



A handover of individual record cards and other related materials concerning former Australian Prisoners of War (POW) to the Australian government

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Embassy of Japan, Australia

1. On the 19 of March, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan formally handed over individual record cards and other related materials concerning former Australian Prisoners of War (POW) to the Australian government.
2. A similar handover of personal detail cards took place between Japan and the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Republic of China during the 1950s, however at the time Australia stated that it did not intend to accept the cards. Thereafter, a Japanese NGO approached the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in November of 2010, pointing out that the cards themselves would be of value not only to the former Prisoners of War themselves, but also to their families, as the cards have historical value through their depiction of life at the time. As such, the NGO expressed a wish for the cards to be handed over to Australia.
3. Based on this request, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, via negotiation with the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, reached an agreement to hand over the cards in January, 2011. In March of 2011, on the occasion of a visit by former Australian Prisoners of War to Japan as part of a grassroots exchange program between Japan and Australia, "Japanese/POW Friendship Program", the then Foreign Minister Maehara announced that preparations began for the handover of the cards and related materials to Australia.
4. It is hoped that this exchange of individual record cards and related materials will serve as a fitting opportunity to further promote the amiable relations between Japan and Australia.

Note: "Individual record cards" or "Personal detail cards" refers to cards that recorded the personal details of the prisoner of war concerned. They are considered to be important historical records as they state not only who the POW was, but provide information to the families of the POW on when and where their family member was incarcerated. (4,497 Prisoner of War individual record cards and 16 related items have been handed over by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan to the Australian government.)