

Paying a Visit to the Memorials of the Japanese War Dead in Malta

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Introduction

This paper deals with the Japanese Naval Memorial which is located at the Kalkara Naval Cemetery in Malta. It seeks to understand why Japanese coming to Malta are motivated to pay a visit to such a site, which has a symbiotic relationship with the memory of the First World War. This memorial is actually dedicated to the 68 war-dead, who belonged to His Imperial Japanese Majesty's 2nd Detached Squadron which operated from Malta in 1917 and 1918. The squadron played an important role in protecting the Allied convoys in the Mediterranean.

Cooperation between the Imperial Japanese Navy and the British Royal Navy in the Mediterranean was set in motion by the Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1902, which promised mutual aid if a third party attacked either country. By 1917 Japan entered the war as England's ally, at a time when German and Austrian submarines in the Mediterranean sank a number of Allied vessels, which transported both soldiers and wartime supplies to the Western Front. Their naval strategy was intended to gain a stronghold on Britain which was dependent on the prowess of her fleet in the region and beyond. In the face of the success of the submarine operations of the Central Powers, the Japanese Navy based in Malta started to provide escorts for conveying troops from Egypt to France. By the end of the War, they had escorted nearly 800 transports, which carried 700,000 Allied soldiers to the European front, facing the on-going danger of being torpedoed by the Central Power's U-boats.¹

Present-day Japanese come all the way to visit the cemetery of the Japanese war dead, which is located in the small village of Kalkara in Malta – a place which contains no other tourist attraction other than this. The centennial anniversary of the Japanese operations in the Mediterranean might further draw much more Japanese attention to the naval operations which rescued 7,075 people from indiscriminate submarine attacks.² One of the reasons why

¹ Mizokami, Kyle, 'Japan's baptism of fire: World War I put country on a collision course with West First global conflict had massive political, economic, social ramifications on ambitious East Asian nation,' *Special to the Japan Times* 26 July, 2014.

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2014/07/26/national/history/japans-baptism-of-fire/#.XASkthMzZN0>

² Naito, Yasuo, 'Chichukai de Okkotta Koto wo Wasurenai de' Yomigaeru Nihon Kantai eno Hyouka Chichukai no

contemporary Japanese people visit the Kalkara cemetery is that they are conscious of the high value which international society puts on the role played by the Japanese Navy. It is indeed one of the few examples that lead contemporary Japanese people to be proud of their ancestors who committed to humanitarian operations at war time. By visiting this shrine for the Japanese who died on their call of duty, contemporary Japanese confirm the memory of ancestors who carried out humanitarian duties during war, when most people in the West today immediately associate the Japanese only with the tragic and reckless activities done during the WWII. This encourages their visit to the Kalkara cemetery.

Among the operations conducted by the Japanese 2nd Detached Squadron – which showed their humanitarian spirit – was that connected with the destroyer *Sakaki* – this being one of the Japanese warships operating in the Mediterranean. The *Sakaki* had participated in the dramatic rescue of 3,000 troops from the torpedoed *Transylvania*, on 4th May 1917, and was torpedoed by an Austro-Hungarian submarine and lost 59 lives on 10th June 1917. The monument erected at the Kalkara was dedicated to these 68 soldiers who died during and after the operation.³ The Maltese pro-British newspaper, the *Daily Malta Chronicle* of the 19th June 1917,⁴ reported that the Japanese rescue operations from the torpedoed *Transylvania*:

“We regret that 55 Japanese lives lost in the interest of Right versus Might, and the officers and men of [the Japanese destroyer] *Sakaki* must know that their bravery will be echoed round and round the world, their effort to be admired of millions of civilized peoples...”

The Japanese operations in the Mediterranean earned international recognition for their contribution to the Allied victory. British leaders, including Winston Churchill, highly praised the Japanese Mediterranean Squadron. So did the governor of Malta, Lord Methuen, who lauded the Japanese Navy for "its splendid work in European waters" and expressed that "God grant our alliance, cemented in blood, may long endure."⁵

Shokoku Malta Daiichiji Sekai Taisen Kaisen 100 Nen, ' *Sankei News*, 3 August, 3 2014.

<https://www.sankei.com/world/news/140803/wor1408030035-n1.html>; Hiram, Youichi, *Daiichiji Sekai Taisen to Nihon Kaigun: Gaiko to Gunji tono Rensetsu* (Tokyo, Keio University Press, 1998), 217.

³ Saxon, Timothy D., 'Anglo-Japanese Naval Cooperation, 1914-1918,' *Naval War College Review*, vol. 53 (1), 2000, 74.

<https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/58822748.pdf>

⁴ *The Daily Malta Chronicle*, 'The World War: Proclamations and Hoarding, Treaties in the Concrete. Grimm's Fairy Tales,' 19 June 1917.

⁵ Howarth, Stephen, *Fighting Ships of the Rising Sun: The Drama of the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1895-1945* (New York, Atheneum, 1983), 130.

However, both the West and Japan have forgotten the contribution of the Japanese Navy in the Mediterranean in favour of the Allied cause. Actually at present many Japanese do not know much about Japanese operations during the WWI, including those in the Mediterranean.⁶ There must be reasons why both Japanese and Western societies have sealed up memories of the role played by Japanese soldiers stationed in Malta. For this reason, this article examines; 1) the causes which brought about such collective forgetting; 2) how Japanese visitors to the Kalkara cemetery attempt to retrieve and reconstruct memories of the Japanese Squadron and; 3) what sort of social circumstances trigger memories of the Japanese naval activities in the Mediterranean with humanitarian characteristics.

Public memory emerges from fundamental issues related to the entire existence of society.⁷ Problems, which exist in Japanese society, stimulate public remembrance of the Japanese operation in the Mediterranean as a humanitarian one. Their practice of retrieving memories of this Japanese operation on the spot seems to be an act which goes beyond the remembering a particular individual, such as one's deceased family member/ancestor.

Since ancient times, people have remembered and understood what occurred in this world, by using buildings, monuments, and theatres and inputting images of the events into these places. They attempted to evoke memories by tracing the images allocated to each place. During the Middle Ages, with the strong influence of Christianity, the main symbolic places became those where religious images were attached to them. By looking at such images, people retrieved their memories in the relationship to the mythological world. When the 'memorising technique' influenced by Scholasticism spread, it led individuals to retrieve memories in similar ways to others, facilitating understanding between persons as they traced memories through shared images and knowledge.⁸ Unlike those in medieval times, contemporary symbolic places are not so much dominated by the religious way of thinking. However, as Maurice Halbwachs⁹ argues, interactions between individuals accumulate in the memory of a community. Memorials and

⁶ Agawa, Hiroyuki, 'Jyo no Jyo 80 nen no Saigetū wo Hete,' the Preface to the book of Kakutaro Kataoka, *Nihon*

Kaigun Chichukai Enseiki: Wakaki Kaigun Shukei Chui no mita Daiichiji Sekai Taisen (Tokyo, Kawade Shobou Shinnsha, 2001), 6; Fujita, Kiyoshi, "Kaijo Jieitai ni Keishou sareta Ichimai no E (2): Chichukai ni okeru Teikoku Kaigun Konkyochi," *Suikou* vol.17 (1&2), 2005, 12.

⁷ Bodnar, John, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1992).

⁸ Carruthers, Mary, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature) (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008), 217-227; Yates, Frances, *The Art of Memory Volume III* (London, Routledge, 1999), 321 -34.

⁹ Halbwachs, Maurice, *On the Collective Memory*, Lewis A. Coser trans., (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1992).

buildings are still symbolic assets of communities and tools for evoking their memories and specific images, which forms shared understandings with others. Collective or public memories have nurtured in such a way and reflected their view of the world.¹⁰

The monument at the Kalkara cemetery is such a place for contemporary Japanese to recollect memories of the Japanese operation at the time of the WWI in the Mediterranean. It seems to act beyond the remembering of a particular individual, such as one's deceased family member. It is actually an attempt to construct shared memories through which people gather a sense of collectivity. His Imperial Japanese Majesty's 2nd Detached Squadron, their legacies, and the monument dedicated to the members who lost their lives during the operation in the Mediterranean become memories, which contemporary Japanese can share to craft "us" as collective.

The shifting interests of the Japanese public's usage of the past, which once forgot, suggests that such informal practices such as retrieving 'the WWI memory' provide the Japanese with a view of the past, which reassures their role in a transnational, or global, network of memories.¹¹ From these perspectives, this article examines how the particular Japanese commemoration site, which was once neglected, catches the attention of the contemporary Japanese. It shows how this unique monument in Malta becomes a symbolic place for retrieving such memories.

The Japanese Operations in the Mediterranean: Sinking into Oblivion

During the First World War, both British and Maltese praised the Japanese Mediterranean Squadron, with the Daily Malta Chronicle, reporting the Japanese operation,¹² in very appreciative terms. The captain of the torpedoed liner himself hailing the Japanese for having protected and escorted: "The crew of the Japanese destroyers who, from their own scanty stores and appliances, did so much for the passengers." During the operation the Japanese produced smoke-screens in order to protect the torpedoed liner from further attacks while returning enemy fire. They saved all the passengers and crew of the liner, 550 persons. The captain continued "how much all were impressed by the splendid seamanship displayed on the occasion."

Although there was this appreciation in Malta, emphasising the Japanese soldiers' dedication to the protection of Allied human lives, both the Allies and Japan have forgotten of this even and

¹⁰ Nora, Pierre, *Les Lieux de mémoire: Les France* (Paris, Gallimard, 1992), 12-32.

¹¹ Houdek, Matthew and Philips, Kendall R., 'Public Memory,' *Oxford Research Encyclopedias Communication*, 2017. <http://communication.oxfordre.com/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228613.001.0001/acrefore-9780190228613-e-181>

¹² *The Daily Malta Chronicle*, 'Japanese Sailors' Fine work,' 15 October 1917.

of the general role the Japanese Navy played in the Mediterranean. There are five issues which led to this historical amnesia. Firstly, it is clear that even during the War, the British did not fully trust Japan as an ally. Although the *Daily Malta Chronicle*¹³ acknowledged that Japan had fulfilled her national obligations to the Allies, it mentioned that both British and American politicians were anxious of the impact which Japanese intervention would have in driving Russia into the orbit of diplomacy of the Central Powers. If Japanese intervention was justified, Japan would then be entitled to parts of Siberia as a reward for her contribution to the Allies. In December 1917, Britain proposed to the U.S. and Japan a joint dispatch of troops to Siberia.

The *Daily Malta Chronicle*¹⁴ reported that the Allied forces wondered if Japanese might seize such an opportunity to expand their military influence in Siberia under the plea of a German-Russian collaboration, which aimed at controlling Russian soil. In March 1918, the Lenin-led Bolshevik government signed a peace treaty with the Central Powers, due to a large number of Russian casualties and the exhaustion of the army. It made the Allies frequently refer to possibilities of Germany occupying Siberia. If Germany intended to arm her war prisoners in Siberia, which the Japanese War Minister numbered as being some 94,000 in the east of Baikal and 60,000 in the west of it – this would invite Japanese intervention into Siberian politics.¹⁵ The mentioned Maltese newspaper articles suggested that it was not only the British and the Americans but also the Maltese who considered that Japanese motives for joining the Allied operations in the Mediterranean were doubtful.

The United States decided to dispatch their troops to Siberia, whilst supporting the self-determination of the Czechs living in Russia, and helped the Czech army in Russia to move to Vladivostok in order for them to join the Western Front. Although Japan sent their troops to Siberia in cooperation with the U.S., their purpose was different from those of the Allies. Japan aimed at expanding its economic activities in Siberia and to establish a puppet government there.¹⁶ This seems to have been one Japanese military policy leading up to the Second World War, and alienating this country from other great powers. From the Allies' point of view, such Japanese military expansionism was not acceptable. It was indeed this policy of expansionism which eclipsed the memory of the Japanese operations in the Mediterranean and helped to make their achievements forgotten.

¹³ *The Daily Malta Chronicle*, 'The World War,' 11 April 1918.

¹⁴ *The Daily Malta Chronicle*, 'The World War,' 22 March 1918.

¹⁵ *The Daily Malta Chronicle*, 'The World War,' 22 March 1918.

¹⁶ Hara, Teruyuki, 'Siberia Shuppei no Shuketu: Primorskii no Soviet-ka to Nihon no Tettai,' 1992.

<http://www.tufs.ac.jp/blog/ts/p/jssrh/pdf/2008/hara1005.pdf>

Secondly, the racial bigotry of the Western Powers towards Japan accelerated this obliteration of memory of the Anglo-Japanese joint operations in the Mediterranean during the Great War.¹⁷ However, this does not mean that at the time of War, the Maltese did not welcome the Japanese presence in Malta. The *Malta Daily Chronicle*¹⁸ reported the speech given by the Commissioner of the Malta Boy Scouts, Mr. Bonavia, at the ceremony organised by the 25 Boy Scouts troop at the town of Hamrun. In his address he moved the Boy Scouts had to make themselves worthy of the trust placed in them – as Hamrun was a place noted for its remarkable “*esprit de corps*,” similar, he said to that characterizing the Japanese who put: “Japan first and everything else afterwards.” This suggests how much the Maltese evaluated the Japanese as ardent servicemen.

Another example of how well received were the Japanese by the Maltese is shown by the Comm. J. Howard – whose presentation at the King’s Own Band Club, to a large audience including Japanese Officers, on 10 June 1917,¹⁹ emphasized that both Maltese and Japanese were allies faithful to the “*Invicta Britannia*.” He went to say that the Maltese appreciated the Japanese struggle of right of Right against Might, of Civilisation against Barbarism. Howard highly evaluated the undaunted and determined Japanese who were not afraid of indiscriminate attacks in order to complete with treacherous weapons and tried to complete the mission of helping the Allies secure constant supplies, although they were thousands of miles away from home. Howard’s act of presenting the Japanese flag to the King’s Own Band of Valletta symbolised his appreciation towards the Japanese.

A reading of the articles in the *Daily Malta Chronicle* brings out a visible empathy with the Japanese and also goes to show how much the Maltese were familiar with their rescue operations. Herbert Ganado observes that: “Japanese sailors walk about in groups and mix with crews of other nations.” He also tells that: “we began to see almond-eyed children that our Japanese allies left as a memento of their visit to Malta.”²⁰ This all suggests that the Japanese sailors were well-received by fellow Maltese sailors, as well as Maltese women.

There is also no sign of any racial discrimination of the Maltese against the Japanese. However, the relationship between the Japanese and the British officers stationed in Malta seems to have been ambiguous. Kataoka, who was one of the Japanese officers working for His Imperial Japanese Majesty’s 2nd Detached Squadron,²¹ recalls a party sponsored by the Governor-

¹⁷ Hunt, David, ‘World War 1 History: Japanese Navy in the Mediterranean,’ *Owlocation*, updated on September 04, 2015.

¹⁸ *The Daily Malta Chronicle*, ‘Malta Boy Scouts Association: Hamrun Troop,’ 12 May 1917.

¹⁹ *The Daily Malta Chronicle*, ‘The King’s Own Band: Presentation of a Japanese Banner,’ 16 June 1917.

²⁰ Ganado, Herbert, *My Country* [Rajt Malta Tinbidel] vol. 1, Michael Refalo trans., (Malta, Be Communications Ltd., 2004), 231-2.

²¹ Kataoka, Kakutarō, *Nihon Kaigun Chichukai Enseiki: Wakaki Kaigun Shukei Chui no mita Daiichiji Sekai Taisen*. (Tokyo, Kawade Shobou Shinsha, 2001), 103-104.

General of Malta at the San Anton Gardens in 1917. He mentions how Japanese officers, including himself, were unable to talk willingly to British officers, believing that the patriotic and nationalistic sentiments, which both Japanese and British held, made them unable to communicate. This idea may be supported by an observation made by writer G. Bonello of sailors' portraits taken at the time of the WWI in Malta. Although he found instant portraits of mixed groups of British and French sailors holding hands, he never saw such type of photographs in which British and Japanese sailors are seen together in a friendly manner.²²

Kataoka also regarded white people as arrogant and conceited, and thought that the discriminatory attitude of the British and the French was due to the racial bigotry. He believed that Japan would be able to get on equal footing with them by increasing its own military power.²³ Other Japanese also recollect that their compatriot sailors expected that their effort and contribution to the Allied cause would be rewarded with the elimination of racial discrimination.²⁴ However, at the end of the War, the Japanese government's proposal of racial equality was rejected and was not included as part of the Treaty of Versailles in 1919. The British decided to sacrifice the Anglo-Japanese alliance in favour of the United States, which suspected Japanese expansionism. This led the Japanese to feel betrayed by the British. In this way Japanese contributions to the Allied cause during the Great War in the Mediterranean faded into insignificance both among Japanese and the Western Europeans.

Thirdly, the Japanese domestic situation also contributed to this general amnesia. The United States' war propaganda, which took on the 'moral responsibility' to make the world safe for democracy, came to influence even Japanese society. Ordinary Japanese started to be interested in party politics and to enjoy pop-culture. However, the economic crisis following the war intensified the social and economic differences among Japanese citizens. Ensuing poverty lend support to the Japanese policy of expansionism on Manchuria and military control of Japanese politics.²⁵ The positive aspects of post-war society faded away and with them the memories of Japanese operations in Europe/ the Mediterranean, faded away.

The fourth cause for the amnesia of the Japanese operations in the Mediterranean was Japan's brutal aggression during the World War II. For the Allies', Japanese military expansionism was immediately seen as not acceptable. Coming to interpret Japanese policies in favour of the Allies

²² Bonello, Giovanni, 'Studio photography in Malta reaches its Heyday,' *Times of Malta*, 9 August 2015.

<https://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20150809/life-features/studio-photography>

²³ Kataoka, Kakutaro, *Nihon Kaigun Chichukai Enseiki: Wakaki Kaigun Shukei Chui no mita Daiichiji Sekai Taisen*. (Tokyo, Kawade Shobou Shinsha, 2001), 22-2.

²⁴ Seki, Eiji, 'Malta no Kanasiki Bochi: Nichi-Ei Doumei no Shuen to Nihon Kaigun,' *Suikou*, 1992, vol.8 (2), 12-13.

²⁵ Inoue, Toshikazu, *Daiichiji Sekai Taisen to Nihon* (Tokyo, Kawade Shobou Shinsha, 2014), 136-179.

during WWI as having been motivated by geopolitical interests. Arthur J. Murder's analysis reflects such understandings that Japanese gains, which were the seizure of German-occupied Tsingtao and German islands in the Pacific (including the Marshalls, Marianas, and Carolines) during WWI, were commensurate with their efforts to pursue an expansionist policy.²⁶ Such a view has prevailed in the history books, helping to almost completely eclipse the Japanese devotion and self-sacrifice in the Allied campaign in the Mediterranean.

The fifth cause for the elimination of WWI memories is actually that in the post-second world war period, the basic premise of Japan's foreign policy was to disengage from conflicts for the sake of economic recovery. They relied on security guarantees from the U.S. and maintained a low profile in international politics. This foreign policy was laid by Yoshida Shigeru, the first Prime Minister after the WWII, was termed the 'Yoshida Doctrine.'²⁷ Following the traumatic experiences of the Second world war, numerous Japanese came to hate militarism and war. The campaign of the American Occupation Forces which seemed to spread a rumour that the Japanese military had deceived ordinary Japanese, accelerated their aversion to war.²⁸ The present author has heard members of the older generations who experienced WWII speaking very bitterly of the Japanese military which had manipulated information related to the battlefields and the size of the American forces during the war. The post-war generations looked at their future by aiming to rebuild their country through rapid economic recovery. The international community also forced Japan's disarmament. Thus, the memories of the Japanese war heroes, including those who had served in the Mediterranean during WWI were concealed.

Visiting the Kalkara and Other War Memorials

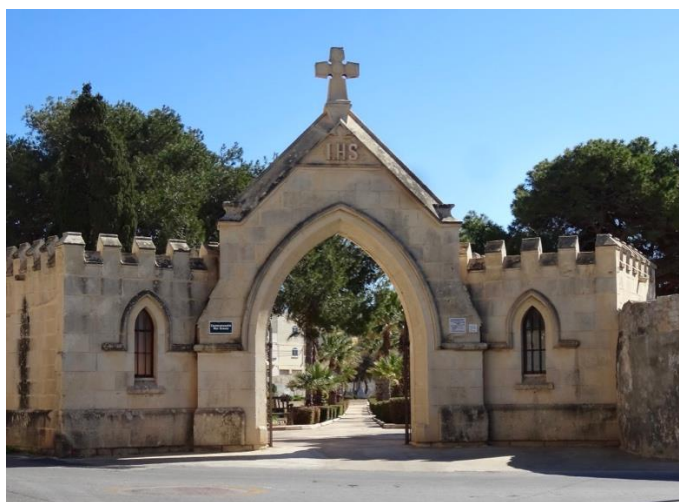
When the memory of WWI was obliterated, there were not many people who visited the Japanese monument at the Kalkara Cemetery in Malta. Since the end of the WWII, the Japanese government has not signed any agreement with other governments on the issue of maintaining

²⁶ Murder, Arthur J., *Old Enemies, New Friends: The Royal Navy and the Imperial Japanese Navy* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1981), 5.

²⁷ Das, Nayana, 'Japan's 'Yoshida Doctrine as It Stands Today,' *UN, You know?*, 22 July 2015. <https://unyouknow.org/2015/07/22/japans-yoshida-doctrine-as-it-stands-today/>

²⁸ Awaya, Kentaro, 'The Tokyo Tribunal, War Responsibility and the Japanese People,' *The Asia-Pacific Journal Japan Focus*, 2006, vol. 4 (2), 2. <https://apjff.org/-Awaya-Kentaro/2061/article.pdf>

graves and memorials of Japanese who died during war.²⁹ In such a situation, it is extraordinary that in 1973, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan accepted to fund the restoration of the Japanese memorial in Kalkara (which was damaged by German bombing during WWII).³⁰ At this point, however, public interest in commemorating the Japanese operations in the Mediterranean was very limited. In 1967, Shuichiro Kino, researching on the service of the Imperial Navy in the Mediterranean, published an article on *Mainichi Newspaper*, which appealed to the Japanese public on the importance of restoring the Kalkara monument. He insisted that this was a symbol of the Japanese contribution for the benefit to humanity, during the WWI. The condition of the damaged memorial was then unknown and only a small number of people, including members of Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force and ex-officers of the Imperial Japanese Navy, showed any interest in the restoration project.³¹



The entrance of Malta (Capuccini) Naval Cemetery. © Photo: Author.

Today, more Japanese have come to be interested in the Japanese military operations in the Mediterranean, as they visit the Kalkara cemetery which is officially called Malta (Capuccini) Naval Cemetery and is one of the Commonwealth War Graves maintained by the British Admiralty. It is composed of Protestant and Roman Catholic War graves, and other ones, and is

²⁹ Harada, Keiichi, 'War graves and ending war: from the Treaty of Frankfurt to the Treaty of San Francisco,' *Bukkyo University, Journal of the Faculty of Letters*, 2007, vol. 91, 49.

³⁰ Sato, Kenzo, 'Uchida Kazuomi Bakcho to Malta no Kaigun Bohi,' *Suiko*, 2002, vol.14 (1&2), 28-30.

³¹ Kino, Shuichiro, *Nihon Kaigun Chichukai Enseiki*, (Tokyo, Hosokawa Kappansho, 1974), 281-297.

neatly divided into sections from A to S. Although the cemetery consists of individual graves of each deceased serviceman, the Japanese who died during the WWI are buried together in one vault in *Section S*.

It is hardly possible to interview Japanese visitors at the Kalkara, as their number per day is small.³² But, to understand the motives of their visit, the author looked at two Visitors Book at the Cemetery, on which some visitors wrote their names and countries and left comments. The author examined two such books on which the visitors jot down observations and impressions on their visit from April 2013 to January 2015, and the other is the one from February 2016 to February 2017. In the latter, 188 out of 529 who left notes are Japanese. Considering the fact that only 68 out of 1089 identified casualties that are buried in the Cemetery are Japanese,³³ the number of Japanese visitors, who left notes for the war dead (making up nearly 36 % of the total amount) entombed in one vault there, is very substantial.

Messages left on the Visitors Book include:

- Thank you, Maltese, for keeping the cemetery so well.
- Rest in peace.
- I came from Japan. Rest in peace.
- I pray for the soul of the soldiers who died in a foreign land far away from home.
- Thank you for your contribution to Japan, our nation.
- Thank you for our Japanese Imperial Navy.
- Great Japanese Navy.
- Thank you for your service.
- I appreciate your braveness.
- I respect your work.
- I am proud of you.
- I am visiting the cemetery, as I had got to know of your operation. I appreciate your contribution.
- I came here to see you.
- I finally arrived here. I feel you invited me to come. Rest in peace.
- Visiting here is good. Thank you for working for Japanese.
- Due to your dedication to the nation, we enjoy our lives. Thank you.

³² One of the cleaners told me that about 20 people visit there per a day.

³³ *Commonwealth War Graves Commission, Malta Naval (Capuccini) Cemetery, Commonwealth War Graves Commission, 2018.*

[https://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/11204/MALTA%20\(CAPUCCINI\)20NAVAL20CEMETERY](https://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/11204/MALTA%20(CAPUCCINI)20NAVAL20CEMETERY)

- *Gassho (Añjali Mudrā*, a sign of respect and a greeting) in Malta with rich history and culture.
- I wish the world comes in peace.
- Wising peace in the world and security of Japanese soil.
- We will never force people to be honorary war dead.



The War Memorial of the Japanese Second Detachment Squadron in the Kalkara Cemetery.
© ***Photo: Author.***

One can understand that these messages do not address a particular individual/ the deceased, but the Japanese Squadron operating from Malta. By contrast, many visitors other than Japanese come to the cemetery, visit their beloved who died during the WWII and who are buried here. They have left the following messages on the Visitors Book.

- Great Thanks for the care of our son's grave for the last 55 years.
- Plot F 64 T. Whitmore Wireless Operator/Rear Gunner Uncle to Margaret.
- To see my brother Kenneth, Plot 777.
- Thank you for keeping the cemetery so well.
- Your sacrifices contributed to constructing peace in the world. Thank you.

There are similar messages left by both Japanese and non-Japanese. For example, there are comments thanking the Maltese who have maintained the cemetery so well and for the deceased 'whom 'I' visit the grave to see' (18 % of the Japanese messages in total). There are of course differences in the comments left by Japanese and non-Japanese. Many messages left other than Japanese address beloved family members. By contrast, Japanese visitors did not leave messages

calling on a particular person. It suggests that the purpose of their visit is quite distinct from other visitors: Japanese look at the deceased as collective, members of the Japanese 2nd Detached Squadron. There are many messages left by Japanese (41 % of the Japanese comments in total) who pray for the souls of the deceased who remain in Malta far away from home. The visitors imagine the situation of the Japanese soldiers 100 years ago when the systems of transportation and communication were not well developed. They draw images of these soldiers' courageous acts carrying out their duties regardless of the hardship and difficulties and show gratitude and respect (39 % of the Japanese comments in total).

Other messages express gratitude for the dedication of the deceased whose operations have helped to construct today's peaceful society (6 % of the Japanese messages in total). They do not use the word "sacrifice of the deceased" but some the latter as officers and soldiers of the Japanese (Imperial) Navy. By contrast, in other cemeteries dedicating to the Second World War dead, which the author introduces later in this article, no one left a message addressing the Japanese war dead in such a way. In the messages left on the soldiers who died during WWII, the phrase - the "sacrifice of the deceased" contributed to constructing today's peaceful society are often observed.

Although Japanese visitors retrieve memories of the Japanese naval operations in the Mediterranean in focus here in a friendly manner, no mention made of the fact that the Allies did not trust the Japanese due to their believe in Japan's expansionist policies. There is neither any mention which mentions that the Allies did not put their trust in Japanese due to their doubt of Japanese which soldiers, such as Kataoka, believed their services would contribute to eliminate racial discrimination against the Japanese. These histories are still forgotten as Japanese visitors pay attention only to the positive aspects of their activities and attempt to retrieve those memories which are favourable for them.

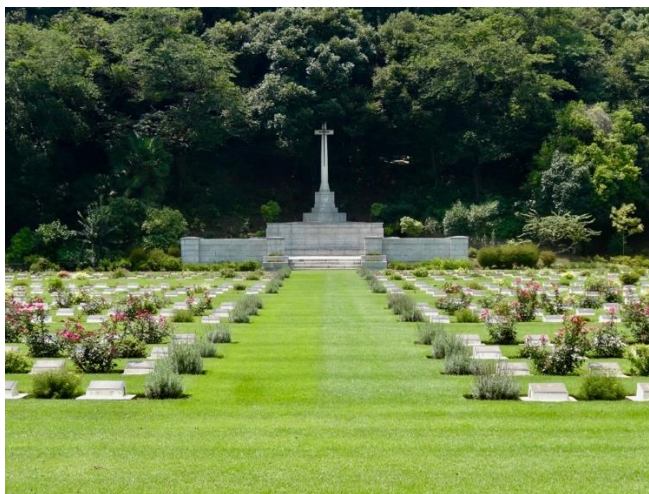
When examining the Visitors Book at the Karkala Cemetery, one can understand that Japanese visitors attempt to reconstruct a memory of the Japanese Naval Squadron in the way that there used to be Japanese who looked beyond themselves and contributed to the welfare of people other than their nationals. Such characteristic reconstruction of their memories will become clearer, when comparing them with those left at the Yokohama War Cemetery in Japan, which is a memorial for the Commonwealth, the U.S., and Netherland soldiers and civilians who died during and the aftermath of WWII.³⁴ There is no Japanese tomb here. The following are typical examples of the messages left by Japanese visitors in the Visitors Book at Yokohama Cemetery:

³⁴ Commonwealth War Graves Commission, 'Yokohama War Cemetery,' *Commonwealth War Graves Commission*, 2018.

<https://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/49433/YOKOHAMA%20WAR%20CEMETERY>

- Please rest in peace.
- Rest peacefully in this magnificent place.
- Whenever I visit here, the cemetery is well maintained. Thank you.
- The anniversary of the end of the WWII comes again. Rest in peace.
- On the sacrifice of our predecessors, we live together in harmony. I pay you a great compliment.
- I pray that no one would die on the field of battle.
- No more war!
- I visit here for the first time for ○○ years.

138 out of the 176 visitors, who left messages in the Visitors Book between May and July in 2015, are Japanese living in Yokohama where the cemetery is located. Similar to the messages left at the Kalkara memorial, their messages do not address a particular individual. In the case of the Yokohama Cemetery, visitors speak with one voice on the issue of war. They express their gratitude for those, who “sacrificed” their lives – “sacrifices” which laid the foundation of present peace-loving Japanese society. For the visitors, it is not a matter whether or not those who are buried in the cemetery used to be enemies of Japan during WWII. This cemetery is a place reminiscent of both Japanese and non-Japanese war casualties. What the Japanese messages convey is that the Japanese have been making efforts to develop a society favourable to peace, as they lost everything during WWII and experienced on their bare skins the misery of war. The war casualties serve as bridge between Japan and international society and remind visitors of this by the sorrowful commemoration of those who died in the Wars. The war dead teach “us” the preciousness of peace. To leave messages is an act of expressing feelings and ideas on war which visitors believe they share with other visitors and the deceased buried there. Indeed, the Yokohama Commonwealth cemetery is a place where visitors reproduce tragic images of wars and their memories in which they mourn for the war dead and show respect for peace. By contrast, in the Kalkara cemetery, Japanese visitors attempt to retrieve memories of the war dead with admiration and respect.



The entrance of Yokohama War Cemetery. © Photo: Author.

Similarly in both the Kalkara and Yokohama cemeteries, memories of Wars do not address particular individuals but are collective in nature.³⁵ It does not mean that Japanese do not recall personal memories of wars. When examining how Japanese express their feeling of their beloved whom they lost during battles, one can understand the difference between such personal recollections and memories recalled at the Kalkara cemetery.

There is one other war memorial for the Japanese to express their memories of the beloved family members and this is the Chidorigafuchi National Cemetery in Tokyo, which commemorates the unidentified war dead of the WWII. Although many people visit Yasukuni Shrine,³⁶ the Chidorigafuchi has only a small number of visitors, except for the cherry blossom season.³⁷ The Chidorigafuchi is the site for family members of the deceased, whose bodies have been retrieved from battlefields or being unidentified, for recollecting their memories. The following are typical examples of the messages found in the Visitors Book at Chidorigafuchi:

1) My brother served in the Japanese Imperial Army as a submachine gunman and died on 31 August 1943. I wonder how till then he had survived in a bloody battlefield, such as that in the Philippine. If he were with me, he would be the most reliable person. We must never have another war and kill each other.

³⁵ In the Yokohama cemetery, there are non-Japanese, such as British and Americans, visit there to see the beloved died during the WWII.

³⁶ It takes less than 10 minutes on foot from the Chidorigafuchi to the Yasukuni shrine.

³⁷ This is the information given by the person who works for the Chidorigafuchi Cemetery.

2) To my father. I come to see you again. Yesterday, I watched *Mother's Tree*³⁸ which reminded me of you. I feel I want to talk to you and come with my daughter. Although I have an ambivalence towards the current political situation, I hope Japan will be a peaceful country forever.



The War Memorial of Chidorigafuchi National Cemetery in Tokyo. © Photo: Author.

The persons who wrote the messages personify memories of WWII, which is never separated from that of his deceased brother/father. Such memories could be shared only among relatives and acquaintances of the deceased, who are attached to the war dead. For the person who left the second message, the sons in the film, who were killed in the battlefields overlap with memories of his father who was conscripted and died at the WWII. He also tries to transmit his sad memories to his daughter. The devastation wrought in their minds is heartrending to complete, as their bodies have not been retrieved yet. By evoking the memories of the war dead and expressing their sadness, these visitors believe that they must not let their descendants experience the sorrows of war which they passed through.

Both messages left at the Chidorigafuchi and Kalkara address to war dead and express their wishes to construct a peaceful society. However, there are differences between them. The former describes the war dead as victims, whereas, the latter depicts them as war heroes. Visitors at the Chidorigafuchi do not appreciate the deceased who engaged in combat for the sake of the Japanese nation. By contrast, visitors at the Kalkara cemetery believe the Japanese navy committed selfless

³⁸ *Mother's Tree* is a film released in 2015. It tells the story of a mother whose seven sons were conscripted one by one during WWII. She planted a paulownia tree when each of her sons was called for military service. She talked to the trees wishing their safe return to home (*Okaasan no Ki*, 2015, <http://www.mothers-trees.com/story.html>).

acts. This is of course a biased view as Japan participated in WWI expecting material and diplomatic gain, as already discussed in this paper. However, contemporary Japanese want on to retrieve WWI events as a communal memory in a positive way by remembering Japanese soldiers who dedicated themselves to save the lives of other nationals at war.

Many messages at the Chidorigafuchi address the deceased who were close to the visitors. By contrast, the messages left at both the Kalkara and Yokohama cemeteries do not evoke a memory of a particular person. In both cases, Japanese visitors express their gratitude for those, who died at the Wars. Japanese visitors at the Kalkara and Yokohama are not descendants of the war dead. In the case of the Kalkara cemetery, their children are now too old to pay a visit to the War Memorial in Malta. Although members of the Japanese Self Defense Force and Japanese Coast Guard officers visit the Kalkara,³⁹ ordinary Japanese also voluntarily pay a visit to the cemetery. The Japanese visitors who attempt to retrieve memories of the Japanese Squadron tell the deceased that: “we” promise that “we” remember “you” and what “you”, and what “you” have done for “us”, although “you” remain in Malta.

The author also interviewed Japanese residents in Malta, as well as those working for the Malta Tourism Authority in Tokyo. They confirmed that many Japanese preparing to visit the Kalkara cemetery said that: “As a Japanese, “I” must pay a visit to the Memorial of the splendid rescue work performed by the Japanese and the casualties of such operations”. To pay a visit to the Kalkara cemetery is one of the processes of how contemporary Japanese reconstruct a collective memory of the WWI. We need to examine the reasons behind present Japanese attempts to provide a positive view of Japanese operations in the Mediterranean during WWI, and to commemorate their services not as soldiers fighting battles, but as acting to promote human welfare.

How contemporary Japanese remember the Japanese Squadron

The memory of the Japanese naval operations in the Mediterranean has gone through the process of obliteration and retrieval. Australians also have experienced the transformation of WWI memories. To look at the transformation of the memories of ANZAC (the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps), which was a First World War army corps of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, has theoretical importance in analysing the process of regenerating Japanese

³⁹ Since 1991, the Overseas Training Cruise of the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force has been carrying out memorial services at the Kalkara for those who died during the Operation in the Mediterranean between 1917 and 1918 (Fujita, Kiyoshi. ‘Kaijo Jieitai ni Keishou saretai Ichimai no E (2): Chichukai ni okeru Teikoku Kaigun Konkyochi,’ *Shuikou*, 2005, vol.17(1&2), 12-15.).

memories of the WWI Mediterranean operations. ANZAC committed to the Gallipoli Campaign which took place in the Ottoman Empire between February 1915 and January 1916 and aimed at providing a sea route from the Dardanelles Straits to the Russian Empire, as one of the Allied powers. Carolyn Holbrook argues that the memories of the Gallipoli Campaign have been a powerful symbol of national identity. Currently, ANZAC memories involve grafting a modern idiom of trauma and suffering being empathised with their fellows, including both Whites and Aborigines, on Australian nationhood.⁴⁰ However, during the WWI, for Australians, to join the Allied operations meant to hold the idea of racial superiority and nationalism. Australians attempted to identify with the British. Since the 1960s, as studies based on ANZAC soldiers have proliferated Britishness and racial superiority have been rejected and memories have changed to ones which are associated with defending Aboriginal fellows. Peter Weir's film *Gallipoli* (1981) conveys the message that Australian nationhood was born as a response to British bullying and its incompetence for the tragedy. ANZAC memories which were grounded in imperialism have now been transformed into myths of national cohesion. The Australian political leaders today utilise ANZAC commemorations, which embodies the idea of sharing the historical experiences of misery, endurance, and trauma, among multi-ethnic and multi-cultural Australian populations, as a symbol of national identity.

In the process of preventing the obliteration of war, 'war memories', the war memories become collective ones. The Australian case suggests that in such a process, films and information produced by the mass media play an important role in the reconstruction of war memories. National politics also utilises commemoration as a means of facilitating national cohesion. The construction of collective war memories includes manipulation such as exclusion, embellishment, oppression, and elimination of parts of actual memories of war acts, as the commemoration affect the present social awareness of war and peace.

The case of Australian WWI memories provides a theoretical insight or our analysis of how Japanese WWI memory has been retrieved. First, the reconstruction of the memories of war is here also deeply related to the formation of national identity. Second, films and other mass media play a role in such a regeneration. Third, the political usage of the commemoration of WWI influences ordinary citizens who recall their own war memories. As already discussed above, many Japanese today refuse to commit to wars and are eager to promote peace.⁴¹ Japanese

⁴⁰ Holbrook, Carolyn, "'Remembering with advantages': The Memory of the Great War in Australia," *Comillas journal of international relations*, 2015, no. 2, 19-27.

⁴¹ Fujiwara, Kiichi, (2001). *Semsou wo Kioku suru: Hiroshima • Holocaust to Genzai* (Tokyo, Kodansha Gendai Shinsho, 2001), 38.

perception of armed conflict and war as an absolute evil is due to the influence of school education and information given by the mass media. The topics and subjects covered in both school education and mass media include the desperation caused by the discreteness of family members and their death, the brutalities of battles, and imperialistic aggression. As those who experienced wars have not transmitted their own recollection of war (which are those of an abominable event and harmful to the people) to younger generations. The Japanese share information about the traumatic and tragic experiences of war through education and the mass media. The obtained knowledge of wars and armed conflicts conveys the common image of war to contemporary Japanese, which is useful for forming anti-war feeling among them and to establish a Japanese society promoting peace. However, both history education and media information hardly deal with the subjects of Japan's responsibility for the wars⁴² as they commit to the embellishment and elimination of some parts of war memories. Such a deliberate selection of events affects the formation of, and attempts to manipulate war memories.

Japanese mass media tend to shift focus on those Japanese who engaged in humanitarian activities during war. Rather than depicting traumatic war memories, the stories highly evaluate those who devoted themselves to saving others regardless of their nationalities. One of such examples is the film "Sugihara Chiune," known as Sempo, who served as vice consul of the Japanese Consulate in Lithuania during the WWII. He issued transit visas for European refugees (mostly Jews) fleeing from Nazi persecution so that they could travel via Japanese territory. To issue transit visas for Jewish refugees mainly from Poland, he risked his job and the lives of his family members. The advertisement at the time of the film release in 2015 addresses the audience: "Do you know a Japanese who saved more than 6,000 lives?"⁴³ Although since the 1970s, German journalists and the Israeli government had started to praise Sugihara's humanitarian work, the Japanese themselves have still not paid attention to what he had done. The film describes Sugihara as the "Schindler of the East" who is a man of justice, but it does not mention Japan's actual wartime policy as an ally of Nazi Germany. It emphasises that there were Japanese like Sugihara who made the right decisions and acted for the international community. This specific film portrays a wartime hero who dedicated himself to protecting people's lives even in difficult situations and whose work is praised globally.

⁴² Ito, Koji and Shimizu, Hiroyuki, (2010). "Conquering the Painful Past" and Historical Education in Japan,' *Shizuoka Daigaku Kyoikugaku Kenkyu Houkoku (Kyoka Kyoikugaku Hen)*, 2010, vol. 41, 12-13, 15-16; Kakuta, Masashi and Watanabe, Takumi, "Shakaika Jyugyou ni okeru 'Senso to Heiwo' eno Approach: Tange 'Senso towa Nanika' no Kaihatsu wo toosite," *Ritsumeikan Heiwa Kenkyu*, 2011, vol. 12, 29-3.

⁴³ Toho, 'Sugihara Chiune,' Toho Movie, 2015. <https://www.toho.co.jp/movie/lineup/sugihara.html>

The film of Sugihara is an example of shifting interest of the Japanese mass media which attempt to introduce war experiences from a new perspective, which promotes the transformation of war memories. Accounts of trauma and suffering have grafted their war memory which has been a powerful symbol of Japanese national identity. Contemporary Japanese have actually started to research accounts of wartime experiences which attempt to satisfy their pride as Japanese. From a similar perspective, Japanese media encourages the retrieval of memory of the Japanese operations in the Mediterranean, stressing how the British praised the Japanese Second Squadron at the time of the WWI as the "guardian of the Mediterranean." They also talk about the Kalkara war memorial which is a monument to those who lost their lives during the humanitarian rescue operations in the Mediterranean.⁴⁴ However, such information tells only a part of their story. During WWI, as examined above, those who engaged in the operations in the military operations in the Mediterranean were doing so to show off their military might and thus make the world acknowledge Japanese presence and to eliminate racial discrimination against them. As such affirming memories of the war have been concealed and suppressed, both the Japanese and the Maltese media commit to acts of embellishment and elimination of real war memories and events. Such heroism as emphasised recalls the universal moral values of dealing with a humanitarian crisis, which Japanese and Maltese share with others. By recalling memories of the Japanese heroes in the Mediterranean, contemporary Japanese can create a sense of solidarity, based on an idea that the Japanese can fulfil a dangerous mission in the face of humanitarian crisis.

The United Nations defines a humanitarian crisis as a single or a series of events which threatens international peace and security as well as the well-being of civilians. It is necessary to hold universal moral values among those who work together to solve international disputes and ensure the safety and logistic support for philanthropic activities.⁴⁵ In other words, to deal with such a humanitarian crisis, it is also vital to strengthen diplomatic relations with other countries for maintaining security and peace. The Japanese government pursues such a diplomatic strategy usually called the "Arc of Freedom and Prosperity." Prime Minister Abe declares that Japan cooperates with states which have in common such fundamental values as freedom, democracy,

⁴⁴ *Nifty Kokologu*, 'BS Asahi 06/29/2014, Chichukai ni Dainihon Teikoku Kaigun no Ireihi, « Chichukai no Shugoshin Daini Tokumu Kantai » towa? 【 Ima Sekaiwa 】 , *Terebi ni Damasarenaizo II*, 30 June 302014. <http://dametv2.cocolog-nifty.com/blog/2014/06/post-0ee6.html>; *Times of Malta*, 'Documentary on Maltese community in Japan,' 19 July 2015.

<https://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20150719/arts-entertainment/Documentary-on-Maltese-community-in-Japan.577380>

⁴⁵ *UNHCR*, 'Handbook for the Military on Humanitarian Operations,' 1995. <http://www.unhcr.org/afr/3d5122884.pdf>

human rights and the rule of law.⁴⁶ For example, in 2013, in his speech at the Conference on 'Rejuvenating U.K.-Japan Relations for the 21st Century' with the presence of H.R.H. Prince Andrew, the Duke of York and the Royal Navy, Abe mentioned the Mediterranean operation:

We must not forget that in the Great War, whose centenary since its outbreak we commemorate next year, members of the Imperial Japanese Navy executed extraordinary operational techniques to escort British ships successfully, for which they came to be called "the guardian of the Mediterranean." Even today, in Malta, a memorial monument dedicated to the souls of the Imperial Japanese Navy war dead who perished during these operations stands in one corner of the cemetery of the British Armed Forces, awaiting visitors... the U.K. and Japan have returned to being partners who work together to maintain the safety of navigation. I believe that it is fitting for us to call the Japan-U.K. bilateral relationship a natural "*a priori*" partnership, insofar as it evolved organically, combining the two nations.⁴⁷

By referring to the operations in the Mediterranean, Abe emphasizes the bilateral relationship between Japan and the U.K., which is a natural "*a priori*" partnership, as the two countries had formed the alliance and worked together at the time of WWI.⁴⁸ It is a diplomatic strategy emphasizing the two countries which can restore a tight partnership on the basis of the sharing of a collective value since the time of the WWI.

Such Japanese foreign policy, as well as the current mass media, which stresses the universal human value during crises could shape the reconstruction of memories of the Japanese Second Squadron in the Mediterranean. The above-mentioned diplomatic remarks have not been made entirely based on historical facts, but rather on the creation of WWI memories by the present generation. Although personal memories related to members of the Squadron are obliterated, the collective memories of the Squadron have reproduced in the current political and social contexts. Unlike History, memories refer to only a part of the knowledge of past events. As Pierre Nora claims, a collective memory is always regenerated in relation to the activities currently in progress.

⁴⁶ Hosoya, Yuichi, 'The Rise and Fall of Japan's Grand Strategy: The "Arc of Freedom and Prosperity" and the Future Asian Order,' *Asia-Pacific Review*, 2011, vol. 18 (1), 13-24. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/13439006.2011.582677>

⁴⁷ Abe, Shinzo, 'Speeches and Statements by the Prime Minister September 30 2013,' *Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet*. https://japan.kantei.go.jp/96_abe/statement/201309/30ukjapan_e.html

⁴⁸ Tsuruoka, Michito, (2016). "Nichi · Ei, Nichi · Futsu no Anzen Hosho · Boueki Kyoryoku: Nihon no Partner tositeno Ei · Futsu Hikaku," *Bouei Kenkyujyo Kiyō*, 2016, vol.19 (1), 158.http://www.nids.mod.go.jp/publication/kiyo/pdf/bulletin_j19_1_6.pdf

It does not necessarily convey the historical facts, but still, reminds us of the past event and makes us understand it in a modern context.⁴⁹

Until the 1980s, the Japanese had been proud of themselves as a nation that had achieved world-class economic growth. However, they are no longer able to seek such national identity, as there is little possibility that Japan's economic growth rate would dramatically rise as in the past.⁵⁰ The materialism which the Japanese have pursued since the end of the Second World War and the post-war diplomacy by which they kept a low profile in international politics, as the Yoshida Doctrine had suggested, do not conform to the current political and social situation.⁵¹ In such a situation, diplomatic as well as media usage of the memory of the Japanese operations in the Mediterranean is targeted to make international society remember them as having engaged in a humanitarian mission. It is important for contemporary Japanese to look for a co-national who met international standards of values and contributed to promoting the welfare of global society. So, they feel attachment to their war dead heroes in Kalkara. The construction of national or collective identity is to link it with internationally recognised values and standards, although such characteristics attributed to its nationals are considered unique.⁵² Contemporary reconstruction of memories of the Japanese naval operations in the Mediterranean is an attempt by the Japanese to search such for a collective identity. By paying a visit to the Kalkara cemetery, they try to confirm the existence of ancestors who are recognised heroes and who make them proud to be Japanese.

Conclusion

Since ancient times, people have attempted to retrieve memories by tracing images allocated to each place, such as monuments, buildings, and theatres.⁵³ Even today, memorials and buildings are still symbolic assets of communities and tools for retrieving memories and are places where they share recollections with others. The Kalkara Cemetery is a symbolic place for Japanese citizens to recall memories and share them with visitors, as it is located in Malta where the

⁴⁹ Nora, Pierre, *Les Lieux de mémoire: Les France* (Paris, Gallimard, 1992), 12-32.

⁵⁰ Iwasaki, Hiromitsu, 'Nihon wa 'Jinkou Genshou' no Shinkokusa wo Wakatte inai Keizai dake denaku Shakai Zentai no Shiki mo Yowatte iku,' *Toyo Keizai Online*, 9 May 2018.

⁵¹ Doak, Kevin M., 'Abe at the Crossroads: ISIS, Yoshida, and Japan's Foreign Policy Future,' *Georgetown Journal*, 20 February 2015. <http://journal.georgetown.edu/abe-at-the-crossroads-isis-yoshida-and-japans-foreign-policy-future/>

⁵² Chow, Rey, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York, Columbia University Press, 2002), 115.

⁵³ Yates, Frances, *The Art of Memory Volume III* (London, Routledge, 1999), 321-334.

Japanese navy used to perform their duties.⁵⁴ Medieval Europeans used symbolic places for retrieving memories and confirming that they shared them with others and that they had a common view of the supernatural world. In a similar fashion, contemporaries believe that a symbolic place for commemorating past events reminds them that they share global standards and values of respect to humanity with other people around the world.

The reason why the Japanese pay a visit to the Kalkara Cemetery is to commemorate a historical mission responding to a humanitarian crisis conducted by a heroic Japanese Squadron. It is the place to confirm that the Japanese engage in naval operations which intended to rescuing lives. To save life fulfils the contemporary global standards of humanitarian work. For Japanese visitors, the Japanese memorial in the Kalkara Cemetery is a place which tells that rather than keeping a low profile in international politics, Japanese can be proactive and cooperate with global society, as their ancestors did in the Mediterranean. By paying a visit to the Kalkara cemetery, they also try to attest to the existence of their Japanese co-nationals who make them proud as Japanese, believing that the Second Squadron did whatever they could for the benefit of all concerned at a time of crisis.

To retrieve such a memory of these war heroes provides the Japanese visitors with an alternative view of war, which they know as a symbol of evil, misery, trauma, guilt, brutality, and imperial aggression. The memories retrieved here are of an historical military operation in the Mediterranean which reminds them as contemporary Japanese to keep the spirit of humanity, philanthropy, and neighbourly friendship, at any time, regardless of danger. This is a wider, ongoing process of constructing a collective memory of war, in which the Japanese themselves are protagonists in creating a sense of solidarity and the keeping of a global humanitarian spirit.

⁵⁴ Cf. Carruthers, Mary, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture (Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature)*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008), 217-227 .