

The Spirit of the Torch

"All Generations of the Hong Kong family remember with pride"
Hong Kong Veteran Commemorative Association of Ontario

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June 2003

Regional Director's Message

Hear Ye! Hear Ye! Hear Ye!
The Election Year Of 2003 Is Upon Us!

Thus, I am officially advising all members of this fact and asking our members to take an active roll in serving "YOUR" association. As a matter of fact, both the National and Regional HKVCA will be holding elections this year, in accordance with our Constitution. All positions are open.

When the Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association National level was formed in 1996, it was apparent that the Regional Level had to be in place as well, in order to solidify the association as a whole. It has been 2 1/2 years since your first, and current, Ontario Region Executive took on these responsibilities on your behalf. I would be remiss if I didn't mention that the task appeared to be onerous, at the very least, because of the vast area we, as the administration, were trying to serve. However, we collectively put our thoughts and efforts together and stayed the course.

This election is your opportunity to pursue the goals of our organization and make a definitive contribution on behalf of the Hong Kong veterans. Ultimately, we would like all Canadians to be aware of the true importance of the Siege of Hong Kong in understanding this country's role in World War II, and we want them to know too about the post-war battles that every veteran fought in his private life for dignity and recognition.

The Curriculum Committee's Up-Date on the Hong Kong Unit for Secondary Schools: One hundred copies of the 10-Lesson Units have been received from our printer. Some were on display at the HKVA meeting in Toronto on April 30, 2003. Both Pat Turcotte and Nick Brune have been circulating copies to various people in the educational field, and to the appropriate contacts in the Ministry Of Education. This hasn't been an easy assignment. However, it is a work-in-progress that is eliciting a very favourable response on the part of those who have seen the lessons. The final goal is to reach

the History teachers in the classrooms, and through them, the students of Ontario. The task is nearing its completion. Well done, Pat and Nick!

On May 8, 2003, Pat and I attended the Planning Services Board Meeting at Oshawa City Hall. This was the follow-up to a contact made in January of this year, when we learned that nine Hong Kong Veterans who were residents of Oshawa at the outbreak of WWII were going to be considered for a list of Oshawa servicemen who might have streets named after them. At that time, The City of Oshawa approved a Street Naming Policy honouring the Memory of the War Dead and War Veterans. The names of the Hong Kong Veterans being considered are as follows: Edward C. Bolton, Henry R. Galbraith, John E. Glenn, Kenneth R. Inche, William J. Lee, Edward C. Lott, Jeffery C. Marston (living in Oshawa), Frederick C. Mason (living in Keswick) and Matthew W. Murray.

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 serves on Remembrance Day, V-J Day and other special occasions
- ✓ To orally proclaim 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

Editorial Staff: Editor- Pat Turcotte
Set up & Distribution-Lori Smith

Remembrance Day participation has increased dramatically here in Ontario. The numbers of HKVCA wreath-layers in the different communities have doubled in the past two years from 16 in 2001 to 33 last year. I dare say, our objective is to reach a three-digit number in the very near future. Oshawa is on board for this year and there are possibly two more in the Durham Region. I urge you to participate in this year's Remembrance Day Ceremonies in your area.

Sadly, on behalf of your Executive Council, may I offer our deepest condolences to the wives and families of veterans who passed away in the first six months of this year. PEACE be with them as they rejoin their comrades. WE WILL NEVER FORGET.

It has been suggested by Lori Smith that Ontario hold an Annual Dinner/meeting to coincide with the HKVA's Fall meeting. The location would be London, Ontario, and presently suggestions range from the Ramada Inn to a Legion situation. More on that later. The time tentatively would be in late September or early October each year. I like the idea. We'd like to know how the membership feels about the possibility. Would you attend? Let an Executive member or your Area Rep. know whether you'd be interested in such a possibility ASAP so that we can start planning for it.

Travel Plans:

The Quebec Region are holding a reunion in New Richmond from June 27-29, 2003. Phil, Lucette and their administration people always put on a good show and will welcome you with open arms. I've been advised to inform everyone to book their hotel reservations before June 10, 2003.

As previously mentioned, the National Convention is held in Victoria, B.C. August 13-17, 2003. No doubt you have received your invitation kits, so I need not go any further with details.

As always, your input relative to any concerns or issues is most welcome. Have a safe and fun summer!

Best Regards,
David J. Murray

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The Word from the Area Reps :

There are a number of changes in the Area Reps' situations which have made for different kinds of contributions to this issue of the Newsletter. We thought it would be an appropriate time for a brief profile of the Area Reps and their roles.

We should point out that the main task for each of the Area Reps is to be in contact with the members in their area, most particularly the veterans and the widows, at least twice a year. When possible, the Area Rep shares the news about those in his or her area in the two Newsletters we publish in June and December of each year. When that isn't possible, the Area Rep often offers to provide a special feature for the Newsletter.

In this last few months, the Executive has discovered that in most areas the number of members has increased to the point where Area Reps are trying to keep in touch with as many as 50 to 55 members, a difficult task,

as you can imagine. The solution: **We're looking for persons in every area who would like to assist the Area Rep in reaching the members. If you're interested, get in touch with any member of the Executive, or your own Area Rep, to volunteer your help. That way we can serve the membership even better.**

What follows will give you an idea of what's happening in each area, and, in the process, provide you with short profiles of our current Area Reps.

South West Area:

Lori Smith, daughter of Harry Atkinson, WG, and living in London, has been a hard-working member since she first became involved with HKVCA. This past November she was able to hold a get-together with veterans, wives and family members which was quite successful. She keeps in contact with members, and has managed to attend a few of our joint HKVA/HKVCA meetings in Toronto. This year she has taken on the newly created role of Membership Chair on the Executive. For that reason, she is looking for one, preferably two, volunteers to help get in touch with members as Area Rep. If you live in South West and could assist Lori, she would really appreciate your help. Lori has written several special articles for past Newsletters and has contributed one in this issue as well. The Executive thanks her for important contributions to the Association.

Central and South East Area:

Leon Sokalski, son of George Sokalski, WG, has done an excellent job as the Area Rep in C& SE. Not only has he managed to bring lots of good news to us in the Newsletters about the "doings" of various members in his area, he has also been able to attend Joint Meetings of the HKVA/HKVCA in Toronto on several occasions, a gesture much appreciated by the members of the Executive. At the end of March, he and his wife, Joyce, moved from

Gravenhurst to Hamilton, which meant that we had to begin a search for someone to take his place. Fortunately, Muriel Warner, who had just recently moved to Uxbridge, agreed to take over. Her brother, Leonard Patrick was with the Royal Rifles, and she is most interested in being in touch with fellow members, especially the veterans and widows. She is new to the area, and has just recently joined HKVCA, so members should feel free to give her a call, and help her get acquainted with the area. Welcome, Muriel!



Fred Mason, chatting with Muriel Warner, the new Area Rep for Central and South East

West Central Area:

As we have already mentioned, Leon Sokalski recently moved to Hamilton, which is in the West Central area. Coincidentally, Rickie Edey, daughter of "Flash" and Jessie Clayton, has decided that for health reasons she will not be able to continue as Area Rep in West Central, and Leon Sokalski has agreed to take her place. We thank Rickie Edey for her past contributions, and her offer to assist Leon in reaching some of the members. Since the WC area is such a large one, it would be a good

idea for Leon to have someone in the Niagara or Mississauga area particularly to offer some assistance as well – especially since Leon is new to the area! Do get in touch with Leon, or others on the Executive if you can help!

North East Area:

Ron McGuire, whom many of you will know as a Postal Historian who has provided well-received lectures related to Hong Kong at our Conventions. He lives in Ottawa, and has been a regular contributor to the Newsletter. He has written articles in past issues, and has provided us with our Hong Kong Veteran profile in this one. As the Area Rep in North East, he has managed to get in touch with many members during the course of a year. Ron has also helped spearhead our campaign to encourage members to sponsor wreaths for our Hong Kong veterans in their own communities. A much-appreciated HKVCA member!

Ron has asked us to pass along this messages: Eric Maloney, RRC, had a bad fall on ice in mid-January resulting in a knee and hip injury which has prevented him from standing on his right leg. He is hopeful that a knee brace which has been ordered will help him to walk in the near future. In spite of this problem, along with a painful case of shingles, he is maintaining his normally cheerful, positive disposition. Ron, who speaks to him regularly, is sure we all wish Eric a speedy recovery.

GTA Area:

Randall Ross, the son of Lance Ross, RRC, is an extra-busy fellow. Not only does he work for the City of Toronto, but he is heavily involved with the educational situation in the city as the Chair of the School Council where his children attend classes. The latter responsibility involves a lot of meetings, so that he hasn't managed to reach as many of the HKVCA members in the GTA as he'd like. He is most anxious to have at least one person assist him with his calls to members, if not two! By all means get in touch with Randall (check the

Directory on the last page of this Newsletter for his contact information) if you can help.

The North Area:

Liana Frenette is the granddaughter of John James, a WG who currently lives in Emo in Northern Ontario. Liana, who lives in Thunder Bay, contributed a beautiful poem to our June Newsletter last year and we hope she will send us other material as well. This year has been an extremely busy one for her, and we do hope that someone will volunteer to give her some help getting in touch with people, as she is working and has a young family as well. The North covers such a wide area that it's a difficult task reaching people, even when you're not as busy as Liana! We appreciate the effort she has made.

To all our members: Keep in touch with our Area Reps, and help them help you as members by offering to assist them where you can!

A New Initiative: The Membership Liaison

Closely tied to an Area Rep's job, but quite different from it, the newly-created Membership Liaison position involves all of the HKVCA Ontario members who have e-mail. The member who has agreed to be the first person to hold that position is Sandi Cameron from Nepean. In the following report, Sandi tells us about the objectives of this new post.

Membership Liaison – A New HKVCA Role

In March of 2003, a questionnaire was e-mailed to all HKVCA members who had given us their e-mail addresses on their Membership Application Form. This questionnaire requested an e-mail reply from members who would be interested in more interaction with the association via e-mail (i.e. bulletins, announcements, correspondence, etc.) and/or in having their "Spirit of the Torch" Newsletters e-mailed to them (as

opposed to paper mail – a cost-saving incentive).

To date, 34 members have shown interest and they have received the following information in four e-mailed bulletins:

- Initial Questionnaire; Updates on the Ten lessons Project as well as news regarding the sale and sponsorships of George MacDonell's book, "One Soldier's Story".
- Gord Hutchinson - the Hong Kong Veteran's 80th birthday
- Notice of the Joint General Meeting on April 30th for all members of HKVA and HKVCA
- Advance notice of the "C" Force Exhibit and Presentation by Ron McGuire at the RA Centre in Ottawa

If you would like to be on our E-mail Distribution List, there are several special advantages:

1. We are able to connect with you for your opinions on various issues that come up.
2. You have the opportunity to share information with us, and other HKVCA e-mail members if you wish to do so.
3. You will be able to receive your Newsletters by e-mail, if that is your preference.

If there are any HKVCA members who have e-mail and have not yet indicated that they would like to be a part of this e-mail Distribution Service, please get in touch with Sandi Cameron, Membership Liaison at sandicameron@rogers.com

(Ed.'s Note: The Executive thanks Sandi for the great work she has already done in her new job!)

Notes from The Hong Kong Veterans Association of Canada, Ontario Branch

By John Stroud, RRC

Well, spring has finally arrived, after the severe winter blasts the country has been experiencing.

In the Toronto Star, April 7 2003, there was an article written by Staff Reporter, Jim Wilkes, titled "War Veterans Keep Stories Alive in Canadian Schools". I contacted Pat Turcotte, found out that she had kept the article, and one which had followed on April 14, 2003 by another Star reporter, Cal Millar, who discussed a World War II get-together titled "They'd rather talk about anything but". We thought it would be a good idea to get in touch with one of these two gentlemen, and Pat called, reaching Cal Millar. Mr. Millar agreed to come to the Joint General Meeting of the HKVA/HKVCA to be held on Wednesday, April 30th at the Legion at Woodbine & Mortimer in Toronto. He arrived at the beginning of the meeting, listening intently to what was transpiring. After the Tribute to Fallen Comrades conducted by John, Pat summarized what has happened relative to the Ten Lessons that she and Nick Brune have been working on over the past ten months. The details will be dealt with in another article in this Newsletter, but the veterans were thanked for their generous financial report, and Pat in turn was thanked for Nick Brune's efforts, and her own, on the behalf of the Hong Kong veterans. Nick has spent many hours researching and writing what has become a reflection of the Hong Kong story as told by our Hong Kong veterans. Those at the meeting were able to look through a few of the first-run copies. Pat and Nick will continue to work on the focus of this project, which is to have these lessons used in the Secondary Schools of Ontario.



Nick Brune, author of the Ten Lessons titled "Canada in Hong Kong: 1941-1945 The Forgotten Heroes", and History teacher at Iroquois High School in Oakville, Ontario

Veterans Affairs:

Mr. Jack Stagg has replaced Larry Murray as Deputy Minister of Veterans Affairs.

****News Flash:** The Minister of Veterans Affairs, the Hon. Dr. Rey D. Pagtakhan announced on May 12th that he will table legislation to improve the health programme for veterans, including giving surviving spouses lifelong housekeeping, and groundskeeping services.

Dues:

Your 2003 dues of \$15.00 should now have been received. Please mail your cheque to:
James C. MacMillan,
70 Delisle Avenue, Apt. 909,
Toronto, ON M4V 1S7

Remember – No dues, no news! Many thanks to the veterans and widows who have made donations.

Ottawa – November 7, 2002:

The Minister of Veterans Affairs Honours Veterans' Champions in the Senate.

So read the headline in an Ottawa Newspaper, alongside the picture of the honorees seated in the gallery of the Senate Chamber. Veterans Affairs Minister Rey Pagtakhan presented the Commendation Medal and Certificate to a number of veterans including John Stroud, Vice Chairman of the National Council of Veterans Associations, and last living founder of the Hong Kong Veterans Association of Canada, as well as William Mayne for his dedicated work and long association with the Sir Arthur Pearson War Blinded Association and H. Clifford Chadderton, CEO of the War Amps of Canada, and Chairman of the National Council of Veterans' Associations. Congratulations all!

National Convention from August 13 to August 17, 2003:

Hope to see all the veterans and their families at the National Convention in Victoria. It will be a very memorable and worthwhile event. By the way: Did you know that the veteran on the Canadian \$10.00 bill is a Hong Kong veteran – Henry Lyons, RRC!

Wishing you all a Healthy and Happy summer season!

John Stroud, President,
Ontario Branch, HKVA

Profiles of Our Hong Kong Veterans

Kenneth Alexander Ewing, E-30578
Royal Rifles of Canada

Ken was born on the 7th of August, 1925, in Hampton, New Brunswick. As a youngster he had four years with the Hampton Army Cadet Corps. While a high school student he followed the example of his older brothers. Initially, he served with the 8th Hussars, and later, the New Brunswick Rangers. His

ambition in those days was to eventually become a doctor.

Like his brothers and older friends, Ken wanted to enlist soon after war broke out. On the 4th of November, 1940, Ken joined the Regiment at Sussex Camp, N.B. He had just had his 15th birthday three months earlier. To overcome the little problem of being underage, Ken simply stated that he was born in 1921! When this was discovered, his parents were very unhappy and finally only agreed to approve Ken's enlistment after a promise that he would complete his education after the war. They actually hoped he would get fed up, leave, and return to school, which, because of his age, he could do. However, the next month he was off to Newfoundland with "W" Force. During the next nine months, Ken served in Botwood, Gander and Saint John's as part of "C" Force; the rest of the story is well-known to us.

As a POW in Hong Kong, Ken helped to build Kai Tak Airfield. In January, 1943, he was sent to Japan with the first Canadian draft. While working in a shipyard, Camp 3-D near Tokyo, he developed a cough which continued to worsen. The Japanese were terrified of communicable diseases, for fear of contracting such diseases themselves. If there was any good luck for Japanese-held POWs, Ken had some in a round about way. When it was determined he had tuberculosis he was sent on the 25th of March, 1944, to Shinagawa, an excuse for a hospital in Tokyo. Ken spent the rest of the war there. After over two years, he was no longer forced to perform grueling slave labour on a starvation diet. This helped him overcome wet and dry beri-beri and pellagra and to better fight his T.B. He was also fortunate to receive some good medical treatment from Dr. Tony Dawson-Grove, a British chest specialist with the Royal Navy, also taken at Hong Kong. In fact, he credits this doctor with saving his life. Ken recalls that "hospital" conditions were no better than the prison camps, nor were the rations. Medication

of any kind was virtually non-existent. The only real benefit from being quarantined was to be no longer worked to exhaustion, or worse.

Some of Ken's fond memories were the day the guards lined up to hear the Emperor's speech confirming their surrender, and the Americans dropping 45-gallon drums of supplies by parachute. On the 16th of August, he was among the first of thousands of POWs to learn that they were going to be liberated.

After being freed by the Americans on the 29th of August, Ken spent several weeks on the U.S.S. Benevolence, a hospital ship anchored in Tokyo Bay. When well enough to travel, he came home via San Francisco aboard another hospital ship, appropriately named the U.S.S. Rescue. When he reached Vancouver on the 10th of October, he required another period of hospitalization. After the train trip across Canada, Ken had only one day at home with his parents before going back into hospital. For the next two years, he would be in and out of military hospitals in St. John and Fredericton. Meanwhile, he was demobilized on the 21st of March, 1946.

During the period Ken was trying to regain his health, he took courses with the Canadian Legion and the Canadian Vocational Training School and obtained his high school diploma. His T.B. was finally cured in 1948, permitting him to attend the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton. He majored in Geology, graduating in 1952. While at University, Ken continued to serve with the militia and his old outfit, the 8th Hussars. He was a sergeant when he left on the 14th of May, 1951.

Ken's first and only employment after graduation was with the Geological Survey of Canada. He moved to Ottawa, and had what he describes as an "enjoyable, satisfying

career", retiring in 1976 from the Survey and Mapping Branch.

On the 30th of October in 1957, Ken married Susan Woods. Together they raised Marjorie, Joan, John, David, Paul, Michael, Stephen, Tom and Ann. They have all had successful careers and those who have married have given the Ewings fourteen grandchildren.

Ken and Sue enjoy their retirement, visiting family and living in the house they built overlooking the Rideau River near Burritt's Rapids, Ontario. They spend their winters every other year in Australia with their daughter, Joan, or in Jamaica, where Sue has a sister. Ken likes doing woodworking and gardening in his spare time.

Over the years, Ken has been involved with the HKVA. He has been on the pilgrimages to the Far East in the years 1971, 1990, 1995 and 2000. The Ewings seldom miss a Regional or National Convention, and plan to be in Victoria this August. Ken regularly speaks to groups of students in elementary and high schools in Kemptonville. On Remembrance Days in the past he has been among the Hong Kong veterans at the National War Memorial. For the first time last November, assisted by his daughter, Ann, he laid a wreath at the Kemptonville War Memorial.

Ken, you have my best wishes to continue this new family tradition for many more years to come.

Ron McGuire
North East Area Rep

The Ladies' Side of the Story

Oda Barlow didn't begin life in this country, but in Sjaeland, Denmark on March 27, 1923, the first of four girls in her family. Her parents emigrated when she was four years old, so she still has memories of her early childhood

there. An uncle had come to Canada first, joined later by the woman who became his bride, and before long Oda's parents followed. Eventually most of the family, aunts and uncles, and grandparents, came to this country. Some found the area that Oda's parents had moved to near Bell Grove, New Brunswick too remote, and moved to Ontario. Although life was somewhat primitive, Oda's father quite liked homesteading in New Brunswick but Oda's mother had become pregnant again, and they were three miles from the nearest store and sixteen miles from the nearest doctor. In those days the doctor didn't come unless patients could produce the cash to warrant his trip. This was one of the reasons they too moved to Ontario. Oda's family name was Berg, and she has just recently prepared a history of her family, full of fascinating stories.

Oda and her family moved to the Aurora area, where she was able to attend High School, but only for a year. Times were hard, the family lived four miles out of town, and Oda was needed at home to help her father who was a market gardener. They lived in a second house on a farm owned by another family, and Oda worked for them in the main house as well. It was here that she met Edwin, always known as Ted, who worked on the same farm. Oda had all sorts of jobs in those early years, including housework in Agincourt and Toronto. She even worked one summer for a doctor who was the Chief Coroner of Ontario. He had a place near where she lived, and later on recommended her for another job she had as a parlour maid to a family in Forest Hill.

Oda was just sixteen when she and Ted began going out together. They dated for three years, and during this time Ted worked at de Havilland, and then in Port Colborne as a welder, trying at the same time to get into both the navy and the merchant marine. He wasn't successful so he came into Toronto

and joined the army. Ted was an excellent swimmer, and when he was sent to Camp Borden he soon found himself training recruits as a swimming instructor. He was really anxious to get overseas, but because they couldn't find someone to take his place as an instructor when his unit went, they wouldn't let him go. He felt especially badly because his parents were in England and he felt he should be there.

By the time they decided to get married in August of 1941, Ted had been at Camp Borden for a year. Not only did they have to get permission to be married, but Oda had to have a letter of recommendation, which the Chief Coroner, her former employer, was glad to give her. Ted hadn't taken too kindly to being left behind when his unit left for overseas, but, before long, being a fitter mechanic, the opportunity to go to Ottawa to join the Royal Rifles came up, so off he went. By October of 1941, the Royal Rifles had entrained for the West coast, and their final destination of Hong Kong.

Ted sent a letter from Ottawa on October 22, 1941, saying that they were on their way. They had been issued summer clothing, and had been given several shots to ward off disease, but their destination was unknown. During the week that it took for the soldiers to cross the country, Oda received several letters from Ted. When he first landed in Hong Kong, she got a cable, and then two more letters before the battle for Hong Kong began. It would be a long time before she heard from him again.

Oda got her first letter from Ted in August of 1942 in which he said: "Tell brother Roland that I'm getting lots to eat." Since he didn't have a brother the message was obvious. The men had subtle ways to let the families at home know what their situation was like. Another fellow writing around the same time noted that "Hong Kong was a nice place but I'd rather be in Mt. Pleasant." The Japanese

wouldn't have realized that Mt. Pleasant was a Toronto cemetery. Oda wrote many letters, and she still has the ones that she wrote before December 7, 1941, which were returned to her. They had never reached Ted, and for all the years Ted was away, the letters were few and far between, and always at least six months old when they were received. Their first child, Rose Anne, was born while Ted was away.

Ted was in and out of hospital for two years after he came back, with most of the problems that those who had been in the prison camps had, but he returned to farming. By 1947, he had bought Oda's dad's farm. This after the DVA had tried to stop his grant for the farm, saying that he was not fit enough to be a farmer. For twenty years, Ted and Oda worked the farm 2 ½ miles south of Aurora on Bayview Avenue. They started with two cows, and a bit of money borrowed, and built up a sizeable milk herd. In 1967, they moved to Gilford, near Fennell's Corners, where they switched to raising beef cattle. On one occasion, some of the cattle were struck by lightning, and, since they were out on the range, it was three or four days before it was realized they were missing. Because they were not discovered within a few hours of their deaths, the insurance adjusters maintained that they couldn't confirm that the cattle had been struck by lightning so they weren't able to collect any insurance. Just one of the ups and downs of farm life. Eventually some of the farm was rented out, some of the cash crop was sold and the couple reached the stage where they could winter in Florida.

Oda and Ted's five children all lead interesting lives. Their eldest daughter, Rose Anne, runs a newspaper in Bobcaygen called "The Promoter", and it is she and Oda's granddaughter who are preparing to print Oda's story. Their second daughter, Kate, is married to Greg Sorbara, a Liberal MPP in

Ontario. Their third child, and first boy, John, owns a cabinet-making business near Barrie, and is looking after gathering the pictures for the family history. Their third daughter, Mary Ellen, taught Sports Administration at Durham College, and later became Director of International Education. In that capacity she travelled the world, recruiting students for the college. She met and married her husband, John, who had been the Dean of Thunder Bay College, when he was doing similar work for that institution. The couple spent a number of years working in India, and Oda and Ted were able to visit them there. Ted wasn't too well at that time but he made the trip, and they managed to see such exotic places as Agra, the Taj Mahal and Jaipur. Their son-in-law was robbed at gunpoint in New Delhi some time later, and everything was taken including jewellery and passports. Before too long, they returned to Canada and are now retired and living in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Both still travel for different educational programmes, but as fanatical bridge players, they often take cruises in the winter, teaching and playing bridge. Oda and Ted's youngest son went into real estate, then into renovations, making use of his excellent skills in wiring, plumbing and carpentry.

When the Ladies Auxiliary of the HKVA Association in Toronto was first organized, Oda didn't drive so she couldn't really go in to meetings but she urged others to go. The men's meetings had involved a smaller group by this time, but, with the addition of the ladies, numbers increased, until there were about thirty who regularly attended meetings. The men and the women would meet separately, and then have a supper together afterwards. There are memories of some really good times. In 1970, the first National Convention was held at the King Edward Hotel in Toronto. Besides having a special banquet, there was a Civic Luncheon at the Royal Canadian Yacht Club on Toronto Island. That first Convention was an excellent model for

those that were to follow. After that, Oda was able to go regularly to meetings, as she had learned how to drive after moving to the Gilford area. It was in the 1980's that the Hong Kong Veterans and their wives had several corn roasts in the summer at the Barlows' farm. Everyone still remembers the get-togethers, and the fun they had on those occasions.

Oda and Ted moved to Churchill in Innisfil Township in 1987, and spent about ten years there. Ted enjoyed spending time in his workshop, but when he died in 1995, Oda started looking for another house. She looked for about a year and a half before she found the place she wanted in Alcona. She's been in that house for about five years now, and is really enjoying her life in the community. She's involved with a 70-member seniors' group, plays cards once a week in Lefroy, and belongs to a horticultural group, since gardening has always been one of her greatest pleasures. Oda drove down to the meetings of the Ladies' Auxiliary until last year, and is still able to attend when she can get a ride with someone. The traffic in Toronto hasn't made driving to meetings an easy task.

Oda just recently celebrated her 80th birthday, with a special get-together for about 100 people at the local hall, and a dinner afterwards for 54 of her friends and family. She is obviously much loved and appreciated. We wish Oda many more happy times, and many more birthdays, and we'd sure like to have a look at that family history of hers!

Pat Turcotte

Secretary, Ontario Region

In Memoriam

Remembering the Hong Kong Veterans who left us between January and June of 2003

Duncan A. Benton, WG

William Nicholson, WG
Roy Robinson, WG
William R. Maltman, WG
Coleman Pollock, RRC
Raymond Smith, RRC

We Shall Remember Them

We shall also remember:

- Clara Matchett, widow of Eugene B. Matchett, RRC
- Laura Louise Findlay-Ross, widow of George Findlay, RRC.
- Florence Whalen, widow of Cecil Whalen, WG, a lifetime member of the Hong Kong Veterans Association who died at nearly 93 years of age.

Our condolences to their families

The HKVCA Clock and Charles Gordon

Some times in our busy lives, we meet a person with whom, for whatever reason- needless to say I don't understand why - a profound connection happens. The connection I'm talking about is like a coming together of two minds that think an awful lot alike. There are some people we meet and allow into our lives that somehow we make this connection with. It is like having a good friend over a long time span of years and being able to pick up on the friendship easily whenever you are together.

Last August I had the pleasure of participating in the Quebec Reunion in Granby, PQ. I renewed acquaintances and made new friends. One such new friend I met, I truly felt this connection. Charlie is not a Hong Kong vet. He is a vet in his own avenue of the Second World War, but he is a worker, supporter, and volunteer for, and believer in, the HKVCA. For

many years and on numerous occasions, Charlie has shared his love and knowledge of music, and piped in the HK veterans for their March Past ceremonies. Though unable to pipe for the Granby march, Charlie did us proud by being there with his pipes and joining in.

During one of our conversations, Charlie told me about a type of clock he enjoys making and he asked if I had ever seen one of his creations. Unfortunately I hadn't. He explained his love of working with wood and preserving artifacts for people. Just a month or so ago, Charlie called me. Much to my surprise, he had a clock for me, and it was ready to be sent. Charlie packed the clock with its intricate parts carefully so that it arrived safe and sound.

I now have this clock sitting on my fireplace mantle. Every time I look at it, I think of Charlie and meeting him in Granby. But it means even more than that. Unbeknownst to Charlie, he has included items on this clock that mean so very much to me. The clock reminds me of working with my father 35 years ago in Winnipeg, planning Veterans' dances. It reminds me of a trip to Hong Kong and all those new insights I experienced in that 'foreign' country. And it finally allows me to realize clearly why the colors of red and green have always been my favorite colors.

That is the connection I am talking about. The connection that Charlie and I have with each other. ***Thank you, Charlie.*** From me to you.

Lori Smith

South West Area Rep & Membership Chair

**Joint Meeting of HKVA & HKVCA:
April 30, 2003**

As seen through the eyes of Pat Turcotte

This was a General Meeting with a difference, as we had a Toronto Star Staff Reporter listening to every word. Cal Millar had appeared at the start of the meeting, with the intention of writing an article about the newly-printed *Canada in Hong Kong: 1941-1945 The Forgotten Heroes*, the ten lessons about to be seen for the first time by some of the veterans who had sponsored the creation of the document.

See Photo:

3-Veterans-with-Booklets

Some of the veterans present holding copies of the the Ten Lessons titled "Canada in Hong Kong: 1941 - 1945 The Forgotten Heroes" l. to r.: Alfred Babin, Jim MacMillan, Gord Hutchinson, Herb Worthington, Fred Mason, and "Flash" Clayton

The makeup of the Committee overseeing the work was discussed. Several of the five veterans and five members of HKVCA who were able to be present at the meeting, including John Stroud, "Flash" and Jessie Clayton, Jim MacMillan and Dave Murray were duly thanked for their input. Others not able to be present included Don Geraghty, George MacDonell, and Lori Smith. They had chosen Nick Brune at a special meeting last June at which Nick first listened to Committee members' thoughts about the direction someone writing about their Hong Kong experience should go, and then provided a very eloquent statement of what he would do if he were chosen to be that person. He summed up so beautifully what everyone was thinking, let alone what they had said, that there was no doubt in the minds of the members of the committee that they had chosen the right person. The result - the

finished product - displayed at the meeting on April 30th, proved that they had chosen wisely.

The completed document was sent to each member of the committee for review last November 20th. Each person contacted responded positively to what had been written. A Copy Editor was then hired to go over the work carefully so that there would be no hint of inadvertent error in the text. Once that was done, the company hired to do the printing was given the go-ahead, and the result, after much careful checking, was a completed copy that has pleased all who have seen it.

Since then, Nick Brune and I have spent a considerable amount of time contacting people in the provincial government, at OISE, at school boards and in various educational institutions, sending letters explaining the purpose of the document and providing them with copies, so they could see the quality of the work for themselves. You may soon see articles in the papers, or in magazines, but most importantly, you can expect to hear about it in the schools of Ontario. History teachers are very enthusiastic and when the word spreads you can be sure that students in Ontario will know a great deal more about Hong Kong and the Canadian soldiers who played such an important role in the service of their country. We will have much more to tell you in the coming months about the possibilities that have opened up as a result of the writing of this document. Stay tuned!

The April 30th meeting was unique in another sense. It turned into a birthday party! Fred Mason was celebrating his 83rd birthday that day, so we surprised him with a birthday cake. Of course he had to blow out the candles and cut the cake, and we sang a wonderfully sturdy "Happy Birthday" as the cake was brought in. Many more birthdays, Fred!

See Photo:

4-Fred-Mason's-Cake

Oh, by the way, Cal Millar stayed for the lunch and the party, and assured us that the article, and the pictures he took, would be in the Toronto Star in the next two or three days. We all waited anxiously for the result, but, for whatever reason, when I checked a few days later to see what had happened, I was told the City Editor had decided not to use the article. Such is the way of the newspaper business. Cal did his best! Maybe the next time!

See Photo:

5-John-Stroud-and-Cal-Millar

Cal Millar enjoying one of John's stories

The Fall Election for the Ontario Region of HKVCA

As Dave Murray has already mentioned in his remarks as Regional Director, this year marks a turning point for this organization. Your first Executive has recognized that it is necessary, according to the Constitution, to go to the members in search of more individuals willing to commit a certain amount of time to making our organization an even stronger, healthier one.

The current Executive feels that we have accomplished a great deal, but that there is much more that can be done by those with new

initiatives and ideas to propose. With more members involved, we can get even closer to the goals espoused by the Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association.

At least two members of the Executive will not be continuing, even though there would be the possibility of a second term. Wendy Campbell, our Regional Treasurer, has actually been involved as Treasurer with HKVCA for nine years, as she was Treasurer in B.C. for six years before she came to Ontario. So you can see why she feels that she has done her share. We thank her for her efforts over the past three years and hope that she will continue to be active in the Association. The second person is Pat Turcotte, who is not leaving the Association, but feels the need of a break from what has been a very busy schedule. She will be out of the country for several months in the coming year, and does not think that it would be fair to try and do her job from a distance. Be assured that she will be active in some capacity when she returns. In addition, new positions have been created, and there should be one or two more, to make for a more efficient distribution of the work to be done.

What follows is the schedule we propose to use in going through the required steps for an election in accordance with our Constitution.

Call for Nomination:

Fri., Sept. 12** to Fri., Oct. 3 [22 days]
(minimum 21 days required)

Nomination Agreement to be returned:

Mon. Oct. 6 to Fri. Oct. 24 [19 days]
(minimum 15 days required)

Ballot to be mailed:

Mon. Oct. 27**

Return due date:

Fri. Nov. 21 [26 days]
(minimum 21 days required)

December Newsletter

Fri. Dec. 5th**
results to be announced

** Mailings

A VERY SPECIAL EVENT: The first Annual Dinner and Reunion

The Ontario Region Executive has been very concerned for some time that as a fledgling organization we have not had the opportunity to get together in large numbers. With nearly 300 members in the province, we feel that finding an opportunity to do so is very important.

Lori Smith, our new Membership Chair, and Area Rep from London, came up with the idea of a get-together in London in the Fall which would feature a General Meeting, followed by a Banquet, and dance (if folks are so inclined), a stay-over at a major hotel like the Ramada (very close to Highway 401), and breakfast in the morning - before heading home.

There are many good reasons to hold such an event, but besides the obvious ones, there are a few special reasons as well. Since we're having an election in the Fall, we should have at least one chance to become acquainted with those who are possible candidates for office. Not only that, there are quite a few members who won't be able to go to the Convention in Victoria, and this would be a good opportunity to learn more about what happened there, and to hear the stories that Ontario members bring back with them from the Convention.

To ensure that we have as many veterans and widows as possible attending, the Executive is planning a campaign whereby Area Reps and other Executive members will survey the veterans and widows in their area to see if they are able to come. For those who feel that London is too far to drive, we're planning an "Invite a Veteran to Dinner!" Campaign. Executive members will try to make arrangements to car pool themselves, bringing veterans, wives and widows with them, and would appreciate offers from any members who plan to make the trip to pick up people on the way - if they have room in their vehicle, and if they're reasonably close to the person or persons to be picked up. If it becomes necessary, perhaps we could even rent a bus!

The point is that a get-together in London would be a wonderful start for good things that we foresee happening in the near future. The meeting in London would be a great place to learn about those happenings. We would expect to have a guest speaker, either at the meeting, or as part of the Banquet. The date that we're proposing is Saturday, October 4, 2003. The start time is likely to be 3 o'clock in the afternoon in the afternoon for our initial meeting, with registration from noon on. We want to be sure that people have enough time to get there, and settle in before the meeting begins. The dinner would be at 6 p.m., with entertainment to follow, if the members wish to have that happen.

The plan is in the "idea" stage at the moment. We would very much like to hear from you with suggestions for help in making this a successful event. Get in touch with anyone on the Executive Council to express your views. If you have e-mail, reach Sandi Cameron at sandicameron@rogers.com

Your Ontario Region Executive Important information:

1. **Wendy Campbell** has a new address in **Meaford**. All those who still need to look after dues covering the current year should send their cheque or money order for \$15.00 to:
**Wendy Campbell,
146 Lombard Street,
Meaford, ON N4L 1M2**
2. All members please note:
You will no longer see the Membership Application Form on the back page of the June Newsletter. Some members thought that such an application was a reminder that dues were owing twice a year. We apologize for the misunderstanding. **Dues are owing at the end of the 12 months of the current year. Members' dues of \$15.00 paid for the present year cover the period up to December 31, 2003.**
3. When you do see the Membership Application Form on the back page of the December Newsletter, consider it to be your letter of reminder that Membership Fees are due. **You do not need to fill in any information that we already have, but simply note any changes of address or phone number which have occurred since the previous year's mailing.** Include the form with your \$15.00 Membership Fee, unless, of course, you are a Veteran or a Widow for whom no fees are required.
4. We urge all members who have previously laid wreaths to do so again this year. It would help considerably if you let your Area Rep know where the wreath would be laid, as they will be keeping a record of the location of the wreaths in their area. **If you are a member who has not yet laid a wreath and would like to, contact Pat Turcotte, or your Area Rep to check out the procedure.** It is wise to begin making arrangements by mid-September to give those who make the wreaths time to prepare them.
5. Don't forget that **donations to the "Spirit of the Torch" Fund** make it
 - possible for HKVCA to arrange for wreath in communities that have not

- previously had wreaths honouring Hong Kong veterans

6. All members, when they pay their 2004 Memberships, will receive a Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association decal.

Those who send in their dues before December 1st will receive their decals with their December Newsletter.

7. Elapsed members: Members who have missed paying their dues for two successive years will be considered elapsed and will no longer receive the Ontario Regional Newsletter, "The Spirit of the Torch" or the National Newsletter "Wasureru-Nai".

8. Some members had asked about getting copies of the video "Slaves of the Rising Sun". They are available through Derrill Henderson at the following address: Suite #164, 1 Stafford Road, Nepean, ON K2H 1B9. The cost is \$15.00 per video, postage included.

Special reminders:

1. We hope to see as many of you as possible at the Victoria Convention, August 13 to August 17, 2003. We plan to have a special meeting with Ontario members when we're out there.
2. We encourage all of you to join us in London on October 4th for our very first Annual Dinner and Reunion. It will be a time for celebration!

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