



Newsletter Issue 14, January 2012

Our 500th Memorial!



On October 7, 1943, Japanese troops massacred 98 American civilian contractors that had been working on Wake Island prior its capture by the Japanese in December 1941. After being captured, the men had been POWs doing forced labor on the island for almost two years. One man escaped the slaughter, and carved a desperate message into a coral rock at the edge of the island: 98 US POW 5-10-43. He was quickly recaptured and beheaded. After the war, the



remains of the murdered Americans were exhumed and moved to the National Cemetery of the Pacific in Hawaii. Today the coral rock, with the still visible inscription, contains a plaque commemorating the incident. Next to the rock is a second plaque listing the 98 names. The Japanese commander was sentenced to death for this and other war crimes.

Featured Isolated Burial: B-17 Man-O-War crew

On 30 July 1943, the B-17 *Man-O-War* was shot down by German fighters over the town of Opijnen in The Netherlands. The plane was from the 91st Bomb Group (Heavy), returning to Bassingbourn in the UK after successfully bombing Kassel, Germany. The crew, pictured below, was on its first mission. Of the crew of ten, two died in the aircraft, six died as German troops on the ground shot at their descending parachutes, and two were immediately captured by German ground forces. The townspeople buried the fallen aviators in their churchyard. After the war, the cemetery they had created for the crew became a focus for community life for decades. The townspeople corresponded regularly with the families of the crew, who agreed to leave the remains of their fallen loved ones in the care of the town, in this unique small cemetery. The memory of these brave US aviators lives on here.



photo contributed by John Stecco

Update on American War Memorials Overseas

We are proud to have entered the 500th memorial in our database (see above). While this is still only a fraction of the total memorials that we know about, we have been making steady progress in database entry in recent months, thanks in great part to our current intern, John Steckroth. John is from Deerborn, Michigan, and is taking a year off from his studies to spend some time in Europe. His patient and diligent research is key to accurately recording our monuments.

Please consider a donation to help us continue our important work