

HONG KONG VETERANS' ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

MANITOBA BRANCH
PO BOX 381
WINNIPEG, MB R3C 2H6

JULY AUGUST SEPTEMBER
2002

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In this issue:

PRESIDENT'S REPORT	1
HONG KONG VETERANS' COMMEMORATIVE ASSOCIATION ..	1
WINNIPEG GRENADIER'S HONG KONG TRUST FUND.....	2
WEBSITE UPDATES	2
NOTES FROM BARRY MITCHELL, TREASURER AND	
MEMBERSHIP	2
NEW MEDAL.....	3
LAST POST.....	3
MUSEUM PROJECT.....	3
MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS.....	4
HUMOUR.....	5
REMINDERS	6

Is it Summer Yet?

Hopefully by the time you read this, summer will have arrived in your little corner of the world. What a crazy country with the weather this year. In Manitoba, it was a warm winter, cold spring and a wet start to summer. Nothing boring about that!

President's Report

Today is June 12th and I'm supposed to be at our cottage at Falcon Lake in Manitoba's Whiteshell district, instead I'm at home trying to type this report on my computer. Oh how true is the adage, "You can't teach an old dog new tricks", especially this old dog. This is my third attempt at trying to get my report ready to give to Carol tomorrow at our luncheon meeting. I thought I was at the lake for the entire month of June but old Mother Nature decided otherwise when it began to rain so heavy so I decided to return home.

There isn't much to report this time, as our semi-annual meeting was cancelled this month due to very poor attendance at our last meeting. I have found though that if any very important decision has to be made that I can usually phone about twenty of our local members to get their opinion and then the matter can be resolved. This occurred when the suggestion arose to make the people in our colour party, honorary members of our Manitoba Branch. I was able to make contact with about 18 of the 20 member and everyone of them was in agreement, hence **Tim Klumper, Vince and Stan Lopata and Don Thomson** are now honorary members of our Branch. I was able to talk to the 2 people that I had missed, and they were in agreement also.

A few weeks ago, I had the privilege of giving an interview to a Grade 12 student from River East Collegiate. His class had been given an assignment to write an essay about the battle of Hong Kong and the subsequent aftermath. During the interview he requested that I to go to his school and relate my story to his classmates. This I was

pleased to do. I talked to the students for about an hour or so and was pleased with the reception that I received. The young lad told me that he received a very high mark on his essay and has promised to send me a copy. When I receive this, perhaps it will be published in a future newsletter.

Just got off the phone from talking to **Roy Robinson**. Roy has had some serious troubles of late, but is very hopeful now of being on the mend again. I also have been in touch with **Bill Maltman** and he claims to be much better. We received a nice thank you note from our old comrade **Harry White** as our Branch sent Harry a letter of congratulations that was read to him for his 95th birthday celebrations. The party was held at the local branch of the Legion and was organized by "**Chick**" Query. Harry is our oldest surviving Winnipeg Grenadier who served in Hong Kong and "**Chick**" is the youngest. **Alf Matthews**, will shortly, be celebrating his 90th birthday. Our sincere best wishes go out to Alf.

To all of you who read this report may you have a good summer, better health and remain with us for a long time yet. May the wind be always at your back.

Yours in comradeship, George Peterson

Hong Kong Veterans' Commemorative Association

Hi to everyone! Hope you are enjoying better weather than our Spring?

An update on our City Hall display is that it is slow going. We had some excitement when we went to Minto Armouries to view the contents of the boxes that are stored there. These boxes contain the records of the Winnipeg Grenadiers. However in the cadet office in the Armouries, there was a stuffed toy bull called "Ferdinand" after the Disney movie, *Ferdinand the Bull*. In discussion with our Manitoba Regional members, it was discovered that "Ferdinand" was in some of the pictures taken at Sendai #2 and in the possession of "**Sailor**" **Morgan**. But there will be more information about "Ferdinand" later in another part of the newsletter.

On May 12th, 2002, Carol Hadley and I represented the HK vets at the Award Ceremony for the Winnipeg Grenadier Cadet Corp held at Minto Armouries. On the Branch's behalf I presented the award and cheque to the winning cadet. After the ceremony I met with the Commanding Officer of the Cadet Corp to investigate the possibility of getting possession of "Ferdinand" to: a) put in the City Hall display and b) to have him x-rayed to see the myth of a crystal radio inside him was valid. To

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our surprise and joy, he was given to us that day with promises that we would assist in supplying the Corp with some history and if possible some memorabilia for use in educating the cadets.

On June 9th, 2002 Al & Carol Hadley laid the HK wreath at the Veteran's Day ceremony at Brookside Cemetery. I was unable to do this as my brother in BC, passed away and I was with my family were out there.

There will be a Peacekeepers Parade and Wreath laying Ceremony at the Cenotaph on August 11th, 2002 in which I will be participating by laying our wreath.

Our Annual Memorial service will be held at All Saints Church at Broadway & Osborne at 1 pm. We will be inviting the cadets and their families to attend if they are back from cadet camp by then.

Our Annual Reunion Dinner will be held on October 26th, 2002 at the Holiday Inn Airport West on Portage Avenue. Information packages will be out soon, so please plan on attending.

Last but not least, have a safe and healthy summer.

- Juliet Lafortune, Regional Director

Winnipeg Grenadier's Hong Kong Trust Fund

- Donna Remillard

We are seeking donations for the Winnipeg Grenadiers Hong Kong Trust Fund and cheques should be made out in that name (not HKVA). The Hong Kong Veterans' Association donate to this fund in memory of each deceased veteran member.

The monies in this fund are used for the issue of the Winnipeg Grenadiers Hong Kong veterans, for their higher education. In 1999 there were 9 scholarships presented, in 2000 – 2 and in 2001 – 6 for a total value of \$10,875.00.

Contributions can be directed to:

Donna Remillard at 303-740 Kenaston Boulevard, Winnipeg, MB R3N 1Y3 or phone her at 489-0008.

(editor: We are looking to some of the HK members to give us a history on the how the fund was started. I have heard some versions but would like to have the true one. So drop me a line or call me with this information. Thanks)

Website Updates

Don't forget to keep monitoring these websites as information is continually being added.

www.hkvca.ca

www.geocities.com/rcwpc

www.cofepow.org.uk

www.hongkongwardiary.com

www.blackyvero.com

<http://ca.geocities.com/surfchops/index.html>

www.geocities.com/jeffyam/hongkong_war

Notes from Barry Mitchell, Treasurer and Membership

Greetings to all in the HKVA and the Hong Kong Veterans' Commemorative Association. I trust you have wintered well and are now enjoying a little more time in the outdoors. Thanks to the regular luncheons at Rae & Jerry's, I manage to see a few of the Vets for an hour or two as well as some of the "youngsters" from the Commemorative Association. The cold, blustery Winnipeg winter days make it a challenge for anyone to venture out for a bite to eat but each month we are able to gather a dozen or so hearty souls to the luncheon table. Once there, however, we realize it's certainly worthwhile when we swap a few tales and enjoy some truly tasty food.

These luncheons have also become an occasion for "show and tell" with various items being passed around for the sake of interest but usually for some kind of identification. We have enjoyed examining artifacts from Hong Kong and Japan but primarily we are asked to examine photographs to try and identify individuals from groups of prisoners of war. It's truly amazing to see a photo taken 60 years ago of someone now sitting across the table from you and of course in such a completely different context. Actually, it's quite a sobering experience.

I really appreciate the note from **Joyce Proffitt** on behalf of her dad, **Michael Haddad** of **Gardnerville, Nevada**. Joyce reports that her dad has been in a rest home in **Carson City, Nevada**, for the past eight years and while his health is not all that good, he is "still able to give us that handsome smile". We thank Joyce for dropping us a line, along with Michael's dues, and send our best wishes for good health for her father and the rest of the family.

Received a great letter from **Pearl MacPherson** in **Richmond, BC** with dues for herself and hubby **Donald**, along with son **John** of **Winnipeg** and **Heather** of **Coquitlam, BC**. Glad to have the whole family signed up for another year as well as a cheerful note with greetings to all. Pearl admitted to the confusion between our two groups with Don being in the HKVA while herself and the kids are in the Commemorative Association. You have it all figured out correctly, Pearl, and we again welcome all of you aboard.

Appreciate the note from **Sidney Vale** out there in **Vernon, BC**. Sid says 'hello' to all the gang and wishes everyone well for 2002.....Welcome to **Evelyn Barrett** as a new Commemorative Association member. Evelyn is a sister to Don MacPherson of Richmond, BC while her husband Bill's brother, Wilf Barrett, was one of the Winnipeg Grenadiers who was killed in action in Hong Kong. That certainly is a strong connection to the Winnipeg Grenadiers and now to the

Commemorative Association. Evelyn also sent us a copy of a strongly worded poem written by her aunt (Nan Emerson) entitled: "The Story of Hong Kong". Thanks for all this, Evelyn.

I have enjoyed the notes from **Leona Kashton** of **Edmonton, Alberta**, who faithfully keeps us up-to-date on her activities relative to the HKVA. Leona still lays the wreath at the Cenotaph each November 11, while her daughter, **Cindy Shearer** of **Winnipeg**, also laid the wreath last year at Norwood Legion #178. Leona remains busy with Legion activities and hopes to be in Winnipeg at the same time as our Reunion Dinner this fall so she can renew old acquaintances.

I particularly appreciate a note from **Jake O'Donnell** of **Winnipeg** who took the time fill us in on the circumstances that brought him to be a member of HKVA. While most of us are related to a veteran of the Battle of Hong Kong, others have their own special reason for wishing to support the Association and for example, I quote, in part from Jake's letter: "I first became associated with the Hong Kong vets in 1964 when the late Bert Delbridge "enlisted" me to help with some publicity on behalf of the association's struggle to win fair compensation for the survivors and widows of those who had given so much. He was also instrumental in having me assigned to report for the Free Press when the first Pilgrimage back to Hong Kong and Japan took place in 1967. Later I was honoured with an Associate Membership, something that I have highly treasured ever since". Thanks for sending us that note, Jake, as well as for your dues.

The mailbox hasn't been yielding very many envelopes with dues, lately. But it's that time of year, I know. We do, however, expect everyone clear up their little debt to the HK Veterans' Association before they head off for the summer. We want to continue to keep in touch with you, but that costs money--primarily our hefty salaries!! Remember--NO DUES, NO NEWS. Yup, a really catchy slogan, isn't it. Let's hear from you promptly! Please send your \$15.00 membership cheque to P.O. Box 381, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3C 2H6. Widows and Veterans are automatically members of the Commemorative Association free of charge and for life.

Have a great summer!! Keep in touch.

Cheers, Barry Mitchell

New Medal

Hors de Combat – to put out of fight, out of action. An expression used on service records of a person out of action due to wounds or injury. This medal is available to all uniformed personnel of both World Wars and former or presently serving uniformed servicemen and women or their next of kin. One may view this at www.awardmedals.com.

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The outstanding bravery of servicemen and women who have sustained wounds or injury in the line of duty is now recognised with the striking of the 'Hors de Combat' commemorative medal.

The medal is a befitting way to recognise and pay tribute to the sacrifices and suffering incurred by service personnel throughout the world in the service of their country.



Last Post

Robert Dunlop, A11998, RRC, died May 23, 2002
William J. Hickie, E-30331, RRC died May 10, 2002

Charles Chesser, E-30040, RRC died May 3rd, 2002

Ray Squires, K-80593 RCCS died on June 21st, 2002

Albert W. Bilodeau, P-17154, RRC, died June 21st, 2002.

Charles Brady, E-30233, RRC, died June 27th, 2002 a long time National President.

Muriel Ashton, widow of Bill Ashton, died April 23, 2002. Muriel was a past President of the Hong Kong Veterans Ladies Auxiliary and a wonderful supporter of the veterans.

Our thoughts and prayers are extended to all the families and friends.

"We will remember them"

Museum Project

- Lora Wachtendorf

The museum project is moving slowly along. The initial items that were sent to us have been completed and returned. So please contact me, so that I may assist you with identifying items or articles for our project.

Whatever you feel may compliment our goal of presenting the Hong Kong Veterans of Canada to the Museum for display/archiving will be greatly appreciated. If you do not want to part with an article, you may wish to give us permission to copy it. We want to get as overall a picture as we possibly can. This is a great opportunity that we all need to take advantage of before the information is

no longer available. Please sort out your information and give me a call.

Lora Wachtendorf, Box 885, Niverville MB R0A 1E0 (home) 1-204-388-6536 (work- message) 945-3012

Items for Sale

Souvenir pin from 2001 Convention



\$5.00



Souvenir sweatshirts

(model Barry Mitchell shown in picture) \$20.00

Please send a cheque or money order payable to HKVCA, with the quantities that you want, to Box 381, Winnipeg, MB R3C 2H6. POSTAGE AND HANDLING INCLUDED.

For the Crests and Markers shown below, please contact Lora Wachtendorf, Box 885, Niverville MB R0A 1E0 (home) 1-204-388-6536, (work-message) 945-3012

Grave markers \$48.00 HKVCA crests \$20.00



Miscellaneous Items

I was privileged to travel with many wonderful people on the last Pilgrimage in 2000. One of these special people was Ralph MacLean of Calgary. He recently sent me a poem that was written by a student, age 11, who is in his daughter-in-law, Melanie MacLean's class at Deer Meadow School in Alberta. I have permission to share this with you:

Remember Us

By Dustin Bateman, Olds, Alberta

When you walk the streets without fear,
Remember us.

When you're sleeping peacefully,
Remember us.

When you listen to silence,
Remember us.

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When the fields are green,
Remember us.

For though we never met, we are your past,
Remember us.

We fought for you and this land,
Remember us.

The future is yours, do us proud,
Remember us.

Melanie was also on the Pilgrimage and she laid wreaths that were made by her students at the dedication ceremonies in Hong Kong and Japan. With these expressive words and deeds, we are shown that the youth of our country will certainly "do us proud".



Member Update:

** A plaque will be placed on the wall at the Stonewall Sports Centre in September, 2002, with the inscription, "In Memory of the Hong Kong Veterans". **Dick Wilson**, who made a sizable donation to the erection of this wonderful facility for his community, has requested the recognition. Thank you Dick, you are truly a generous person.

** In May, we had the pleasure of sending Best Wishes to **Harry White**, who celebrated his 95th birthday in Okanagan Falls, BC. It must be all his activities that keep him so young.

** **Anna Mae Waters**, born January 21, 1903, died December 9, 1987. Mae (to her family and friends) was a very practical, caring person. She never married but had a close relationship with her family and was always available when someone was seriously ill. She worked at Ninette Sanatorium prior to the war and on an American ship until the war ended after her release from Hong Kong. Molokai, Hawaii was her next port of call, where she nursed lepers in a colony there for about 13 years. She returned to Winnipeg, every 2 – 3 years to visit her family. She settled in Long Beach, Ca, near a brother that had some health issues and that is where she was when she passed away. We have contacted her nephew and will be meeting with him soon to obtain more information about his aunt. To be continued ...

** In July, we will be wishing **Alf Matthews**, all the best on his 90th birthday, ..whatever you are doing, Alf, keep it up – its working.

** **Charlie Cardinal** has moved from Keewatin to Nanaimo, BC and is enjoying the better weather. He has had some health issues but is back to some of his interests as a ham operator and a musician – playing fiddle, accordion, keyboards, guitar, banjo and mandolin. Thanks for the note, Charlie, this clears up the reason why I was unable to reach you in Keewatin. I had tried to call several times, after sending you a get-well card, to see how the progress

was. I'm so glad that we found you. Please include us in any future address changes.

** **Jean Gray** sent a nice note on behalf of **Walter**, who suffers from hand cramps. The note included a donation in memory of Harry Atkinson and these words for Harry's family ... "Harry, tho' quite ill, worked tirelessly to better pensions for the HK vets who had not been fairly compensated."

****Floris Van Raes** sent us news of **Emile's** status – that there was little change. He is in Extendicare where they do a great job giving him total care. He knows her as she gives him his dinner, daily. Our sincere regards to you both.

** **David Martin**, from Saskatchewan, has asked us to say "Hi" to all the members and sends his best wishes to you all. David has kept in touch with us through his Christmas letter. He really enjoys living in the Veterans Village where he keeps busy with cribbage, exercise classes and other scheduled events that his time just flies by. He was in hospital in October with a collapsed lung, so it has been slow recuperating. He is busy with his family and looking forward to a family wedding in July, 2002. It was great hearing from you David, keep in touch.

** **Ferdinand the Bull**

As promised, here is the followup on Ferdinand.

- **Gord Crossley** of the Fort Garry Horse, provided us with this information: Ferdinand was made by Chiltern Hygienic Toys in England, famous for their line of "Hugmee" teddy bears. He has sent out some emails to toy collector organizations on the web to find out more.

Ferdinand would have been quite new in 1941. The book that his character was based on was written in 1936, and the Disney film and books came out in 1938. Here is some interesting information on the author of the book.

"MUNRO LEAF, author and illustrator of dozens of children's books, is best remembered for his signature character, Ferdinand, the Spanish bull who preferred smelling flowers to fighting in a ring in Spain.

One Sunday afternoon in 1935, Leaf decided to write a children's story so that his close friend Robert Lawson (a relatively unknown illustrator) could show his talents. In less than one hour, Leaf composed the beloved 800-word story as it stands today, nearly 60 years later.

When published by Viking in 1936 as *The Story of Ferdinand*, the book sparked controversy. With the Spanish Civil War waging, political critics charged it was a satirical attack on aggression. In Germany, Hitler order the book burned while fellow dictator Stalin granted it privileged status as

the only non-communist children's book allowed in Poland. And India's spiritual leader Ghandi called it his favourite book. In spite of the notoriety, the nation embraced the peaceable bull."

- Now the **questions** that we have are: Where did "**Sailor**" **Morgan** get the stuffed bull, when did he get it and from whom? The rumour of the crystal radio in the bull was proven false after having the bull x-rayed and it doesn't look like any alterations to the toy has occurred. But was the story a coverup or something to give the men hope? Even the original "Chiltern" label is in tack. We have tried several emails to try and find out further information but to date, we have had no luck. If anyone has input into this story, or knows how we could reach any of "Sailor's" family, please let me know.

** Books -- **George MacDonell** has decided to donate the proceeds of his book to the HKVCA. His book, *One Soldier's Story*, is a major revision of his previous book and therefore is being printed as a new book in September, 2002. A committee is being formed to establish the strategy of sale and the criteria of use of the funds generated. Our deep gratitude is extended to George for this most generous donation.

– **Tony Banham** in Hong Kong, is doing the final preparations prior to the printing of his book, "Hong Kong War Diary". He is looking to purchase a copy of the following books: **From Jamaica to Japan** by Thomas S. Forsyth and **I Was a Hell Camp Prisoner** by Robert Wright. Please contact me if you know where to purchase these books and I will pass it on to him.

- I received a note from Blacky Verreault's son, Michel, who would like to inform you that his father's diary has been re-printed. If you check his web site, www.blackyvero.com, there is a place where you may order the book.

Humour

Three sisters aged 92, 94 and 96 live in a house together. One night the 96 year old draws a bath. She puts her foot in and pauses. She yells to the other sisters, "Was I gettin' in or out of the bath?" The 94 year old yells back, "I don't know. I'll come up and see." She starts up the stairs and pauses. "Was I going up the stairs or down?" The 92 year old is sitting at the kitchen table having tea listening to her sisters. She shakes her head and says, "I sure hope I never get that forgetful." She knocks on wood for good measure. She then yells, "I'll come up and help both of you as soon as I see who's at the door."

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Two brooms were hanging in the closet. After a while they got to know each other so well, they decided to get married. One broom was, of course, the bride broom and the other the groom broom. The bride broom looked very beautiful in her white

dress. The groom broom was handsome and suave in his tuxedo. The wedding was lovely. After the wedding at the wedding dinner, the bride broom leaned over and said to the groom broom, "I think I am going to have little whisk broom!!!" "IMPOSSIBLE!!", said the groom broom. "WE HAVEN'T EVEN SWEPT TOGETHER

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Several men are in the locker room of a golf club, showering, getting changed for the 19th hole. When a cell phone on a bench rings, a man picks it up, engages the hands-free speaker function, and begins a conversation. Man: "Hello?" Wife: "Honey, it's me. Are you at the club?" M: "Yes." W: "Great! I am at the mall two blocks from where you are. I just saw a beautiful leather coat. It's absolutely gorgeous!! Can I buy it?" M: "What's the price?" W: "Only \$1,000." M: "Well, OK, go ahead and get it, if you like it that much." W: "Ahhh, and I also stopped by the Mercedes dealership and saw the 2002 models? I saw one I really liked. I spoke with the salesman, and he gave me a really good price - and since we need to exchange the BMW that we bought last year..." M: "What price did he quote you?" W: "Only \$60,000." M: "OK, but for that price I want it with all the options." W: "Great! But before we hang up, something else..." M: "What?" W: "I stopped by the real estate agent this morning and saw the house we looked at last year. It's for sale!! Remember? The one with a pool, English Garden, acre of park area, beachfront property." M: "How much are they asking?" W: "Only \$450,000 - a magnificent price. It may seem like a lot, but I was reconciling your bank account - and I see that we have enough in the bank to cover the down payment. M: "Well, then go ahead and buy it, but just bid up to \$420,000. OK?" W: "OK, sweetie. Thanks! I'll see you later!! I love you!!!" M: "Bye...I love you too..."

The man hangs up and closes the phone's flap. The other men are looking at him in astonishment and derision. The man holds up the phone and asks "Anyone know who this phone belongs to?"

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A minister decided to do something a little different one Sunday morning. He said "Today, church, I am going to say a single word and you are going to help me preach. Whatever single word I say, I want you to sing whatever hymn that comes to your mind." The pastor shouted out, "Cross!" Immediately the congregation started singing in unison, "The Old Rugged Cross." The Pastor hollered out, "Grace!" The congregation began to sing, "Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound." The Pastor said, "Power!" The congregation sang, "There is Power in the Blood." Then the Pastor said, "Sex." The congregation fell in total silence. Everyone was in shock. They all nervously began to look around at each other afraid to say anything.

Then all of a sudden way from in the back of the church a little 87 year old grandmother stood up and began to sing..... "Precious Memories."

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Reminders

Monthly lunches at Rae & Jerry's Restaurant on Portage Ave. at NOON every 2nd Thursday of the month; except June and December.

**** PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF ADDRESS****
The Hong Kong Veterans' Commemorative Association address in Ottawa is: 1 Stafford Road, Ste.164, Nepean, ON, K2H 1B9. This new address should be noted by anyone who purchased one of the earlier grave markers as it will have the old address on the sheet to send in to register the location of the grave.



There will be a **Peacekeepers Parade** and Wreath laying Ceremony at the Cenotaph on **August 11th, 2002** in which I will be participating by laying our wreath.



Our **Annual Memorial** service will be held at All Saints Church at Broadway & Osborne on **August 18th, 2002 at 1 pm**. We will be inviting the cadets and their families to attend if they are back from cadet camp by then.



Manitoba Branch of the HKVA will be hosting the **ANNUAL DINNER on October 26, 2002**, so please mark that date on the calendar - we would like to see you there.



Quebec Region will be hosting their **ANNUAL REUNION on August 15 - 17, 2002**, so mark your calendar, if you plan to attend.



Your Branch Council Phone Numbers - Keep Them Handy:

George Peterson, President	256-7174
Bill Maltman, 1st Vice	669_4941
Carol Hadley, Secrtry/Newsletter	837-6754
Barry Mitchell,	
Treasurer/Membership	269-1497
Juliet Lafortune, Social	338-3354
Terence Jackson, Memorials	452-1460
Phil Dodderidge, Nat'l President	418-392-5838

