went to Hong Kong, approximately 550 of them never returned due to death on the battlefield or while held as prisoners of war
- **[Click 2]** Of those 550, 267 of them died while held as POWs by the Imperial Japanese Army
- Some of those 267 who died as POWs were in Hong Kong at the time of their deaths. Others had been transported on the “Hell Ships” to other POW camps/work sites in Japan
- **[Click 3]** Including the Canadian POWs, nearly 140,000 POWs of Western allies were held under horrible conditions and used as slave labour by the Imperial Japanese Army. Like the Canadian POWs, they either labored locally or were transported by “Hell Ships” to Japan, Taiwan, Thailand, Burma, China, etc., wherever slave labors were needed by the Japanese military and corporations

Section E: Activity – Investigating the Treatment of Allied POWs by the Imperial Japanese Army

NOTE: It is recommended that Section E take 25 minutes.

[Frame 24] Activity Break – Comparative Investigation of Japanese POW Camps and Work Sites



In order to determine whether the violations of the Geneva Convention—and thus war crimes—that occurred in the POW camps in Hong Kong were isolated incidences or part of a more systematic treatment of POWs by the Imperial Japanese Army, students will now participate in an activity that has them investigating other Japanese POW camps/work sites for Allied Forces around Asia during the war. Students will have the opportunity to learn in small groups and from other groups about a few exemplary incidences of war crimes related to the treatment of POWs by the Imperial Japanese Army. Through a comparative analysis of the violations of the Geneva Convention that occurred at each of these camps/work sites, the systematic and intentional abuse of Allied POWs will become evident.

ACTIVITY PROCESS

- Divide the students into five small groups and assign each group one of the POW camp/work site packages:
 - The “Hell Ships”
 - Fukuoka Branch Camp No. 26 (i.e. Keisen No. 26) on the Kyushu Island of Japan
 - The Bataan Death March on the Luzon Island of the Philippines
 - Thailand-Burma “Death Railway”
 - Sandakan Camp and Death Marches in North Borneo (now part of Malaysia)
- Instruct students that they are to investigate their POW camp/work site for instances of violations of the Geneva Convention related to the treatment of prisoners of war.
- Allow 10 minutes for the students to read through the backgrounds and testimonies in their packages and analyze any maps/photos/sketches/etc. that are also included. It is recommended that students take turns reading aloud while the others in their group follow along.
- Once the 10 minutes is up, each of the groups would have 3-4 minutes to present to the rest of the class on:
 - Basic background of their POW camp/work site
 - In what ways that conditions at their POW camp/work site violated the Geneva Convention on the Treatment of Prisoners of War? What impacts the students most?
 - Evidence at their camp site of clear intention to harm or to violate Convention (versus what could be perceived as unavoidable circumstances)

NOTE: The following five frames are to be used as backgrounds while the respective group presents on each of these POW camps/sites.

If time is limited, then priority of presentation can be given to the groups working on “Hell Ships” and “Fukuoka Branch Camp No. 26. The Fukuoka Camp topic is an appropriate lead to the following Section: Postwar Closure?”

[Frame 25] The “Hell Ships”



[Frame 26] Fukuoka Branch Camp, Keisen No. 26 in Japan



[Frame 27] The Bataan Death March in the Philippines



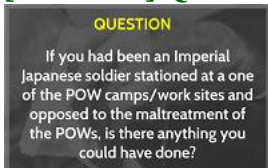
[Frame 28] Sandakan Camp & Death Marches in North Borneo



[Frame 29] The Thailand-Burma “Death Railway”



[Frame 30] Question – What Would You Have Done?



QUESTION FOR STUDENTS

If you had been an Imperial Japanese soldier stationed at a one of the POW camps/work sites and opposed to the maltreatment of the POWs, is there anything you could have done? Why or why not?

Students will have different answers, but challenge them to consider what options the Japanese soldiers who did not agree with the maltreatment of the POWs would have had. They should consider the role of peer pressure, the threat of punishment, etc. The purpose of this question is both to have students reflect on what they can do when witnessing injustice and to help students understand the ways that even Japanese soldiers were victims of Imperial Japan’s militarism.

[Frame 31] Some Statistics about POW Camps



NOTE: This frame requires clicking once to make the statistics appear on the screen.

After the above discussion, contribute the following facts as further evidence of the systematic maltreatment of POWs by the Imperial Japanese Army:

- **[Click 1]** The Imperial Japanese Army ran a total of around 130 major POW camps within Japan and over 500 POW and civilian concentration camps outside Japan proper.
- More than 140,000 Western Allied POWs plus another 180,000 Asian troops were captured by Japan. The Asian troops were mainly Filipinos with the Americans, Indians and Chinese with the British, and Indonesians with the Dutch.
- 130,000 Western Allied civilians were interned in Japanese occupied territories, including 42,000 women and 40,000 children. They were held in very harsh living conditions. Brutality by the guards was common and death rates were high.
- 27% of Western Allied POWs held by the Imperial Japanese Army died in captivity, comparing with 4% of Western Allied POWs held by Nazi Germany.
- There was concrete evidence collected by a US Army war crimes investigation team that from April 1942 to August 1945, orders were given by Tokyo command headquarters authorizing POW camp commanders to kill all prisoners if necessary. There was also documented instruction dated August 20th, 1945 for the guards to flee capture by the Allied Forces to avoid prosecution for the maltreatment of POWs

Section F: Post-War: Closure?

NOTE: It is recommended that Section F take 40 minutes.

[Frame 32] Closure?



NOTE: This frame requires clicking once to make the question mark appear on the screen.

The question for the rest of the presentation is: Was there closure for the surviving POWs following their liberation?

[Frame 33] The End of the Asia-Pacific War



NOTE: Dates are given according to the time zones in which the events occurred.

The following are key dates related to the end of the Asia-Pacific War:

- May 8, 1945 [Germany surrenders](#)
- July 26, 1945 Potsdam Declaration defining terms for Japan's surrender issued by US, UK and China

- August 6, 1945 US drops atomic bomb on Hiroshima
- August 8, 1945 USSR declares war on Japan
- August 9, 1945 US drops atomic bomb on Nagasaki
- August 15, 1945 Japan's surrender

Following the end of the war, POWs were liberated and repatriated to their respective countries.

[Frame 34] Trials for War Crimes Related to the Maltreatment of POWs



Following the end of the Asia-Pacific War, war crimes trials were set up and carried out by the Allied Forces in Japan and other Asian countries to try Imperial Japan for war crimes. Many of these trials prosecuted and convicted members of the Imperial Japanese Army for crimes related to the maltreatment of POWs. By 1951 all war crime trials by Allies had ended.

[Frame 35] Trials for War Crimes Related to the Maltreatment of POWs (continued)



Unlike in postwar Germany, postwar Japanese courts have not tried any war criminals of the Asia-Pacific War. Postwar Germany has continued to go after Nazi war criminals and German courts have held over 900 trials against Nazi war criminals. Besides seeking justice, such trials also help to fight denials and distortions of the Nazi Holocaust.

[Frame 36] KISHI Nobusuke – Class A War Crime Suspect

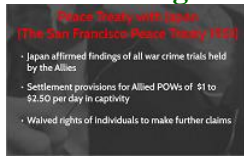


As head of the Munitions Ministry of TOJO's wartime cabinet, KISHI Nobusuke was responsible for armament production and had overseen the slave laboring of hundreds of thousands of Korean and Chinese forced laborers and Allied POWs. He was a suspected Class A war criminal, imprisoned and later released in 1948 due to abrupt ending of the Tokyo Tribunal.

With the full lifting of purging after Japan became independent again in 1952, KISHI quickly was involved in Japan's postwar leadership. He went on to become the Prime Minister of Japan from 1957-1958, and again in 1960. He was also the first Prime Minister of Japan invited to visit Canada. The current Prime Minister of Japan ABE Shinzo is his grandson.

Many wartime leaders connected to grave war crimes escaped purging and were allowed to take up public and private sector leadership positions in postwar Japan.

[Frame 37] The 1951 San Francisco Peace Treaty with Japan and Relevant Implications for Surviving POWs



The Treaty of Peace with Japan (commonly known as the San Francisco Peace Treaty) was signed by Japan and the Allied Powers on September 8, 1951 and went into effect in 1952. The treaty officially ended WWII, affirmed the findings of all the war crime trials, and reinstated Japan's sovereignty, stipulating a formal end to Japan's position as an imperial power and to its continued commitment to democratization and demilitarization. Due to Cold War politics, the Chinese governments of Mainland China and Taiwan, and the North and South Korean governments were not invited to participate in the treaty, even though Korea and China are the two countries that were victimized most during the war.

The treaty included settlement provisions for the Allied POWs. Under the treaty, each POW was paid small lump-sum compensation in the amount of \$1 to \$2.50 per day for time spent in captivity. Some governments added additional payment to the POWs, such as Canada, which added in another \$0.50 per day. The treaty also waived the rights of individuals to make further claims.

It's important for students to understand that those affected, including the surviving POWs, had no input into this treaty.

[Frame 38] Lawsuits by Allied POWs Against Japanese Government & Corporations



For surviving POWs, the terms of the treaty were unjust and they do not feel they received adequate compensation for the labor they performed and the suffering they endured while in captivity, especially when they compare Japan's inactions to the actions adopted by Germany. In 2000 the German parliament passed a law setting up a \$5 billion claim fund to pay Nazi Holocaust slave labor victims. The German parliament also formally apologized to slave labor victims.

Since the 1990s, some of the former POWs from the United States, Britain, Canada and the Netherlands have brought forth lawsuits against the government of Japan and Japanese corporations which they had slave labored for in courts in both the United States and Japan for compensation. However, both the US and the Japanese courts dismissed the lawsuits for the following reasons:

- The San Francisco Peace Treaty settled issues of compensation and waived rights to individual claims
- Both in the US and Japan, the statute of limitations on claims had expired

[Frame 39] Remedial Actions by Individual Governments



Subsequently, starting from the late nineties, individual governments convinced that Japan would not pay compensation, committed to using domestic funds to provide money to the surviving veterans and spouses of POWs for the slave labor they performed and for the suffering they endured while in the POW camps.

- The UK, the Netherlands, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Norway, Singapore and the Isle of Man have used domestic funds to compensate former POWs held by Japan.
- The US has not offered any further compensation due to adamant opposition from the executive branch.
- In 1998, the Canadian government offered C\$24,000 to each of the 350 Canadian Hong Kong veterans and 400 widows who were still alive. Veterans were satisfied with the amount but angry that it came from Canadian government instead of Japan.

[Frame 40] Statements of remorse and apology. Lacking meaningful actions in support



The survivors are also angry that the Japanese government has never officially offered a meaningful apology that fully acknowledges their suffering. Several times since the end of WWII, Japanese government officials have made statements that they regarded as an apology but that other nations did not accept as full, direct, and unambiguous apologies.

On August 15, 1995, Japanese Prime Minister MURAYAMA Tomiichi made the following statement, “During a certain period in the not too distant past, Japan, following a mistaken national policy, advanced along the road to war, only to ensnare the Japanese people in a fateful crisis, and through its colonial rule and aggression caused tremendous damage and suffering to the people of many countries, particularly to those of Asian nations.” He went on to say, “In the hope that no such mistake be made in the future, I regard, in a spirit of humility, these irrefutable facts of history, and express here once again my feelings of deep remorse and state my heartfelt apology.” However, this statement was not seen as adequate by various victims' groups because, they said, it was not endorsed by the Japanese parliament. Most important is that such statements are not backed up by actions of remorse and reconciliation; instead they are often soon after followed by actions and statements of denial by other top Japanese officials and politicians.

As related specifically to the Allied POWs, in December 2011 Japan’s parliamentary vice-minister of foreign affairs, KATO Toshiyuki, apologized to the few Canadian Hong Kong veterans invited to Tokyo for the maltreatment they endured in the POW camps, the apology was made behind closed doors and was not followed by any meaningful action or public acknowledgment. While the Canadian government officially accepted the apology, many Canadian Hong Kong veterans had different reactions.

[Frame 41] What the “Apology” Means to the Canadian Hong Kong Veterans (3 min.)



[Source: Clip from Canada ALPHA interview with HKVCA First Vice-President Murray Doull, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N5S_ExuYUFU&index=2&list=PLtwnh8f5tyJ03XM9n8dxVJ7RtXaLoz2QF]

In this video clip, Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association’s First Vice-President Murray Doull explains the reasons why many of the Canadian Hong Kong veterans do not accept Kato’s apology.

[Frame 42] Government Policies and Denials



In addition to not offering a sincere, transparent and meaningful apology, the Japanese government has even acted in ways that support those who deny the war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by Imperial Japanese Army. Such actions include:

- The government not condemning or explicitly refuting denials made by Japanese corporations about their use of slave labor during the war
- The Ministry of Education has not included the maltreatment and exploitation of prisoners of war in its educational materials for Japanese students
- Despite repeated protests from Asian neighbours, Japanese government officials, including some Prime Ministers like Abe, Koizumi, etc. continue to visit and pay tribute at the Yasukuni Shrine. The Shrine is symbolic of State Shintoism which espoused militarism of past Japan. Moreover, convicted wartime leaders (Class A war criminals) as well as convicted Class B and C war criminals are also enshrined in Yasukuni Shrine.

[Frame 43] The Meaning of Reconciliation



The following quote, included in the frame, is offered as a point of reflection for students on the meaning of justice for surviving POWs:

“I know that for many it is not really money that matters. What they want is for their suffering to be recognized as suffering and for the injustice done to them to be named injustice. I pay tribute to all those who were subjected to slave labor under German rule and, in the name of the German people, beg forgiveness. We will not forget their suffering.” – German President Johannes Rau, 2000

[Frame 44] Activity Break – Redress & Reconciliation

ACTIVITY

**Redress
and Reconciliation**

Why is it in Japan's best interest to reconcile with former POWs and their surviving family members?

Write a short letter to the Japanese government making your argument.

The purpose of this activity is to get students to synthesize what they have learned into a persuasive argument for Japan's need to reconcile with the living POWs and surviving family members with this chapter of history.

ACTIVITY PROCESS

- Have the students get back into their small groups
- Each group should be given a writing utensil and paper
- Give the students 5 minutes to write a short letter to the Japanese government containing two persuasive arguments as to why it is in Japan's interest to reconcile with living POWs and surviving family members
- After the 5 minutes are up, have each group read their letter to the rest of the class

NOTE: *This activity should take no more than 10 minutes.*

[Frame 45] BC ALPHA Resources

www.alpha-canada.org

www.facebook.com/Canada.alpha

BC ALPHA's [website](#) provides extensive resources on this issue and other human rights issues related to the Asia-Pacific War. Our [Facebook page](#) also provides up-to-date news about the redress movements.

[Frame 46] Home Screen

