

The Museum at Mukden

After the war, the barracks were converted into poor quality housing and remained so for 65 years. In 2002, Ao Wang went to Shenyang to see what he could find out about the old camp. There he met some of the local people who also wanted to preserve the grounds. In 2003 he took 3 former POWs and a descendant with him. The 2004 trip was more for Chinese history buffs and the 2005 trip took one POW and his family. During each of these visits, they met with city and provincial government representatives, people from the American Consulate, local and international news outlets, as well as the local preservationists who had been working from their end to preserve the camp. Ao donated over 3000 pages of documents from the American National Archives to show the wealth of information available there.

Museum .1 appeared almost magically for the 2005 trip. It was well laid out, had many displays, and no artifacts. Museum .2 was available for the 2007 trip with expanded displays, larger space, and some artifacts. The 9 POWs, one liberator, and many others who came on or supported that trip brought a wealth of information, drawings, stories, photos, newspaper articles, etc., which Museum .3 will use. The latest enlargement is due to open fall 2009 with research space and many more displays and is possible because the Chinese Government has recently put some \$7 million US into the Museum to remind the Chinese people that they were not the only people in China to be harmed by the Imperial Japanese Army, and to honor Chinese American friendships. Materials in the research center are to be duplicated in Chinese, Japanese, and English so the world can learn from the senseless brutality experienced there.

We hope future generations will use the information to be found at Mukden as a tool for peace.



Drawing of future plans for the Museum at Mukden

Building 1, in the lower left, is the original barracks 1 (of 3) with the attached wash house. The upstairs of this building has been restored to look like the original bunk area.

Building 4, the square building in the upper center, is a bathhouse built after the war which will be filled with “how we got here” displays. Building 2, in the upper right, is the original Japanese barracks which will house Japanese artifacts. Between them, number 3, is the original smokestack and water tower. The water was stored in a tall brick building near the smokestack where it could be heated to provide hot water and keep it flowing in the winter.