

## **ACCCI's Australia's Tourist Sites and Services in China: Dongfang County**

Way up in the hills of Dongfang County in central-west Hainan Province, China, there is a village called Lou Ou. Here more than sixty years ago escaped Australian prisoners of war, first captured in Singapore and Indonesia and transferred to Ambon, Dutch East Indies, and Basuo on the West Coast of Hainan Island, fought vicious sniper warfare with the Japanese occupiers of Eastern China. Some fought with the Nationalist Kuomintang forces, others with the Communist opposition. Most died.

Yet for some reason they are remembered more by the local Hainanese than by their countrymen in Australia. The battles and heroics of the Middle East, Europe and the New Guinea Pacific are household stories to generations of Australian school children. However this cameo struggle was seldom mentioned until last year when Darwin City Council spent \$AU9000 to erect a Memorial to the hundreds of Australian who died on the Island together with their Dutch, Indian, British and American allies; not to mention the over 20,000 local Hainanese 'forced labour' workers.

In February 1989 the ACCCI President Michael Jones first visited Hainan. In October 2002 he returned with Vice President Marilyn Walker to make a personal inspection of the building of the memorial. He intends to return to see the completed memorial. For those younger Australians who want an adventure, the road from Haikou to Basuo and Sanya is sealed and easy to travel. A variety of low cost facilities are now available. The Chamber has therefore nominated Dongfang County as one of its Australia's Tourist Sites and Services (ATSSP) Special Projects. The pilgrimage to Basuo is a worthwhile experience for those who wish to experience the ethnic minorities of China.



***Mr Jones is pictured with the workers who were then building the memorial described above in a peaceful field near the Village of Lou Ou.***