

THE REMARKABLE WW2 RAF CATERPILLAR CLUB AND ESCAPERS GROUP TO A BRITISH/JAPANESE AIR GUNNER OF 83 SQUADRON WHO FOUNDED THE JUDO AND BOXING SCHOOL AT STALAG 383, BAVARIA, ESCAPING NO LESS THAN 3 TIMES 1942-44, ONCE DISGUISED A JAPANESE WORKER EACH TIME ONLY RECAPTURED AFTER SEVERAL DAYS ON THE RUN. POST WAR HE BECAME A RENOWNED JUDO EXPERT, AMONG OTHERS, TRAINING THE ROYAL MARINES, HE CAPTAINED THE BRITISH JUDO TEAM DURING THE 1950S AND 1960S.



1939-45 Star, Air Crew Europe Star, 1939-45 War Medal, all unnamed as issued and Caterpillar Badge 'Sgt. P. Sekine'

Percival 'Percy' Yasushi Sekine was born in London on 20 February 1920 of a British Mother and Japanese father, his father working for The Mitsui Bank in London. Although Percy became a champion boxer at his school near Kings Cross, his father was keen for him to learn the Japanese art of judo and by the age of 19 he was already a Black Belt. However with the outbreak of the war, he volunteered for service with the Royal Air Force on 7 August 1940 (No.1375192) and trained as a wireless operator/air gunner.

Posted to 83 Squadron, which was equipped with Handley Page Hampden's. On the 10 of January 1942, the Squadron operated for the last time in Hampden aircraft before converting to Avro Manchester's, when 6 crews attacked Wilhelmshaven. From that attack Sgt Fletcher, flying AE133 failed to return, having been shot down at Kapen Sgt Fletcher and the Observer, Fox were killed, Sgts Sekine and Holme taken prisoner.



Percy Sekine Remembered the event:-

"We took off from Scampton around 17.00 Hrs on the 10th of January 1942, the target Wilhelmshaven. Over Germany, approaching the target, either through FLAK or a mechanical failure, the port engine packed up and with a full bomb load we started to loose height. The port engine also powered the generator so we could not drop the bombs which we had to do to stand a chance of getting back. To ditch in the sea in January '42 was certain death, and Martin Fletcher, our pilot, told me to try and release the bombs manually, but it was no good; we threw overboard everything of weight, guns, cylinders etc.

Then Martin turned the aircraft inland, (we had been heading out to sea) and told us to bale out. I jumped at under 3,000 feet, Harold followed. The last I heard before that was Leonard Fox (second pilot) asking and helping Martin to control the rudder pedals.

Less than a minute after I jumped, they crashed, lighting up the sky with the explosion, as I was still on the way down. Leonard Fox and Martin Fletcher are buried in Sage, a cemetery on the way to Wilhelmshaven. I owe my life to Martin, a fine brave Rhodesian.

I was captured about 5 hours later, the usual interrogation and first of many Stalags was VIIA Mooseburg, near Munich. I escaped from there in July 1942 by climbing the wire between two sentry boxes, aided by pouring rain which deadened sound and caused the sentry to shelter as I went over. I was free for seven days and after several 'episodes' was caught outside Innsbruck."

Transferred to Stalag 383 in Bavaria on 15 September 1942, he made two more escape attempts, one by tunnel under the wire in March 1943, the next in November 1943 whilst on a working party (dressed as a Japanese). Sekine would write, "I guess the only other way would be by flying!"



Of the above account, another commentator would write:

"Percy's account is remarkable, not so much for what he says, as for what he omits! One of the 'episodes' he refers to was the occasion when, in normal RAF battledress uniform, he joined the queue at a mobile German kitchen and enjoyed a mug of soup before continuing on his way- only Percy would have tried and got away with it! Another was when he matched in broad daylight through the town of Bad Tolz at the head of German soldiers."

His Ex-PoW Report states:

1 Escaped from VIIA by climbing the outer wire, recaptured at Garmisch Escaped 1.7.42 captured 7.7.42 By Military Police – No Companions,

2 From 383 By Tunnel Recaptured at Resenburg Near Ingolstadt, unable to carry on through sickness. My Companion W?O T Baronowski carried on but caught 5 days later.

3 From 383 off Fatigue party, Captured Resenburg

Whilst a Prisoner of War at Stalag 383, Sekine organised a judo, boxing and wrestling club; 'The Four Posts Club', negotiating with the guards for canvas and sacking to make a mat and

jackets. He was soon running regular training sessions and even the occasional tournament; but his wartime Judo career was brought to an end when he and a number of other troublesome prisoners were transferred to another camp on 30 July 1944, in Sekine's case, Stalag Luft 7 in Silesia. He would be transferred to Stalag Luft IIIa in Lucicennwalde on 8 March 1945 and was finally liberated from captivity on 5 May 1945.



ORIGINAL JUDO CLUB BADGE MADE IN STALAG 383

POST WAR

After the war Percy Sekine became a renowned judo expert, training comedian Tommy Cooper and race car legend Stirling Moss as well as Royal Marines at his Hammersmith

judoka. He weighed only 9.5st but was so proficient he captained the British judo team during the 1950s and 1960s. He died aged 90 on 15 October 2010.



JUDO BLACK BELT MADE FROM CANVAS WHILE IN STALAG 383

More details of this remarkable man's life can be found here:

http://www.kanosociety.org/membership/percy_sekine.htm



PERCY IN ACTION STALAG 383

Sold with the following original WW2 items:

- a) Air Gunners Brevet
- b) Brass Wireless Operators Sleeve Badge
- c) RAF Cap Badge
- d) Remarkable and original Judo Black Belt made from Canvas while in Stalag 383. As can be seen, the thick rough canvas has been painted or dyed black but the white base colour threads are beginning to show through.

- e) Remarkable and original Judo Club Badge made in Stalag 383. As with the belt, this amazing POW artefact has been hand sewn onto a piece of canvas.
- f) An original photograph (corner ripped) of Sekine in the boxing ring.
- g) Also various non WW2 Judo Badges and a copy photograph of Sekine in later years



Copy paperwork consists of; Ex Pow Report, Copy Red Cross Letter. Copy annotated photographs of Sgt Sekine with Crew, in Flying Kit and his Judo Group in the PoW Camp. Also a copy of 'The Long Road' by Oliver Clutton-Brock in which Sekine is mentioned and quoted a number of times. His Tunic, a small amount of Paperwork and Photographs and Judo memorabilia were sold in auction in 2022 (pics of these lots with research)

Sekine's papers relating to his WW2 service, logbook, photos etc are held in the Imperial War Museum collection:

<https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/1030021738>

A most interesting WW2 RAF POW group to a remarkable man