

APHAFIC winter meeting on January 22, 2011

APHAFIC held its 2011 winter meeting at the San Diego City Library, Carmel Valley Branch at 3919 Townsgate Dr., San Diego, CA at 10:30am to 12:30pm. After Professor Tenney's talk, he autographed his book 'My hitch in hell' on the Bataan death march.

A total of 30 people attended. This meeting featured an invited talk by professor Tenney, past national commander of American Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor, on "After 65 Years Why Do We Still Need an Apology from the Japanese?"

Professor started his talk by stating that people do not understand why we keep asking for apology from Japan. They would say why not go on and forget the past. Then he talked about his trip to Japan in September 2010: Japanese foreign minister, Mr. Katsuya Okada, apologized for the inhuman treatment toward the POWs. However Japanese companies that used POWs as slave laborers have not done so. During WWII, 26 thousand American troops were captured and 12 thousand at the Bataan. In Asia, 40% POW died while in Europe, only 1.5% died.

In May 2009, Mr. Fujisaki, Japanese ambassador, accepted the invitation of the last meeting of Forum commander of Bataan association- Bataan survivors meeting in Antonia, Texas and apologized to 500 POW and their families. In that meeting, half of the attendees booed and half applauded and this event was not reported in any Japanese newspaper. At the 64th and final reunion of Bataan Death March survivors in San Antonio, Texas, the Japanese ambassador to the United States apologized to an assembly of survivors for Imperial Japan's treatment of Allied prisoners of war, on behalf of the Japanese government.

In Nov 11, 2009, professor Tenney met with Mr. Ichiro Fujisaki, in Washington D.C. and he asked professor Tenney what he wants. Tenney questioned why Japanese government invited POW from Europe to Japan and not include POW of US. Mrs. Fujisaki was moved by listening to Tenney's account of Bataan death march and kissed Tenney good bye.

In late 2010, as part of the Japanese-American POW friendship program, US state department informed Lester Tenney about the trip but the first 10 ex POW refused. Six ex-POW and their family members accepted the invitation and on Sept 11, 2010 the group took first class flight to Japan and met with US ambassador Rose, speaker from Japanese diet and foreign affair officers. On September 13, 2010, Japanese Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada, at Okada's office in Tokyo Monday, Sept. 13, 2010 received Lester Tenney and other US ex-POWs. Okada apologized to the group of former prisoners who were invited by the Japanese government.

Now, after 65 years, why do we still ask Japanese to apologize? Lester Tenney said he welcomed the government's apology but still seeks recognition from the private companies that "used and abused" prisoners in their mines and factories, often under brutal conditions. "At no time have we gotten from these private companies just a letter," Tenney said. "These private companies have kept quiet for 65 years. It is an insult, because by their keeping quiet they are hoping we will die off."

Dr. Lester Tenney took the possible high-speed rail as an example. He wrote to California governor Jerry Brown in January, 2011, regarding the possible high-speed rail contracts and asked that governor would insist that Japanese companies acknowledge their role in violating the human rights of American citizens. These Japanese companies should come clean about their wartime misuse and abuse of American POWs by apologizing and creating an educational fund to preserve the history of us American veterans.



Professor Lester Tenney talked at APHAFIC winter meeting



Professor Lester Tenney with APHAFIC board members and some attendees

