



## Intercultural Consulting Group

### **Australia's forgotten soldiers return to Hiroshima.**

*8 soldiers in the twilight of their lives will return to Japan in August this year to remember an important overlooked time in their lives before it is forgotten to history forever.*

On the 6th August 1945 the world was introduced to the horror of atomic weapons with the dropping of an atomic bomb on the city of Hiroshima. Two days later another bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. Amidst the horrors of death and destruction, some 16 000 Australian soldiers were tasked to take part in the occupation of the Japanese mainland as the British Commonwealth Occupation Forces. Unaware of what lay before them, they arrived in Kure city in Hiroshima prefecture in early 1946 to begin, what was to become a life changing series of events and activities that none would forget. They were unsure what they were to face. Were the Japanese people willing to accept occupation? Would they face aggression and possible death? How would they disarm the nation to allow rebuilding and the creation of a democratic society. The BCOF force was tasked with disarming, destroying weapons and rebuilding a devastated nation facing hunger, homelessness and an uncertain future. They were not told of the dangers of the effects of radiation nor the dangers of drinking the water, eating the food or being exposed to the many effects of Hiroshima and the surrounding areas. They were placed into an environment that was not considered active military service and the Australian public were told only of the unsavoury behaviour of some of this Occupation Force. It by no means represented the overall attitude nor activities of the force. Some reports even portrayed the force as having a holiday paid by the Australian Government. Those first important months of occupation were filled with dangers akin to active service in more ways than could be imagined. It was only later that life began to take shape as what would be considered normal.

On August 3rd 2013, eight of the some approximately 1800 surviving BCOF soldiers will travel to Hiroshima to take part in what will probably be one of their final remembrances of those days 66 years ago. They have fought for recognition of their service and recognition by the Australian nation for the role that they played. 82 Australian soldiers died while on service while many more have died of a range of cancers documented by medical authorities. They have even had to produce their own medal of service. They are, as some have called "The Forgotten Force" who embarked on dangerous active service and forged the relationship between Australia and Japan that is so important today.

The "aussie" boys will revisit their old bases in Kure and Hiroshima and accept an invitation from the Mayor of Hiroshima to attend the Hiroshima Day ceremonies.

They will also meet Hiroshima survivor Keijiro Matsushima to share their memories. In Yokohama they will pay tribute to those who died while on service in Japan.

The sad reality is that in a few years there will be no more BCOF nor Hiroshima survivors. This is their final opportunity to try and get recognition and justice for the incredible bravery overlooked by so many from their very own country.

Why have successive Governments failed to recognise their service in Japan?

*The group is being taken to Japan by **Intercultural Consulting Group**, an educational consultancy promoting Peace and Cultural opportunities and who recently presented a special exhibition at Brisbane Square library and in August in co-operation with the Australian Red Cross will exhibit **Memories of Hiroshima and Nagasaki - a quest for Peace** at the High Court of Australia in Canberra highlighting atrocities of Nuclear weapons and the BCOF soldiers role through the story of soldier Dan Crane. Dan's daughter Bernadette will retrace her father's steps in Japan this August.*

Follow their journey at

[www.bcofremembered.com](http://www.bcofremembered.com)

[www.memoriesofhiroshima.com](http://www.memoriesofhiroshima.com)

Find out more about Intercultural Consulting Group

[www.interculturalconsultinggroup.com](http://www.interculturalconsultinggroup.com)

For further information contact

Michael Fiechtner

0417710120

[interccg@bigpond.com](mailto:interccg@bigpond.com)



