



THE SPIRIT OF THE TORCH

“All Generations of the Hong Kong Family Remember with Pride”

Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association of Ontario

Volume VI, No. 2 (11)

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Regional Director's Message—Mike Babin

it was exactly a year ago that a group of Veterans and HKVCA members – me among them – were in Hong Kong commemorating those who died in the battle and the camps.

I spent some time recently looking through the photos of that trip, reminding myself how moving it was to see the cemeteries where so many Canadians are buried, and the places where Canada's soldiers so bravely stood and fought to repel an invading enemy.

Also in Hong Kong at the same time last year were some 200 students and chaperones from Durham region, east of Toronto. Every student had "adopted" a Hong Kong Veteran in the course of preparing for their trip, and had written a composition about their "adopted" Veteran. These compositions, as well

as those written by a number of other students from across Canada, were buried in a memorial capsule at Sai Wan Cemetery as part of the commemoration ceremony we all attended.

As a memento of their trip, the students have just published a book of these compositions – titled "Passing the Torch: Our Youth Remembers Hong Kong" – and a copy of the book has been sent to each living Veteran.

Because we felt that some of our members might be interested in having their own copy of the book, the HKVCA has arranged to purchase a quantity of them for resale at a price of \$25, including postage. If you'd like to order one, you'll find an order form on page 18 of this newsletter.

HKVCA IN ONTARIO

This Association aims to perpetuate the memory of and to ensure the welfare of the surviving veterans and their spouses, and the widows and their families by:

- Enrolling all those in the Hong Kong family in the HKVCA
- Ensuring regular, periodic contact with those members
- Attending and participating in memorial services on Remembrance Day, V-J Day and other special occasions
- Orally proclaiming our link to the Hong Kong Veterans
- Educating and increasing the public's understanding of the sacrifice made by the Hong Kong veterans
- Organizing Reunions and National Conventions, as well as providing opportunities for social events for The Hong Kong Veterans of Canada

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We've been working hard on introducing the Hong Kong story into schools. Elsewhere in this newsletter you'll find a report from Pat Turcotte with the details, but I especially would like to point out the Essay Contest that we've recently announced. This is open to high school students across Canada, and offers cash prizes for the best essays written about the battle and the POW camps. I'm asking each of you, who have high school-aged children or grandchildren, to encourage them to participate. And if you have any contacts in your local school system, please use them to publicize the contest!

On a rather wet and cool Saturday at the end of October we held a general meeting of our membership in Toronto, followed by a luncheon. This was the first Ontario meeting since our mini-reunion in Aurora in the fall of 2004, and I was gratified to welcome a great turnout of 50 people, including 5 Veterans! Although most attendees were from the Toronto area, we also had people travel from London, Cornwall and Sudbury to participate! Those of you with internet access will find photos of the meeting here: <http://galleries.hkvca.ca/photogallery/06events.htm> (scroll down the page a little to find them).



"Flash" & Jessie Clayton, Pat Turcotte, Mike Babin

We honoured several people at our meeting who have had a major impact on keeping the Hong Kong story alive and getting it into schools: we bestowed



Mike Strahl & Nancy Hamer Strahl, Pat Turcotte, Mike Babin

HKVCA Outstanding Achievement Awards on George MacDonell and "Flash" & Jessie Clayton for their tireless work in visiting schools and talking to students; and we awarded Honorary Memberships in the HKVCA to Nancy Hamer Strahl and Mike Strahl for their terrific work in introducing Hong Kong into the Durham School Board's history curriculum, preparing their students for their trip to Hong Kong, and producing the fabulous book I referred to above. Nancy and Mike have also carried the message outside Ontario to other teachers across Canada.

All of these people richly deserve their recognition.

A project we're working on which received a very positive reception at the general meeting is the "Speakers' Bureau". The objective of this work is to develop a presentation that any association member can use to tell the Hong Kong story at a school or other venue. It will include not only text, but also video clips of Veterans and photos of memorabilia to make an engaging and informative presentation. We hope that over time many of our members will be willing to use it to spread the Hong Kong story as widely as possible.

» *Thank You* «

TO EVERYONE WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THIS EDITION OF OUR NEWSLETTER

**Publisher: Sylvia Mason
Editor & Distributor: Tim Hodkinson
Proof-Readers: Pat Turcotte, Sandi Cameron**

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You may be aware that a considerable amount of work has been done by a committee of HKVCA members, largely located in Winnipeg, to develop a proposal for an interpretive centre to be located there. This work grew out of discussions at the National Convention in Victoria in 2003 where the HKVA made it known that they would like to build some kind of memorial to "C" Force; perhaps a wall or similar structure. The committee has done an excellent job of designing a top-notch interpretive centre, including a classroom and display room, which would be located in a beautifully landscaped location in Winnipeg.

I'd like for you to know, however, that I and your Ontario HKVCA Executive group have taken the position, with the HKVCA's National Board of Directors, that we do not support proceeding with this proposal. The main reason is its cost: the committee has estimated a capital cost of \$3.4 million to build the centre. Although they have not estimated ongoing costs to staff and maintain the centre, it would not be unreasonable to assume 5-10% per year, or about \$170-340,000 annually.

The committee believes that most of the required funds can be raised from donors. However, we are skeptical that such a large amount can be raised, and the HKVCA would certainly be responsible for

any shortfall. In addition, even if the capital cost were covered by donations, the very substantial ongoing operational costs remain.

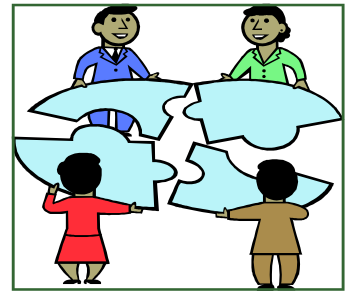
Our belief is that our funds are better utilized in reaching out to Canada's youth by conducting the kinds of educational programs we are currently working on than in building a very expensive centre in Winnipeg. The internet gives us the capability to offer a "virtual" interpretive centre at a fraction of the cost. Having a memorial to "C" Force is important, but we believe that the wishes of the Veterans can be respected by building a more modest memorial in a location such as Ottawa, which is likely to have a great many more visitors.

If you have opinions on this issue I would like to hear from you, so please don't hesitate to contact me about it.

To return to the topic of our general meeting ... the feedback we received about it was uniformly positive. We'd like to hold meetings more often, and include people from other parts of the province. I would be interested in hearing from you about the possibility of holding a meeting in Ottawa or Kingston, or in London or Hamilton where we have substantial concentrations of HKVCA members. Do you think this would be a good idea, and would you attend if we were to hold a meeting in your area?

Please email, phone or write me and let me know, or chat with your Area Rep. about it.

The holiday season is rapidly approaching, so let me take this opportunity to wish you and your family a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



We thank all the Area Reps for their willingness to serve and for taking time from their busy schedules to maintain contact with members in their area.

THE WORD FROM THE AREA REPS

West Central Area: Leon Sokalski

I hope you all had a great summer, but it is with sincere regrets that we have lost one of our comrades.

Peter Anthony Gelley (Tony) passed away August 3, 2006. Peter was the only Winnipeg Grenadier in the West Central Region of Ontario. A Memorial Mass was held at St. Denis Parish in St. Catharines, and was attended by family members

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and many friends. The HKVCA was represented by myself, Mike Babin (Regional Director) and Pat Turcotte, (Past Regional Director).

Carl Adams – is doing well, and will be celebrating his 88th birthday on November 22, 2006. He is finding it difficult to maintain his farm these days, and is looking forward to selling his property and moving to Welland this Spring.

Donald Geraghty, Ken Pifher, and Gerard Sunstrum, all had a good summer, and seem to be doing well, but regret that they will not be attending the October meeting.

Harold Smith, like his comrades, is also doing well, but will have to find another mode of transportation, as he is no longer allowed to use his Scooter which has given him much pleasure over the years. He, also will not be able to attend the October meeting.

On November 11, a Memorial Wreath will be placed at Gage Park in downtown Hamilton.

South West Area:**Barbara Cunningham–Drew**

Lori Atkinson–Smith, Barry Fair, myself, Alfred and Christina Babin traveled to the Toronto General Meeting Oct. 28 from the London area. We took two vehicles. The

visiting and comradeship was great. And it was good to see everyone.

The meeting clarified a few issues and opened up a lot of discussion on other topics pertaining to the Hong Kong Veterans. If anyone else would like to join us for the next meeting, please call me at 519-676-7348 and we will make arrangements for car pooling to the next meeting.

I have enjoyed a good telephone conversation with both Lillian Gauvin in Kitchener and Mrs. Jean Killoran in Sarnia. Lillian tells me her parents were to be honored with a special Remembrance Day service in Quebec.

Jean was out to a play when I first called. When we connected, she tells me her health is generally pretty good. Jean and her family lay a wreath every year in Sarnia. And it is wonderful that Jean can see the cenotaph and Remembrance Day service from her apartment window.

Please expect a phone call soon if you haven't heard from me lately. I want to catch up on your news. Merry Christmas to you all.

North East Area:**Ron McGuire**

It is with sincere regret I report that Thomas Jones RRC passed away on September 3, 2006 in his

87th year. I only learned this when Sandi Cameron sent me his obituary.

On a number of occasions I tried to arrange a visit with Mr. Jones in Pembroke, but for various reasons, mainly his health problems, we unfortunately never met. I will fondly remember our telephone conversations, during which, as I always do when speaking with our Veterans, learned many things of interest about his life and experiences.

I also regret to report that Irene Cotton, widow of Leonard Cotton RRC, and Loretta Cyr, widow of Roger Cyr RRC, have also passed away. May they rest in peace. My sincere condolences to each of their families.

As is my practice each Spring and Fall, I have contacted my members and can report all is well. I keep in more regular contact with Ken Ewing and Eric Maloney who are also doing very well. Ken and Susan are always travelling, often visiting their family. They plan to spend several weeks next February in Jamaica where Susan has a sister.

I finally made the trip I planned to make for several years to the Gaspé Coast, where so many of our RRC were born, raised, and returned after they were liberated. Bill MacWhirter is one of the lads that stayed, while

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many others left, mainly to gain employment that they could not obtain throughout those beautiful towns, villages and places they loved so much.

I stayed with Bill and Lynn MacWhirter whose hospitality was truly wonderful. They gave me several very informative and enjoyable tours of the area. We drove down to New Richmond and back to Gaspé where they have lived since the 1950's. On my own, with weeks, it would have been impossible to see, do and meet the people I did during that memorable week thanks to the MacWhirters. I will be preparing an overview of the trip and the HK Vets and families I visited for the next National newsletter. Again my sincere thanks to Bill and Lynn for everything. In the meantime, please join me in sending sincere best wishes to Bill for a complete recovery, from what I learned during our recent conversation, has been successful surgery on his leg on November 7.

Coincidentally, on the evening of November 7, I escorted Eric Maloney to what has become an annual, City of Ottawa Veterans Candlelight Ceremony. Eric carried the Youth Wreath which was laid on the stage by a young lady in her Girl Guide uniform. The majority of the youth representatives were members of the various scouting and cadet corps and were wearing their respective uniforms. It was a very impressive sight as each one escorted a veteran, often wearing their medals, carrying a lighted candle which the youngster laid on the stage. A VAC rep. told me that there was over 300 veterans participating. Derrill and Vivian Henderson also attended the event.

Eric is in the following photograph accepting the presentation sign, on behalf of the Leboutillier family, for a new street named after Captain William P.C. Leboutillier. This is the result of Derrill Henderson's initiative and will hopefully be the first of additional streets that will be named, in the future, after other Hong Kong Veterans who lived in Ottawa and/or former towns, now part of the



city streets which already have an Ottawa Veteran's name, will understandably prohibit their name from being used again. Derrill has asked me to work with him on this project and we hope to have new streets named after other HK Vets at future Candlelight Ceremonies.

For my tenth Remembrance Month exhibit for the Nepean Museum I prepared, "A Tribute to Newfoundlanders at War: 1914-1918 & 1939-1945". I designed a poster to publicize the exhibit. As I always try to do with my exhibits, I had portions concerning our HK Vets. Of course, this was not difficult because many of the lads with the RRC served in Newfoundland with "W" Force before being reassigned to "C" Force. Several of these men eventually married Newfoundland ladies that they met who promised to wait for them to return when the war was over. Eric Maloney, was one; marrying Betty Ebsary, in 1946 in his home town of Douglastown on the Gaspé. Lieut. Kenneth R. Strang was another who met and married his lady friend, Barbara Winter. I met and got to know Mrs. Strang during the Reunion in Victoria in 2003 when we had several pleasant conversations about our common interest in Newfoundland.

Douglas Rees and five fellow Newfoundlanders, all from St. John's, joined the RRC. They thought they would be able to get into the war in Europe sooner by doing so. Doug's father was a prisoner of war during

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the First World War and I included what Doug sent me about his Dad. John Ford served with the RAF and was taken prisoner at Singapore. John and the other Newfoundlanders that became Japanese POWs were in another section. This all gave good coverage to the Pacific campaign and what our Vets were subjected to as POWs.

I remind readers that "Flash" and Jessie Clayton and Lionel Speller will be inducted into the Canadian Veterans Hall of Valour at the 5th Annual Induction Banquet on Saturday, May 26, 2007. It will again be held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, which offers a special room rate to those identifying themselves as attending the event. I have been successful with having the event changed from the evening to daytime. A cash bar begins at noon and the luncheon will be served at 1 p.m., followed by the inductions. Tickets are \$45.00, and reservations can be made by calling me at 613-724-3223. Reservations will be held until April 26, 2007 when payment is due or they may be cancelled.

Due to a problem, I could not complete the list of those who laid wreaths on November 11, 2006. I sincerely apologize for this and will include it in the next issue of our newsletter. I can report that Dempsey A. Syvret, RRC, assisted by Derrill Henderson, laid a wreath for his fellow Hong Kong Veterans at the National War Memorial in Ottawa.

Connie joins me in wishing everyone a happy Christmas and New Year.

**Central & South East Region:
Maureen Dwyer-Kline**

.....They say "time flies when you're having fun". Well, I sure hope I had fun because time has just about left me behind!!! Where did the summer go? It's the end of October already, Halloween is just a couple of days away and Christmas is just around the

end. I haven't even had the chance to enjoy my garden and yet I'm already ripping out the plants!!!

I'm going to start with my own family first this time, and yes, it has indeed been a very busy summer for us. Two of our children moved into new homes; one in Mississauga and the other moved to Amherstview. Our other son in Barrie blessed us with another granddaughter. Madison Paige was born September 14th. That gives Bob and I a grand total of 6 granddaughters and 1 grandson.

Mom, Bob and I, attended the Granby Reunion in Quebec this past August and had a pretty good time. A lot of new faces, and a number of "old" friends as well.

As for my Mom (Marjorie Dwyer), she has been enjoying good health this year. Had cataract surgery this summer and that went very well. We didn't make it to Verona, New York to gamble, just found other things to keep us busy. My sister Roxanne and her family came from Nova Scotia for a visit; it's always a hoot when we get together. She and her husband Greg headed off to the States to meet up with their motorcycle friends, leaving daughter Jessica behind for an extended visit. Mom really enjoyed the "one-on-one" with her. We are all making plans to go to Calgary next summer and will be looking forward to seeing many of you there. Until then.....

I wasn't able to speak with Ron and Murdena Claircoates from Kingston before the last newsletter so I couldn't let you know that Ron had decided to go into a Nursing Home last December, 2005. He has had problems with his legs for a long time now and had been falling down quite a bit, which caused him to become wheelchair bound. Ron is doing very well and is just outside Kingston in Amherstview, about a 15 minute drive for Murdena who continues to drive herself around and therefore is able to visit with Ron on a daily basis. Murdena tells me that she too had cataract surgery this year, and is doing very well.

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It's always a pleasure to speak with Delilah and Fred Cooper in Keswick. Fred continues to be pain free since hip surgery and able to enjoy his gardening and yard work. They were in Kitchener for Oktoberfest this month and had a great time visiting and dancing the night away!! Both Fred and Delilah are 87 yrs. young but that's not holding them back. They have been taking tours all over Ontario this year, to the North Bay area, Temagami (the leaves were just fabulous I'm told) and to the Toronto area.

Delilah tells me that after 27 yrs. of visiting Florida for the winter months they have decided to sell their motor home and enjoy good ole winter with the rest of us. I should have offered to go for you, Delilah, I hate the cold!!! Like many of us, Fred, Delilah and family are hoping to make the trip out west for the Convention in Calgary.

Fred and Delilah just celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on October 26th. They met with 145 friends and family members, at the Sutton Legion, on October 22nd and had a very special day! Lots of food, flowers in abundance, even special congratulations from Cliff Chadderton, the Queen, government officials, and the Mayor of Keswick. On behalf of everyone, I extend Congratulations to both of you on 60 wonderful years together.

In speaking with Muriel Warner (sister of Leonard Patrick) she told me that her husband, Howard just passed away October 10th. Our heartfelt condolences to you and yours, Muriel. Muriel is doing well, keeping busy with her bridge playing and continuing to crochet baby sweater and hat sets, of which she has 30 sets made already.

Leo Berard is feeling so much better these days. He says the weather has been miserable up in Barrie but it's not keeping him at home, as he enjoys visiting his friends at the Legion whenever possible. Can't keep out of trouble forever, eh, Leo, just no fun in that!!!!

Oda Barlow and I had a great visit via telephone. She tells me her trip to the Mediterranean July 9th – 27th was just fabulous. They visited the Adriatic, Pompeii, Paris, Venice, Croatia and many other great places. Although Oda returned home, her daughter who teaches bridge onboard ship, continued on to a 90 day trip to the Pacific Rim (hope I got that right Oda). No more long trips for the rest of the year though, just short ones to visit with the rest of her family and friends.

Had a very nice conversation with Doreen Fleming (widow of Jim Fleming). She's been doing quite well since Jim passed away, just a little lonely at times. Many of us understand that feeling. Although Doreen can't get out much, she enjoys her apartment and the company of her two cats. We'll talk again soon, Doreen.

“Flash” and Jesse Clayton!!!! I get exhausted following all the activities they involved in!!! I don't know where you get your energy from, but I sure could use some!!! We had a short conversation a couple of weeks ago (I'd called to let “Flash” know that Alfred Mills of Prescott had passed away) and found that both are well but very busy. They too, are planning to attend the General Meeting in Toronto.

Another very busy person is my dear friend, Sylvia Mason. She helps out at the local hospital, works endlessly for the HKVCA and still finds time to e-mail me jokes and short conversations, about this and that and everything. Sylvia and her Uncle Fred usually make it to the Granby Reunion but had to pass this year, so I'm looking forward to seeing you both in Toronto. Until then ...

Speaking of Fred Mason, he's had quite a summer, spending some of it in hospital. But Fred is doing much better and has returned to his trips with the seniors' group, or off gambling somewhere. In fact, he was in Niagara Falls on a trip when I last called.

Like many others of you, he is a hard person to catch at home.

On that note I had better say goodbye. It was wonderful talking to so many of you and I'm sorry that I couldn't reach more of you. Take care and think seriously of going out to Calgary next summer for the Convention. I hope to see many of you there.

By the time you get to read this we will be on top of Christmas, so MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL AND A VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!! "We Will Remember Them".

North Area: Jackie Le Drew

Here it is almost another year gone by. Spoke to most members who were at home and I found that the most common comment from the over 80 group (mostly the veterans and widows) was, "except for a few aches and pains, I'm not doing too bad". I was amazed at their enthusiasm, especially considering what they have been through, compared to the attitude of most people today, who complain about the trivial things.

Most aren't really looking forward to the snow and colder weather. It makes it difficult getting around for those who use canes, walkers and wheelchairs. No one had any news or anything to share from my group but all were grateful to receive a phone call and to the association for keeping in touch with them especially through the newsletter. I enjoy speaking to the vets and especially hearing their little anecdotes.

I wish everyone and their families the blessings of the Christmas season and may 2007 bring peace, health and joy.

Greater Toronto Area: Randall Ross

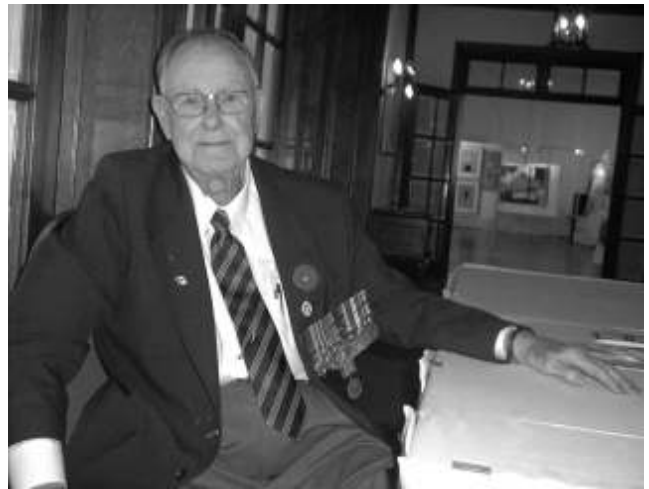
No report available at this time.

Veteran Profile: Fred Mason, RRC

—by Tim Hodkinson

After the General Meeting on Oct. 28th in Toronto, I had the pleasure of talking with Fred Mason about his life story.

Fred was born in Toronto, in York Township, near Dufferin and Eglinton. His dad, a WW1 veteran, had his own barbershop nearby and at 17, Fred apprenticed as a barber and joined his father after 6 months at barber college. Barbering didn't appeal to Fred because of the late hours he had to work, so after finishing High School he went to work for the Dominion Bridge Steel Company (more money too). Not long after that he joined the Royal Regiment of Canada.



Although his basic training in Brantford, Ontario was supposed to be four months, it was shortened to two and he volunteered along with over a hundred other Ontario recruits to be added to the Royal Rifles of Canada, to bring them up to full strength before leaving for Hong Kong.

In fact Fred said that the train carrying the RRC westward stopped in North Bay and the cars, carrying the reinforcements, were just hooked on to continue to Vancouver.

Like many of the HK veterans, Fred spent some time in hospital after arriving home. A new wing had been added to Sunnybrook Hospital to accommodate the veterans and Fred was one of the first ten veterans to move in. A doctor and nurse, from Louisiana in the US, were brought in as the HK veterans suffered from many tropical diseases that Canadian doctors were unfamiliar with.

Along with 26 others, Fred was diagnosed with dysentery, and since they were all carriers, they were sent to a hospital in Malton, Ontario, where they were isolated. I think Fred showed some real talent for medicine when he told the doctor to give him a double dose of the dysentery medicine. However, the doctor wouldn't agree, saying that a double dose would be too much and would probably kill him.

After the 28-day treatment was over, with the exception of Fred, all of the others were cured and were sent back to Sunnybrook. Fred's test showed that he still was carrying dysentery and, as a result, the doctor had to stay with Fred out in Malton for another 28 days. However, this time he took

Fred's wise advice and gave him a double dose and everything then went well.

Fred was finally discharged in March 1946 and he went back to Dominion Bridge Steel to get his job back – the one he had left when he went to fight in the War. As a returning soldier he was legally entitled to return to that job, however the company was uncooperative and Fred looked for work elsewhere.

Not wanting an "indoor job", he made inquiries at Toronto Hydro, who would have hired him if it were not for an equipment shortage. At the suggestion of a friend, he applied to the Toronto Police where he went on to work for the next 10 years.

With his barber shop days now firmly behind him, he became the Chief of Police for the town of Southampton, on the shores of Lake Huron. Seven years later, he moved to Newmarket to start a new police force there. He hired all of the new force's 14 men and remained the Chief for seven years until the force was amalgamated into the now York Regional Police.



However, Fred wasn't interested in becoming the new Regional Chief, but he stayed on for awhile as Staff Inspector. He retired in 1975, but his legacy still lives on in York Region; Fred was the one who hired the current Chief of Police, for York Region, as a cadet, many years ago.

After retiring in 1975, he bought a resort on Lake Buckhorn, north of Peterborough. Six years later he sold it and moved to Keswick, to be closer to his daughter and the rest of the family.

Fred showed his talent, for building design, by designing the floor plan for his new home, which was actually an addition built onto his daughter's house. He still lives there, but sadly, his wife, Irene, passed away in July of 2005 after 64 years of marriage.



Ladies' Side of the Story

**An interview with Rena Cadoret by
Shelagh Purcell**

Rena Cadoret has a unique perspective on the Battle of Hong Kong. She is the daughter of, and the wife of, men who were captured and held prisoner by the Japanese for nearly four years. Both Irvin Doody and Bruce Cadoret survived their captivity and returned home to Gaspé,

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Quebec. Both had been taken prisoner in Hong Kong and then later, together, were transferred to Japan – Irvin to work in the shipyards and Bruce among the men who worked in the coal mines.

Rena was thirteen, the eldest in the family of five children when her father joined the army and went off to war. The youngest child was only six months old, and so, of course, had no memory of their father when he returned four years later.

Maintaining the farm was difficult for Mrs. Doody and her young family – particularly in the winter. There was no electricity, so cooking and heating were done with wood, and the Doodys were fortunate to have their own woodlot on the farm. The closeness and caring of extended family and friends in the Gaspé, who helped with the chores, kept things together for the family until Irvin returned home. Rena said she thought her mother might have received a portion of the pay given to soldiers – about \$75 per month – as income.



Like other families of POWs, Mrs. Doody and her children had no word of Irvin, Rena said, to know whether he was still alive. Then, nearly a year later, a postcard arrived from him to say that he was fine – he was well – and he hoped all of them were well too.

When the prisoners were liberated and returned to Canada, Rena remembered that her father's brothers, and two sisters from Montreal, came to meet him when the family was finally reunited in Gaspé. Three more children were born after the war.

Rena knew Bruce Cadoret before the war because his grandmother was a neighbour. They met again after he returned home, and married in 1946. (They

celebrated their 60th Anniversary in September.) Their first child, Blair, was born in Gaspé.

But jobs were scarce, so they decided to move to Toronto where Bruce started working for the City of Toronto in 1949. Richard and Anne were born there. Rena and Bruce lived there until 1984 when they moved to Napanee – then later took up residence in Cobourg, where they live today. The death of their eldest son, Blair, from cancer in 2000 was a devastating blow. They are very close to their son, Richard, in Toronto, a designer and artist, and their daughter, Anne, and son-in-law Greg, who have opened a unique store in Port Hope, where Greg designs and builds all of the wrought iron pieces sold there.

Rena said the children would almost rather not know the horrors of Hong Kong. Their father & grandfather didn't speak much about their experiences – but all of them were proud of both men. The whole family attended the Convention in Ottawa in 2005 and were thrilled to meet so many of their friends there.

Rena said she and Bruce have always felt close to the veterans and their wives and families that they came to know. "They were such wonderful people, we've enjoyed having them as friends," she said. The Cadorets kept their connection to the veterans through meetings, in Toronto, of the Hong Kong survivors, and they attended as many of the reunions and gatherings in Granby and New Richmond as they could, catching up with others from the Gaspé. Rena found it hard to believe that the veterans had to fight to get their proper pensions after the war, and was glad that individuals in the Hong Kong Veterans Association had worked to get the men the compensation they deserved. Knowing that the HKVCA is now bringing the Hong Kong story to the schools, Rena commented that it was important that young people know the sacrifices the men endured after the battle of Hong

Kong. But Rena expressed regret that nations still continue to fight wars, having learned nothing from the suffering and hardship experienced by the soldiers and their families as a result of these conflicts.

Rena and Bruce were part of the 1980 Pilgrimage to Hong Kong with fifty other veterans and family members. The hardest part for Rena was the trip to Sai Wan Cemetery where so many of the names on the headstones were men she had known at home in the Gaspé – and most were so young. The trip continued on to include Manila, Singapore and Thailand (where Rena and Bruce had a ride on an elephant). The Cadorets are hoping to go to Calgary in 2007 for the Hong Kong Convention.

Both Cadorets have been able to maintain fairly good health. They used to go to Florida in the winter until one of the hurricanes damaged their property there. Now they have discovered cruises, and with their children have enjoyed many voyages in recent years. At their condo on the waterfront in Cobourg, Bruce spoke about the years as a POW. The men talked about what they would do when they got home, he said. It kept them thinking positively instead of dwelling on the situation they were in. For Rena and Bruce, those days are not forgotten but are part of a past history. Now they can enjoy their retirement, looking out onto the water of Lake Ontario from their home in Cobourg.

Shelagh Purcell is one of the four daughters of Leonard Corrigan

DO YOU HAVE A BONE TO PICK?

The body of any organization has four bones: Wish bones, who spend all their time wishing someone else will do all the work. Jaw Bones, who do all the talking and very little else; Knuckle Bones, who knock everything that everybody else tries to do and Back Bones, who get under the load and do all the work!

NOTES FROM THE HONG KONG VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF CANADA, ONTARIO BRANCH



Hello everyone—I'd like to congratulate the HKVCA on the great job they've been doing assisting in the conventions and meetings.

August 15, 2007 is the date for the National Convention in Calgary. I will try to get a preferred rate with WestJet for our HKVCA members. We just had our meeting of the National Council of Veterans Associations of Canada. Cliff Chadderton was re-elected as Chair, along with myself and Les Peate as Vice-Chairs.

There have been changes to the benefits available for HK veterans. Many more things are covered, such as, Housekeeping, Lawn cutting and Weeding. You can also get a cane, if you need one, and have Heavy Housekeeping done twice a year, if necessary. Once you have qualified for Disability Pension, the DVA will send you advanced payment for Housekeeping and other VIP coverage, so you will have the money ahead of time to pay for the services when they're done. Pedicure (toenail cutting) is also covered. Although payment for pedicure is not made to the Veteran, in advance, the person doing this can bill DVA directly.

Thank you to those of you who have made donations recently. Dues are still only \$15.00 per year. "No dues – no news." Dues and donations should be made payable to: HKVA, Ontario Branch, and mailed to our Treasurer: J. C. MacMillan, 909–70 Delisle Ave. Tor. ON M4V 1S7.

I wish all our members, including our sons and daughters in the HKVCA and their families a very Merry Christmas and happy holiday season. God Bless.

John Stroud, President, Ontario Branch, HKVA



The leadership of the HKVCA is pleased to announce that Denise McLachlan, daughter of Tony Gelley (WG) has stepped into the role of Secretary for the Ontario Region.

Welcome, Denise!!

Memories of Kenneth Jackson (WG)

.....By Shirley Harper Goodwin

I have decided to start writing some of my memories of my Dad, Kenneth Jackson.

The first memory I have was when he was leaving for Jamaica. I remember being at the railroad station, he kissed me and said, "Next time I see you, you will have those front teeth" – but I never saw him again. We heard from him frequently from Jamaica.

I have many pictures. He was very good at remembering birthdays and other special occasions,. I have birthday cards. Then we received word that he was being sent to Hong Kong, no training for this, no ammunition, a complete disaster. I remember my grandparents being very upset. I guess my brother and I didn't realize the distance and the danger.

My mother left us when I was 5 and Morley was 3, so the three of us went to live with my grandparents in Valparaiso, Saskatchewan, very fine Scottish people, pioneers in Saskatchewan and I loved them very much. Even though loving relatives surrounded "Mo" and me, we still hoped what when our Dad returned we would be a family again. That was not to be!

Then came the fateful Xmas day when Hong Kong fell to the Japanese. We sat at the radio all day. What a sad day it was. I cannot find the words to describe it.

We heard from him twice while he was a prisoner of war – very short letters – but certainly not written by my Dad. They spoke of returning home and killing the fatted calf. Also how well he was being treated. The only real thing was his signature "Slow". We heard many horror stories. I never talked about them then and I still don't!

Then came the September when they were released. We received word my Dad would be arriving in Vancouver. My dear Gram and I were going to Vancouver to be there when he arrived. Two days later we received another telegram saying my dear Dad died on board ship off the coast of Manila and was buried at sea. A family friend, Roy Harper, who was to become my father-in-law, delivered the telegrams. It was very difficult for him.

Can you imagine the heartbreak? I cry just writing about it. My poor grandparents and "Mo" and I were absolutely devastated. What was to become of us without our Dad? My grandparents kept us with them. We were loved, cared for and educated and taught to be decent people. I shall be forever grateful to them, they were Jessie & Findlay Milne. My Gram lived to 96 and spent much of her last years in our home. She was always referred to as "Grama Jessie".

Apparently, at the time of release, the Japanese gave some of the prisoners Saki, supposedly to celebrate. This took place in a hospital. My Dad had been wounded then and remained there working until their release. The Chaplain told us it was only his personality and acceptance of "things" that kept him alive. However, the Saki was poisoned. Others survived it but my Dad didn't. He was very weak.

The Chaplain told us this story and I have heard it from others since then. I have been in touch with a few people; one in particular is Leo Berard from Barrie, Ont. I read in the Barrie paper that on the 50th anniversary of the fall of Hong Kong, Leo was

placing a wreath on the Cenotaph, so my son and I went down. The man who was in charge at Camp Borden came over and asked my reason for being there, so I told him and he told Leo who came over to me, took my hand and said, "Madam, I know all about your Dad". Needless to say I shed a few tears. Leo and I have placed a wreath on the Cenotaph every November 11th since then. Leo is a fine man, he had written a book of his experiences titled, "One Lucky Canadian".

War is a terrible thing. It certainly affected our lives. We had no Dad, our children missed the joy of having a grandfather and my Dad missed the joy of being a grandparent. One tries to sort things out but I was very bitter for a long time.

I have been very fortunate to have had a happy marriage for 40 years to John Harper (who knew my Dad and curled for him as a boy). We had three beautiful children, Jayne Elizabeth, Marci Ann and Kenneth John (who looks like my Dad). I now have five beautiful grandchildren. My husband John died in 1991.

I was alone for 7 years when I met a very fine Scotsman, Lennel Goodwin who had also lost his partner. We were married last year and are sharing a good life. My brother Kenneth Morley Jackson is retired and living in Abbotsford, BC. He has four sons, Kenneth, Bradley (deceased), Michael and Patrick.

One never gets over the loss of a parent; in our case it was both parents. On every special occasion, birth, graduation, weddings, even funerals, I think of him. Every time I hear John McDiarmid sing, "Dance with Me Daughter" I think yes, I would love to have danced with my Dad, "Slow".



Membership Review

—Lori Smith, Chair

Here it is December. Where has this year disappeared? It has just sped by in a blur. I want to wish you and your families all a very Happy and Safe Holiday.

December is also the time of year I first give you notice of your membership renewal for the following year. Some of our members have been renewing for more than 1 year at a time – some have renewed into 2008 – 2 or 3 years at a time. Those members that have already renewed for 2007, as well as our widows and our veterans, will receive their 2007 membership stickers and 2007 cards in the mail shortly.

Unfortunately, in 2006, we have lost a lot of our regular members who have not renewed their membership for 2006. Or maybe the Year of the Veteran is long over for them. One thing I have noticed is that once one of our veterans is deceased, we quite often lose his family as members. This is truly unfortunate.

The original organization – the forerunner – was the Hong Kong Veterans Association. It was started many many years ago by our veterans. When we promised to carry on as the Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association, we assumed the children and the grandchildren, friends and other relatives, would stay involved and purchase memberships.

The membership purchase allows the veterans' mandate to carry on into the future. Please remind your children and your siblings how very important membership is for our organization to continue. Membership details to keep in mind:

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- The Association's Membership Year is January through December.
- We would request that you complete the Membership Information form every year in December. You'll find it on page 20 of your December Newsletter. Whether you are a veteran, a widow, a new or a renewing member, we need to keep updating our Membership database.

It is important for us to have accurate information about all our members in order to be able to communicate with everyone.

- New and Renewing membership dues are \$15.00 per year.
- Veterans and widows do NOT pay dues. Their memberships are free.

Please take a moment and complete the attached Membership Information form. Send it and your cheque in the amount of \$15.00 per year, to the address on the form.

**Send your membership to:
Membership Chair: Lori Smith
143 Highview Ave. West. London, ON N6J 4C7**

HONOUR WREATH CHAIR REPORT

As, many of you know, the position of Honour Wreath Chair is new. I appreciate the opportunity to serve with your Ontario Region Executive as the liaison between the Association, the families of Veterans and the local branches of the Canadian Legion.

My role is to arrange for a special Honour Wreath, donated by the Ontario Region of the HKVCA, to be laid at the Remembrance Day ceremonies across Ontario. The hope is to have the Honour Wreath dedicated to All Hong Kong Veterans and laid by a family member of a Veteran who has died in 2006.

How does it work? Once I have been notified by the Executive, of the passing of an Ontario Veteran, I contact the family by letter and ask if they would like to participate in this event and which branch of the Legion would be their choice.



Vicky Hedelius at General Meeting

Once we have established contact, I make the arrangements regarding the purchase of the wreath, the details of the ceremony and inform the family.

As this is a new endeavour it is filled with many challenges, but the goal is obtainable: to continue to hold up the memory of our loved ones who served their country with courage and valour. We will remember them. By this simple yet meaningful act, we shall continue to share their story with the generations that follow. Thank you for this privilege to serve.

This year's Honour Wreath Recipients

James Fleming—RRC—Peterborough—Legion 52

Peter Anthony (Tony) Gelley—WG—St. Catharines – Legion 24

Herbert (Bert) Worthington—British Navy—North York, Toronto—Legion 66

Respectfully submitted, **(Rev.) Vicky Hedelius**
(Daughter of Herb Fortune, WG)

ONTARIO HKVCA FINANCIAL STATUS (as of October 31, 2006)

Our financial position has not changed materially since my last report in the June newsletter.

For those who may have missed the last report, here's a brief recap, updated to the end of October:

We opened the year with \$16,612 in our account. Since then we've received \$18,519 in revenue, of which a great deal was funding provided by Veterans Affairs Canada for our French Ten Lessons project, and the remainder mostly dues and donations.

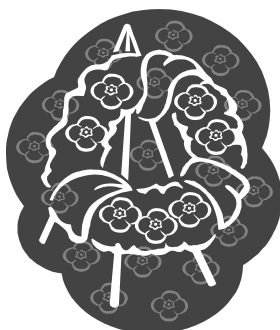
We have had \$14,225 in expenses, much of which was associated with the translation and production of the French Ten Lessons books, expenses for printing and mailing of the June newsletter and the share of membership dues we pay to the National HKVCA.

This left us at the end of October with a balance of \$20,906.

.....Mark Purcell, Treasurer

IN MEMORIAM

Remembering the Hong Kong Veterans who have recently left us:



- Geoffrey Marston, RRC
- Jack Rose, RCCS
- Fred Ryman, WG
- Maurice Lapointe, WG
- Robert James (Jim) Fleming, RRC
- Alfred Wagner, WG
- Joseph N. LeBlanc, RRC
- Peter Antony (Toni) Gelley, WG
- L/C Robert Acton, RCCS
- Thomas G. Jones, RRC
- Clifford Matthews, WG
- Alfred Mills, RRC
- Oswald Clark, RRC

We will also remember:

- Aini Dissing, widow of Eric Dissing, RRC
- Mary Hall, widow of William Hall, WG
- Rita T. Burton, widow of W. Keith Burton, RRC
- Rhona Muir, wife of Bill Muir, WG
- Thelma Cole, widow
- Monique Russell, widow of Albert, RRC
- Jeanette Palmer, widow of George T. Palmer, RRC
- Ruth Kellas, widow of William A. Kellas, WG
- Irene Cotton, widow of Joseph Leonard Cotton, RRC
- Dorothy Varley, widow of Les Varley, RRC
- Winnifred Schofield, widow of Reginald Schofield, RRC

Our condolences to their families

'WE WILL REMEMBER THEM'

**Report on the OHASSTA Conference:
Nov. 3 & 4/06**

The Ontario History and Social Science Teachers' Association of Ontario (OHASSTA) holds a conference each year at the Holiday Inn on Dixon Road in Mississauga. Our Publications Committee has had a display at this event for the last three years. We became involved for the first time because we had a workshop that we wished to present, relating to what was just being published as the Ten Lessons. George MacDonell spoke in that situation, as did Nick Brune, a History teacher at Iroquois Ridge High School in Oakville, and the author of the Ten Lessons. Nick is an outstanding teacher who won the Governor General's Award for Excellence in the Teaching of Canadian History in 2002, and is known for his exemplary teaching style, and his work writing textbooks for Ontario schools.

We have come a long way since that time, but we have continued to have a display table at the OHASSTA Conference so that more and more people can become familiar with the Ten Lessons, and other publications we have to offer. We believe that History teachers and their students need to become more familiar with the role of the soldiers in Hong Kong,



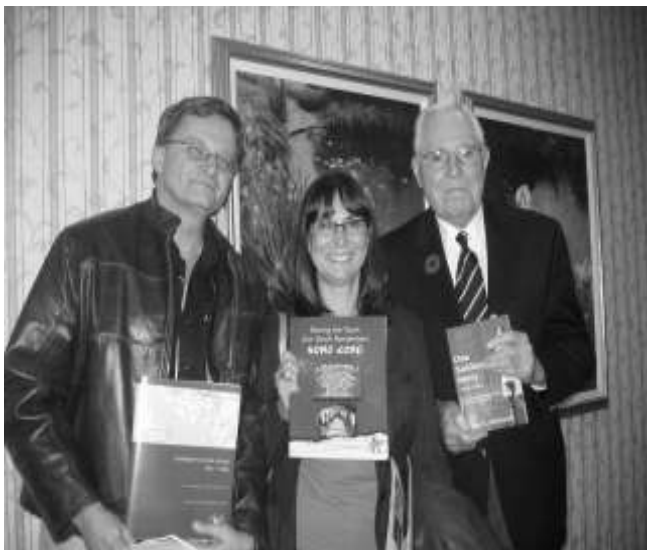
Mark Purcell, our Regional Treasurer, at the OHASSTA

and we continue to work at bringing the story of Hong Kong to the general public as well.

On Friday, November 3rd, and Saturday, November 4th, we were able, once again, to bring to the attention of at least 250 of the teachers at the Conference, the various publications we have available. We had the additional advantage this time of having with us copies of our newly-printed French translation of the Ten Lessons, as well as George MacDonell's wonderful "One Soldier's Story" and Bernard Castonguay's "Prisonnier de guerre au Japon".

We were also able to introduce the teachers to a new and exciting way to work with material related to the Battle of Hong Kong, and the soldiers who fought there. We have developed an Essay Contest, which you can see detailed on our **HKVCA Website at www.hkvca.ca**. The object is to have a student research some aspect of the Hong Kong story and write an essay based on what the student has learned. There are two categories of winners, Junior and Senior, and first and second prizes in each category. The Senior 1st prize winner receives \$200, and the 2nd prize winner, \$100. The Junior 1st prize winner receives \$150, and the 2nd prize winner, \$75. An important feature of the contest is the fact that the winning entries will be published on the HKVCA Website. Some of the teachers at the Conference told us they already have students in mind who would be ideal candidates to take part in the contest.

Nancy Hamer Strahl, a History teacher herself, who is now an Honorary member of HKVCA, Ontario Region, gave a workshop on Friday afternoon which dealt with the Durham Region students' pilgrimage to Hong Kong in December of 2005. She made much mention of her connection with HKVCA, and the work we are doing, and prompted a number of people to come down to our display and look over our publications. George MacDonell also spoke at the



Nick Brune, Nancy Hamer Strahl George MacDonell

Workshop and was warmly received. Nancy has put together a remarkable book called "Passing The Torch – Our Youth Remembers Hong Kong", detailing many of the stories and letters and other creative pieces of work by the students of the Durham Region.

The Publications Committee will be part of a final workshop in Peterborough on December 1st for the Kawartha Pine Ridge School Board. On this very special occasion, Nick Brune will go through some of the many ways to use the Ten Lessons, and will be followed by George MacDonell and "Flash" Clayton, giving us their view of their experiences in Hong Kong and the many things that the Hong Kong story can teach us about the past, the present and the future.

It has been a most interesting year. Many thanks to those who have been a part of the effort to increase awareness of the Hong Kong story.

Pat Turcotte—Publications Chair—Ontario Region, HKVCA

A Thought to Ponder

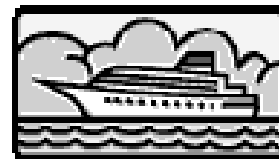
About two years ago, on a cruise through the western Mediterranean, aboard a Princess liner, at dinner there was an elderly lady sitting along the rail of the grand stairway in the main dining room. All of the staff, ship's officers, waiters, busboys, etc. all seemed very familiar with this lady. Many wondered who she was, expecting to be told she was in some way connected to the shipping line. However, that wasn't the case. I had heard that she had been on board for at least the last 4 cruises. Upon leaving the dining room one evening, I asked her if it were true that she had been on the last few cruises and she replied, "Yes, that's true." I asked her if she wasn't bored—no she said, "It's cheaper than living in a nursing home".

I wondered how that could be? Well, here's the proof—:

The average cost for a nursing home is \$200 per day. On a Princess Cruise, one can get a long term discount and a senior discount price of approximately \$135 per day. That leaves \$65 a day for:

- 1 Gratuities which will be about \$10 per day
- 2 One can have as many as 10 meals a day, provided they can waddle to the restaurant, or they can have room service (which means—breakfast in bed—every day of the week!)
- 3 Princess has as many as three swimming pools, a workout room, free washers and dryers, and shows every night.
- 4 They provide free toothpaste and razors, and free soap and shampoo.

- 5 You'll meet new people every cruise.
- 6 Light bulb need changing? Need to have the mattress replaced? – No Problem! They will fix everything and apologize for your inconvenience.
- 7 You'll get clean sheets and towels every day, and you won't even have to ask for them.



Now hold on for the best! Do you want to see South America, the Panama Canal, Tahiti, Australia, New Zealand, Asia, or name where you want to go? Princess will have a ship ready to go. So don't look for me in a nursing home—just call shore to ship!



ORDER FORM

Passing the Torch: Our Youth Remembers Hong Kong

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Quantity Ordered: _____

Cheque Amount: \$ _____ (\$25 per copy, including postage)

Please make cheque out to "HKVCA", and mail this form and cheque to:

P.O. Box 381, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 2H6

