

WASURERU-NAI

“Never Forget”

Volume 7, Number 2

January, 2005

NEWSLETTER OF THE HONG KONG VETERANS' COMMEMORATIVE ASSOCIATION

President Report

- Carol Hadley

I sincerely hope that everyone has had a wonderful Christmas and New Years with family and friends. I wish you all good health and loads of happiness in the coming year.

As you all know, we had our National Convention in Ottawa in August and also commemorated the 60th Anniversary of the end of World War II. What an event!! Ontario Region, their Executive and Veterans Affairs Canada did a superb job of coordinating the gatherings – from transportation, accommodation and food – it was terrific! The convention was attended by over 700 people who took advantage of the event to have family reunions, birthday and anniversary celebrations. I thoroughly enjoyed meeting and talking to so many of you – it's wonderful to put faces to names now. It was a busy but very satisfying time. I am sure there will be more of a report in the newsletter but I just wanted to give a big WELL DONE and THANK YOU!! to everyone who worked on this huge endeavour.

Our National Elections were also part of the Convention. There were some issues with timing of the ballot returns. This was discussed at the Convention and hopefully with the revisions that have been made this will not happen again. Thank you to all who were involved in the Elections – the Committee – for

the time that they took to do this important task, the members – for your nominations, acceptances and for voting. This Association has been fortunate to have some incredible people to accept positions, Nationally and Regionally, who realize the importance of the goals that have been set and who want to work to see them happen. Thank you all!! The election involved one position, that of 2nd Vice President and the Executive are pleased to announce that **Helen Wedge** from Atlantic Region has accepted this position. The other acclaimed positions were: 1st Vice President, **Murray Doull**; Secretary/Membership, **Jim Trick**; – both from BC Region; Treasurer, **Barry Mitchell** and President, **Carol Hadley** both from Manitoba Region. Welcome Murray, Helen, Barry and Jim - I look forward to working with you in the months ahead.

I extend my heartfelt appreciation to the National Executive that have stepped down – **Neil Darrah**, 2nd Vice President and **Lucette Mailloux-Muir**, Secretary/Membership we are truly grateful for your time and expertise.

Another item of the Convention was the National Survey that was sent with the election material. The National Executive felt it was time to see if our members had any issues with the direction of the Association. Our members' opinions are important as we want to meet your needs but also to challenge you to get involved with the programs either Nationally or in your

Region. It was very satisfying to see that basically we are on the right track – thank you for your comments. There were not too many suggestions, other than more communication. Between the National and Regional newsletters our members should be receiving information about four times a year. Then there is our website (www.hkvca.ca) that has past, current and future events highlighted. Some regions have telephone contacts also - this seems to cover a lot of ground with communication but we are always open to suggestions. If anyone wishes to make comments or suggestions please do so as we appreciate your input.

You will see in the newsletter reports that our Association is slowly growing – and that is wonderful. With more members, the finances will come to build and increase the programs that have been and will be initiated. Presently we operate on a shoestring budget – why not increase the dues? Personally I believe our focus should be on program, to grab and maintain the interest of our members and to encourage other people to join. However it is a “catch 22” situation as you need money for programs. The charity status that has been established should be given more emphasis to our members as it is a benefit to them and it would help to cover the initiation and maintenance of our projects.

The direction of the Association so far is towards Education – we would have a broader base of potential

membership by starting with our youth. They are also our future. We need to encourage our children, grandchildren, and other family members to join the Association to sustain our membership. Promotion of the use of the curricula in schools and use of our website would certainly reach and generate interest in the community. Ontario Region has the "Ten Lessons" in French translation and will be issued soon that will benefit many school divisions. Their involvement with the Port Perry school division project and trip to Hong Kong, is a tremendous effort in community relations with 200 + students focusing on the Battle of Hong Kong. Something similar to this could be started in any area.

Also media – I don't think we are utilizing the media sufficiently to reach the people in each community. When each region is holding a meeting or other function, this would be prime time to use the media to broadcast the fact to the whole community, not just the members. This is why a publicity chair would be important, especially at the National level, to ensure uniformity of the information that is issued and would also assist the Regions.

The regions need to build relationships with other service groups, like the legions and specific military units that are in the area. Then take part in their wreath-laying ceremonies or other commemorative events to show support – also invite them to your ceremonies – this serves to promote our 'C' Force and the Association. Invite them to attend your social functions and they would usually reciprocate – this helps to establish a camaraderie and added support to your events.

WEBSITE: www.hkvca.ca

Encourage your vets and members to speak in schools, churches, legions, service groups, etc to show that there is a viable interest group serving the Battle of Hong Kong and 'C' Force. Manitoba Region has been doing this and the word is spreading with more invitations – there is a financial gain, as a honourarium is usually given to the presenter.

Another initiative might be scholarships. In the past, there has been a National Scholarship but the funds diminished and it folded – but this could be picked up again and another use for the charity receipt.

I am sure there are other ideas in the thoughts of our Executive and members but in order to initiate new projects, capitol is required and more importantly, people to coordinate and maintain it. The drive and momentum must come from the members – the Executive is keen to do the running with this incentive.

In closing, from my family to yours, we extend sincere best wishes in the seasons ahead for peace and contentment. God bless!

HKVA President Report – Phil Doddridge

As national president of the HKVA, I have been called upon to represent the Association on a number of occasions in this, the Year of the Veteran. I have been pleased to do so, and I hope that my fumbling efforts will not be interpreted as a lack of devotion to the task.

After the Convention in Ottawa, I was pleased to attend the Maritimes-Gaspesian Reunion in Florenceville, New Brunswick, in September, where I was well

received and was given the opportunity to convey the greetings of the HKVA as well as the HKVCA.

I am planning to attend the Diamond Jubilee meeting of the Manitoba Branch in Winnipeg on October 22, and later to represent the HKVA at the National Council of Veterans Associations in Toronto.

TIME CAPSULE

Everyone knows by now of the splendid effort of the Ontario students who will be journeying to Hong Kong at the end of November to bury the capsule at Sai Wan Bay Cemetery.

The Minister of Veterans Affairs has invited me to go along, and to name five other Hong Kong Veterans to join the official party. Of course I was pleased to accept.

Since three HK Vets had already decided to go and had paid for the trip, it seemed only fair to include their names and ask that they be reimbursed. Because all three were ex-Royal Rifles, it also seemed fair that an ex- Grenadier is included, and since it is too often forgotten that there were support troops with us in Hong Kong, an ex- Brigade Headquarters member was asked to go along.

I hope that everyone agrees with the logic of my choice. So unless changes are necessary, the following HK Vets will be going on the trip:

George MacDonell
George Peterson
Robert Clayton
Douglas Rees
Horace(Gerry) Gerrard
Phil Doddridge

Activities will include, among other things, visits to historic sites, wreath laying and time capsule burying ceremonies at Sai Wan

Bay Cemetery, as well as plaque dedication ceremonies.

BREAKING NEWS

Alas, it seems that George Peterson won't be able to go after all. Ed Shayler may be his replacement.

ON LINE MEETINGS

As you know, the HKVCA Executive meets on line once a month, usually on the last Thursday. It is a treat to chat on line with the executive members from coast to coast and share their views and opinions. It is an evening well spent, ably chaired by Carol, and contributed to by all.

MUSEUM

I have done so much talking about our little museum that I'm sure you have heard enough about it. I just want to report that we had a successful second summer of operation, and that the satisfaction rate of the visitors was very high.

I also want to let you know that our curator, Rachel Dell, will be going to Mombassa, Kenya, in November to help set up a museum.

Please check out our web site at www.chaleurmilitarymuseum.com

LANCE ROSS

By this time you will have heard that Lance underwent surgery on his 94th birthday to remove a tumour from his stomach, and that the operation was a complete success. We are all thrilled to hear the good news and have high hopes that his recovery will be complete.

In April, Bob Barter and I attended his induction ceremony into the Canada Veterans Hall of Valour. In the last issue of Wasureru-Nai, I reported that Ron McGuire had some part in his

WEBSITE: www.hkvca.ca

induction. I beg to correct that statement by saying that Ron had everything to do with Lance's and John Osborne's induction ceremony. It was he who read the citations for both our heroes. Ron has always been a staunch supporter of all things related to Hong Kong Veterans, and is a very important member of the CVHV as well as HKVCA.

Many thanks, Ron.

LEN BIRCHALL

In the Fall 2005 Edition of "Airforce" magazine, there is an article by Holly Bridges, titled, "Birchall Room Officially Opened". There is a picture of the chief of the air staff, LGen. Steve Lucas, CMM, CD, and Mrs Kathleen Birchall unveiling a portrait of Len inside the Birchall Room at National Defence Headquarters in Ottawa. LGen Lucas is quoted as saying, "We are here to honour the memory of a great Canadian. Without a doubt he was one of our greatest aviators. Not only was he known as the "Saviour of Ceylon", but his actions under the most difficult of circumstances in the POW camp were something that airmen of all stripes and all nations can take lessons from."

Kathleen is quoted as saying, "This is one of the proudest, most memorable moments of my whole life."

I am proud to have made his acquaintance and to have shared some time with him when he was our guest speaker at a reunion of the Q-M Branch in Frederickton some years ago.

That's all for this time. Thanks for listening. Be good to each other and may God Bless.

UPDATE (January 16, 2006)

Doug Rees, who shared the pilgrimage to Hong Kong in December, along with his

daughter, Cheryl Viner, recently suffered the loss of his wife after a long illness. On behalf of the Hong Kong Veterans' Association, I offer sincere sympathy.

The trip received much media coverage, so everyone should, by now, be well informed of all the activities. I did submit a brief account in "The Torch", the Quebec newspaper, which is now posted on the HKVCA web site.

Let me just say that we Hong Kong Veterans, the six of us who were there, could not have been treated better by the Veterans Affairs team, the wonderful students (some 210 of them) and their magnificent teachers, and the 38 HKVCA members who accompanied us on all the ceremonies that took place. Ed Shayler replaced George Peterson when George had to bow out.

In Hong Kong I was contacted by Toby Brown, an archaeologist who lives in Hong Kong. He had discovered some shell casings on Mount Cameron, one of the battle sites. I plan to mount them on a board and will photograph them to be shown in a future newsletter. The actual fragments I will expose in the Baie des Chaleur Military Museum.

The Minister of Veterans Affairs sent me a plaque thanking the Hong Kong Veterans Association for our part in the celebration of the Year of the Veteran. I have scanned it and will send a copy to be used in Wasureru-Nai, if it is feasible.



Although this update is rather lengthy, I cannot sign off without commending Carol for stepping in and offering to complete and mail the newsletter. Many thanks Carol.

- Phil

Treasurer's Report "Dues and Views" - Barry Mitchell

Greetings to all in this very special "Year of the Veteran". From my vantage point, the designation by the federal government of a full year to honour our veterans has been most effective and it has focused the public's attention on these most deserving Canadian men and women.

Our organization certainly felt the impact of Veterans Affairs Canada putting its considerable resources into our convention in Ottawa. Our attendance swelled as a result of the generous funding provided to the veterans and caregivers to enable them to come to the nation's capital to celebrate the end of WWII. While long overdue, the recognition of the Hong Kong veterans by government at this event in terms of dollars, manpower, dignitaries, and overall energy, was greatly appreciated by the veterans and in fact by all those associated with our proud organization.

Appropriately, there was of course lots of celebrating at the convention but we also got a little bit of work done too. For example, most of the Regional Treasurers of the HKVCA got together briefly to review some of the common challenges facing our association as far as finances are concerned.

We discovered that we were not taking full advantage of our designation as a charity by regularly providing those who donate to the Commemorative

Association with a tax deductible receipt. It was agreed that we should all let our membership know that we are registered as a charity with the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) and this permits us to issue tax receipts for straight donations. As a guideline and to keep the paperwork reasonable, we are asking our membership people to limit the issue of tax receipts to gifts of \$20.00 or more, **exclusive of annual dues**. The cost of maintaining our organization is on the increase and our most important function—keeping in touch with you through newsletters, etc.—grows on a regular basis.

The HKVCA is now well established in almost every Province with a membership of about 1,200. This number, however, includes veterans and widows who don't pay dues but are BY FAR the most generous group when it comes to making donations. So while the number of Regular (dues-paying) members is slowly increasing, our fund raising is lagging with a diminishing number of donations coming our way. Thus we ask everyone to keep the Commemorative Association in mind when considering which charities you are going to support and now you know you will receive a tax-deduction receipt at the time of your donation.

Thanks to the Treasurers and Membership people in the Regions across the country who volunteer their time to collect dues, pay bills and assist in various executive duties. I receive excellent reports each month from most of you and appreciate your co-operation in national initiatives. I am confident we can continue to meet our financial challenges in

putting forward a variety of meaningful programs.

Barry Mitchell, National Treasurer

Election of HKVCA Executive Committee

In August 2005, a new Executive was elected in accordance with corporate By-Laws.

The following were elected to serve 2005 – 2007:

President, **Carol Hadley**
from Manitoba
1st Vice President, **Murray Doull** from BC
2nd Vice President, **Helen Wedge** from Atlantic Region
Secretary and
Membership, **Jim Trick** from BC
Treasurer, **Barry Mitchell**
from Manitoba.

Our deep gratitude is extended to **Neil Darrah**, 2nd Vice President and **Lucette Mailloux-Muir**, Secretary/Membership for your time and talents.

National Conference Wrap-Up – Pat Turcotte

What a weekend it was!! From the Hospitality Room conversations starting Thursday night to the closing breakfast chats on Monday morning, the Lord Elgin Hotel in Ottawa was an exciting place to be.

The activities began in earnest on Friday morning. Even if you hadn't signed up to see the Changing of the Guard, or the tours on Parliament Hill, the Governor General's Foot Guard Band passed the hotel that morning, and every morning, so that the guests were able to enjoy the marching and the music as they went by. What a colourful way to start the day!

Friday afternoon involved four different sessions. The first was the HKVA luncheon for the Veterans, so the veterans were

able to get together at the very start of the weekend. The second was the Board of Directors' meeting, held in the Penthouse Suite – a most relaxing atmosphere.

The third session was a very stimulating talk by Nancy Hamer-Strahl, explaining the trip that she and over 200 students and their teachers will take to Hong Kong in December to honour the soldiers who fought at Hong Kong. They will be involved in ceremonies there in the first week of December, one of which will be the burying of a memorial capsule just outside Sai Wan Cemetery containing works created by the students who, as part of their course work, have researched a Hong Kong veteran and have reacted to his story with poetry, songs put on CDs, stories, videos and art work of various kinds. All their thoughts and ideas have been transformed as a permanent memorial near the spot where many of the Canadian soldiers are buried.

The fourth and final session of the afternoon was an inspiring lecture by Vince Lopata, giving those present a very clear picture of the Interpretative Centre which the Organizing Committee based in Manitoba has projected as the home for all the information out there that could relate to the soldiers who fought in Hong Kong. The plans are quite exciting and the presentation is very well-organized. Those who were able to see it were very impressed. There is much to look forward to in the future.

On Friday evening, everyone boarded buses to the National War Museum for the official presentation of a plaque honouring the soldiers who fought in Hong Kong. The plaque will

have a prominent place in Ottawa to help ensure that the Battle of Hong Kong and those who fought there are well-remembered by Canadians. We were well-represented by Phil Doddridge, National President of HKVA and Carol Hadley, National President of HKVCA, speaking on behalf of all of us.

Saturday morning the Annual General Meeting of the Association (HKVCA) was held in the Pearson Room at the hotel. With the Remembrance Protocol as a preamble to the meeting, the reading of the Honour Roll, the skirling of the bagpipes, and the trumpeter's "Last Post" and "Reveille" reminded everyone present why we had gathered there. The meeting itself gave members of both associations, HKVA and HKVCA, an opportunity to welcome the attendees and to bring them up to date regarding ongoing activities.

Special meetings were held in the afternoon, with Ron McGuire giving a slide presentation involving "C" Force, and the Treasurers from all six Regions getting together with our National Treasurer, Barry Mitchell, to compare notes and discuss the challenges facing an organization as large as HKVCA.

Saturday evening was an opportunity to recognize all the veterans present at the Convention with a special gift provided by the Ontario Region. There were 71 Hong Kong veterans present, as well as 64 other veterans of the fighting in the Far East, including Burma Star, Burma Bombers, merchant seamen and sailors from the H.M.S. Uganda. All were honoured, and all seemed very moved by the occasion. The gift each man received was a clock with a special plate on it naming

the veteran, and his unit, and in the case of the Hong Kong veterans, the Hong Kong insignia was there. Our guest speaker, following the dinner, was Cliff Chadderton who is Patron to both organizations, HKVA and HKVCA. He has been active on behalf of the Hong Kong veterans for many years. John Spearn then provided musical entertainment, and introduced the song he had written especially for the Hong Kong veterans called "Christmas in Hong Kong, 1941". Lively music by "Assembly Required" had many up dancing, and a Cash Draw was held at various points during the evening. The list of winners will be posted on the Website when all those who won prizes have been reached.

The most important occasion of the weekend took place on Sunday morning at 11 a.m at the National War Memorial Cenotaph. Governor General Adrienne Clarkson spoke, many wreaths were laid and prayers were offered. The soldiers who fought in Hong Kong and other areas of the Far East were honoured, as were those died in the prison camps of Hong Kong and Japan. There was a touching moment when a group of children offered large poppies to each of the veterans attending. The flypast and the parade that followed was the finale, with the veterans themselves taking the salute.

Following the Memorial service, the families and friends of the veterans were invited to a luncheon in the Convention Centre at which the Minister of Veterans Affairs, Albina Guarnieri socialized with those attending. The veterans themselves, their wives, the caregivers and the widows were then bused to Rideau Hall for a reception with the

Governor General, at which she spoke most movingly about her special connection with the Hong Kong veterans. After a motorcade through the city in 10 articulated buses, with police escort, the veterans were ready for the evening's Gala at the Crown Plaza Hotel.

Before dinner, Minister of Veterans Affairs Guarnieri spoke to the group about her focus for the present and for the future in Veterans Affairs. The meal was followed by Terry Kelly's entertaining video, which he combined with a live presentation that many in the audience found very special. The Gerry Helke Orchestra provided great music for dancing, and the evening concluded in a lively fashion, with many of the veterans "strutting their stuff".

As everyone prepared to leave the next morning, there was no doubt that the Convention had been a great success, and many were heard discussing meeting again in 2007.

On behalf of the Ontario Region, may I thank all of those on the Ottawa Committee, in particular Derrill Henderson as its Chair, all those working with Terry Tobin in Veterans Affairs, such an important part of the celebration, and all of the many volunteers who helped look after our 719 registrants so well.

Cheers! See you in 2007!
Pat Turcotte, Regional Director
HKVCA, Ontario Region

National Convention Postscript

Hello, everyone,

It is now just over two months since the National Convention in Ottawa reached its conclusion. We are still receiving

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congratulations from the many people across the country who felt that the event was a great success. We thank all of you for your kind words.

On the Saturday night, as part of the festivities surrounding the banquet and dance, we had a series of Cash Draws. Some of those present were winners, but others had to be notified by mail as they weren't in attendance that night. It took quite awhile to contact each person, but we now have the complete list of winners whose names were drawn. All of the money has now been distributed, and the names of the recipients are listed below. We hope they enjoy their good fortune!

Our appreciation goes out to all those who were able to attend the Convention. Some of you came long distances to be with us. We know there were many who very much wanted to be there, but could not attend. You were in our thoughts, and we hope that you can join us for the next Convention in 2007. The Ottawa Committee and the Ontario Executive feel sure that the memories of this year's event will prompt our members even more strongly to set aside the next opportunity to be a part of the Hong Kong family.

Pat Turcotte, Regional
Director Ontario Region

Cash Draw Winners

Bonnie Boudreau, Fredericton, NB \$300.00
Anne Labar, Beaconsfield, QC \$200.00
Lillian Osborn, London, ON \$100.00
Arnold Ross, New Richmond, QC \$100.00
Margaret Ford, St. John's NL \$100.00

Bryce Craig, Callander, ON \$100.00
Grant Wood, Mississauga, ON \$100.00
Muriel McDavid, Thornhill, ON \$100.00

In the Interest of Economy...

To make the most effective use out of the dues our members pay, it is the policy of HKVCA to send only one newsletter to each address even when there is more than one member living there. If you need more copies, please contact the HKVCA Secretary (secretary@hkvca.ca).

Have You Visited Our Websites Lately?

The HKVCA websites are receiving between 3000 and 4000 visits per month, indicating that they have become a valuable resource, both for our members and for others as well. The sites serve two major audiences - those who are conducting research or have questions on Hong Kong, and those who want to keep up to date on what the latest HKVCA activities are. You, as an HKVCA member, can help us make our sites even more useful. Why not look through that shoebox of wartime photos and see if any of them could find a home on our galleries site? Even better if you can provide a story to go along with them. Is there an HKVCA event coming up in your area? Why not advertise it on our front page. Our websites contain a wealth of information, but there is always room for more. Don't forget to try out our web search utility - it's an easy way to zero in on the information you need. Need help? Have a question? Go to <http://www.hkvca.ca> and contact our web administrators.

The link is at the bottom of all our pages.

Latest major addition to the HKVCA web - Padre Laite's

Diary. Check it out at:

<http://www.laite.hkvca.ca>

In Memoriam

Arthur Wright, WG, L-51098, died December 29, 2004.

Ken Hogarth, H 6471, WG, died July 18, 2005

Walter Inglis, H 6923, WG died September 23 2005

Arnold Hunt, E-29864, RRC died November 05, 2005

George Merritt, H 17648, WG, died on October 21, 2005

August (Gus) Bitzer, WG died on January 23, 2006

HKVCA

Helen L. Martyn passed away on February 20, 2002

Irene Evelyn Mason, wife of Fred Mason, died July 9, 2005

Margaret Falcon, wife of Joseph Falcon, WG, H6035, died on August 25, 2005

Louise Coleman, widow to Glen Coleman (RR) and mother of David Coleman passed away in Saskatoon, SK. On November 3, 2005

Alice Doiron, widow to John Doiron (RR), and mother to Norma Fuchs passed away in Medicine Hat Alberta on November 20, 2005

Janet Coulson, widow of E. W. Coulson, HKVDC has passed away

Carolynne Anne Rees, wife of Douglas Rees (RR) passed away January 3, 2006.

Our thoughts and prayers are extended to all the families and friends as we share in your grief.

WEBSITE: www.hkvca.ca

We will remember them.

REGION REPORTS

From British Columbia ...

- Linda Stewart

2005 – The Year of the Veteran. It seems to have gone by so quickly and it has most certainly left many memorable events in its wake.

A Chinese Television crew creating a documentary about the Battle of Hong Kong to be released in China, traveled to BC in 2005 and interviewed Larry Stebbe, John Lowe and Gerry Gerrard. They portrayed the Hong Kong Veterans of Canada very well and Larry tells me that he has received a DVD from the producers. It was all in Chinese so he took it across the street to a neighbour who helped him decipher it. He said it was well done.

We had many veterans and members from British Columbia in attendance at the National Convention in Ottawa. We are deeply grateful to Ontario and the organizing committees for all of their hard work in making the event a huge success. We extend kudos to Veterans Affairs Canada who treated our veterans like they were made out of gold. On a personal note, I shared a hotel room with my sister Lora Wachtendorf and her son Brett. Lora was one of the founding members of the HKVCA and was responsible for getting me involved with the Association here in BC. We had a wonderful time at all the Convention events and loved the opportunity to meet new friends and re-connect with old familiar friends within our Hong Kong Family. It was an absolutely memorable Convention. Well done, Ontario! Thank you!

When I returned to Victoria a few days after the Convention, I went to visit with Lionel Speller at Broadmead Lodge. Luckily, Ida was there for her daily visit at the same time. I had a selection of photos from the Convention to give to Lionel and Ida and we visited for quite some time. Lionel is sleeping quite a bit these days but on that day, he was in tiptop shape. He talked about each photo pointing out those vets he knew by name. I left them the website address so that he could check out the Convention photos on-line and gave him a copy of the report prepared by Pat Turcotte. He thoroughly enjoyed it all. I also delivered a HK membership pin included in a hand-written note sent by Ron McGuire. In the note, Ron told Lionel how very much he was missed at the Convention.

British Columbia is very proud to have Jim Trick taking on the role as the new National Secretary. Thank you, Jim. We're proud to have Murray Doull acclaimed to the National First Vice President position and extremely happy that he has agreed to also continue as the BC Region Secretary - Treasurer. Thanks Murray.

We held our Spring Luncheons in Victoria on May 28/05 and June 4/05 in Vancouver. It was wonderful to be together again. We look forward to the Luncheons again this spring. Dates and details will be forthcoming.

Larry Stebbe visited with some 9-year-old cub scouts the evening before Remembrance Day. Larry brought pictures and newspaper clippings to show them. They listened with rapt attention as he told his story. He wore his navy blazer with all his medals on it. The cubs asked

some very interesting questions. In a more informal time, after the session, Larry placed his blazer on the table and allowed the cubs to touch the medals. They were thrilled to be allowed to do that. The next day these same cubs marched in the rain in a Remembrance Day Ceremony. They were proudly wearing the Veterans Affairs Canada "Year of the Veteran" pin that was given to them by a Hong Kong Veteran of Canada.

Gerry Gerrard and his beautiful wife Ev were the veteran and wife representing British Columbia on the pilgrimage to Hong Kong in December 2005. Ev and Gerry have such energy and they needed every bit of it for this trip. We had ten BC members (including myself) who were on the pilgrimage. There were so many events and there are some wonderful accounts on our website so I won't go into details here.

As is our tradition in Victoria, Gerry Gerrard laid a wreath at the Cenotaph in Victoria on December 18th, 2005 to commemorate Christmas Day. It was a small but warm gathering. There were five commemorative members at the event with Gerry and Ev. It was a week early this year and I apologize to those members who were not made aware of the change. We will communicate the event more effectively for 2006. If you need to contact me about anything, my phone number in Victoria is (250) 588-3417. A small wreath laying ceremony also took place on December 27 at the cenotaph in Pitt Meadows. The wreath is still in place and someone has recently put some flowers beside it.

Please keep in mind that this is a good time to think about renewing your HKVCA

membership for 2006. The yearly cost of membership remains at \$15.00. Membership pins are also available at the same time for an additional \$5.00.

Here's a story that makes me smile out loud. I phoned Gerry on January 19th to wish him a Happy Birthday. Asked how his day went he told me he had a family gathering and met with friends at his Legion. They went bowling with the Legion friends although because of his recent cataract surgery he could only see the top of the 5-pin and the edges of each of the 2-pins. His scores were 227 for his first game and 180 for the second. He told his buddies that they should just all close their eyes when they bowled and they would get scores like that too. Don't you just love it? I do.

To get back to the pilgrimage to Hong Kong; I'd just like to end my report with this. At Stanley Market, I found some delicate beautifully painted metal butterfly ornaments. I sent one home with Pearl MacPherson's daughters to give to Pearl as a gift and I delivered one personally to Lionel Speller at Broadmead Lodge on Christmas Day. This is what the butterfly from Hong Kong means to me. At the plaque unveiling ceremonies and the ceremonies at Sai Wan and Stanley Cemeteries, more than one of our Commemorative group remembers seeing a butterfly flitting about during the ceremony. At each and every outdoor event – there was a butterfly. To me, they seemed to be saying that God wanted us to know that his grace was there with us all.

Until we meet again,
Kindest regards, Linda Stewart
BC Regional Director.

**From Alberta-
Saskatchewan ...**

- Gail Richoz

Things seem to be off to a slow start in the AB/Sask Region after all the seasons Christmas and New Years festivities – don't imagine it has anything to do with all that good food and subsequent hard to keep resolutions??

Two veterans from our Region were part of the Veteran's Affairs Delegation to Hong Kong in early December. HKV Doug Rees (RR) and caregiver Cheryl Viner, along with HKV Ed Shayler, (WG) and caregiver Gail Richoz, went along on the remarkable trip that will most certainly never be forgotten. It was a very special highlight of 2005 for those attending, not only because of the exceptional hospitality and efforts of the Veterans Affairs staff, but because of all the wonderful students and HKVCA members that were there to share in all the memories. As one of the HKVCA participants on the trip, Alan Mondor from Calgary posted an incredible Web Journal of his experiences on the HKVCA website – his insights give a true feel for all the wonderful experiences we shared. We are currently in the process of organizing our spring election information, which will be mailed out shortly to our members in our AB/Sask Region. We have received a wonderful response from members who have volunteered to work on the Committee to host the 2007 HKVCA Convention in Calgary. So far the Committee has held 2 organizational meetings in Calgary - the most recent on Jan 14th. Right now we are trying to narrow the venue down to something we hope will appeal to everyone. Once we are a little more organized, we will try to post regular updates about this event and our progress on the

HKVCA website, in order to keep everyone informed.

Last Post: We are sad to announce the death of another of our Veterans in the AB/Sask Region. Just last evening, on Monday January 23, 2006, August (Gus) Bitzer of the Winnipeg Grenadiers passed away in Calgary of apparent heart failure. On Tuesday, January 3, 2006 Carolynne Anne Rees, wife of Douglas Rees (RR) passed away in Calgary.

From Manitoba

- Juliet Lafortune

Hello one and all The trip to Ottawa was fantastic. The Ontario Board along with VAC did a great job honouring the Hong Kong Veterans. Congratulations to Ontario.

When I got back to Winnipeg I was busy organizing the V.J.Day Celebration for August 21st at the Legislative grounds. Again with the backing of Veterans Affairs - it was a great success. I had the honour of singing two songs. There was a lunch served and great entertainment with the Al Miller Band and recording artist Cheryl Paille. There were approx. 450 people in at the event. George Peterson made the only speech. This was a great celebration for V.J.Day.

We had our Tea and Titbits for the ladies in September. There were more new faces at this event as the ladies appreciate it as they have a chance to share some of their stories.

Our Reunion was the next event held in October. We were pleased to have Phil Doddridge attend. The evening went well with good food, entertainment and lots of winners of the Silent Auction table and name draw.

We lost another Veteran here **Walter Inglis**. He was at the Convention in Ottawa and enjoyed himself. He passed away Sept 23 2005 in his sleep. May he rest in Peace. Our sympathies go to the family. The monument committee are moving along with the HKVA "C" Force Memorial Project and are making great headway. They are now Incorporated. If you want more information please visit the website - www.hkvca.ca . We will be holding our elections in MB in the spring. Signing off for now, take care and may God Bless you all

From Ontario ...

- Pat Turcotte

Since this will be my last opportunity to communicate with the various Regions in any official way, I want to let you know that it has been a real pleasure to connect with the National Executive of HKVCA, the Regional Directors across the country, and those associated with them. For those of us at the regional level, Carol Hadley, as National President, and Barry Mitchell, as Treasurer, have proven to be excellent models of Executive leadership. Their assistance and wise counsel have helped considerably in many situations. Phil Doddridge, as National HKVA President, and a member of the National Executive, has been a special strength for the HKVCA organization as well. I thank him and all of those who have made the four years I've been involved so special.

I feel it important to mention the contributions made in Ontario by the current Executive, and those working with us. The National Convention just concluded proved the mettle of our Regional Treasurer, Sandi

Cameron, who was not only the Treasurer for the Convention, but also looked after all the aspects of Registration. She and Sylvia Mason did double duty, both nationally, and regionally, in helping make the Convention the success that it was. Sylvia was an excellent Secretary in our Convention meetings and arranged for the items in the gift bags for all participants, as well as helping to create the Ontario Region's special gift of engraved clocks that all the veterans received. Mike Babin was also involved, attending meetings early on, and volunteering at the Convention itself. Lori Smith was unable to attend, but provided real support in preparing materials for the Special Ceremony associated with the AGM.

Before leaving the topic of the National Convention, we must not fail to recognize the tremendous effort made by the members of the Ottawa Committee in the preparation of the National Convention. Besides the Executive members mentioned above, Ontario Region members resident in Ottawa were involved in monthly meetings held under the Chairmanship of Derrill Henderson as Coordinator of the Event. These meetings began a year and a half prior to the Convention, and included: Ron McGuire, Ian Doull, Mitzi Ross, Rita Flanagan-Kuhn, Joanne Scaffidi, Jeremy Swanson, and numerous other volunteers who supported the Committee. The role of Terry Tobin and the members of the Veterans Affairs' team were of extreme importance as well. A great effort!!

Our first Ontario Executive was appointed in 2001, and included Dave Murray as Regional Director, Wendy Campbell as

Treasurer and myself as Secretary. Both Lori Smith and Sandi Cameron were involved in those

early beginnings, even before they became members of the Executive themselves. They helped shape the approach to Membership in Ontario and brought forward new ideas that assisted the first Executive greatly. When the first election occurred in 2003, they were there, officially part of the team, as Secretary and Treasurer. The two have continued their valuable support to the present, and we'll be sorry to lose them at the end of this year. Many thanks to both Lori and Sandi for a tremendous contribution.

In 2003, partway through the term of the first elected Ontario Region Executive, we realized that we needed a larger core group to deal with the many tasks we saw as necessary to our growth as a region, and we implemented the Deputy Regional Director positions. The first candidate to join us was Ken Skelton, who expanded our activities to include a very important connection to the Asian Heritage community. His wonderful displays were provided initially for events of the Asian Heritage Month's GTA Committee. We then asked Ken to mount an exhibit for our Mini-Reunion in Aurora, and, this in turn led to his display at the National Convention. Those who were able to see Ken's incredible collection of artifacts and memorabilia, as well as the other exhibits, certainly felt that they had a better understanding of what took place in Hong Kong, and the important part those events have played in Canadian history. Ken's contribution to the Ontario Region Executive was an important one.

Not too long after Ken became involved, Mike Babin offered to assist us in some of the projects we were undertaking. It was agreed that a second Deputy Regional Director would make good sense, and we asked Mike to join us. Mike has been involved in a number of initiatives, particularly in the last year or so. He has been working with the Port Perry teachers and their students in planning their trip to Hong Kong. He has also been responsible for organizing a trip to Hong Kong for the HKVCA members and friends who wanted a final pilgrimage there, in addition to attending the National Convention. As this newsletter is going to press, approximately 35 people are making their final preparations for their Hong Kong visit, which will take place from December 1st to December 9th. We thank Mike for a lot of hard work in making this Hong Kong trip possible.

Sylvia Mason was asked to become a third Deputy Regional Director earlier this year. She had been involved with the formatting of the Newsletter, but was quite interested in helping with the National Convention as well, so we were able to persuade her to do both, and have really benefited by her expertise in both areas. Helping her with the June Newsletter, and shortly, the December Newsletter, has been Tim Hodgkinson, a real stalwart in assisting with the newsletters, as well as getting us started in our attempts to transcribe a number of the Hong Kong veterans' 1997-1998 videotaped interviews conducted by Veterans Affairs. Tim's first transcription is now on the HKVCA Website, and we thank him for his diligence. He also spent many hours assisting us

in the Hospitality Room at the Convention. And we all know how much of a success that was!

We mustn't forget the role that the Area Reps. have played in helping the Executive communicate with HKVCA members around the province. With such a large Region to cover, our decision early on to divide the province into six areas was a wise one. The six Area Reps. looking after the interests of the members in their area are: Randall Ross, Area Rep. Coordinator and the Area Rep. for the GTA, Maureen Dwyer-Kline, representing Central & South East, Ron McGuire, the North East, Jackie LeDrew, the North, Leon Sokalski, West Central and our newest Area Rep., replacing the retiring Lori Smith, Barbara Cunningham-Drew, South West. We do appreciate the many phone calls and the contacts all of you have made on the Region's behalf, and hope that you will be happy to continue to do so.

Communication being as important as it is, we set up a special post early on called the Membership Liaison. This person was to keep track of e-mail members so that special bulletins could be sent whenever important matters came up in the gap between the June and December Newsletters. Sandi Cameron filled that role early on, but as the number of members with e-mail grew, it was felt that this should be a special assignment for someone outside the Executive. We have been delighted to have Janis Jennings take over the position. She has done an excellent job reaching our 90-plus e-mail members with special information that we have felt members would want to have. Many thanks, Janis!!

We've had our very special projects, one major one being the publication of the Ten Lessons. We thank John Stroud, Jim MacMillan, "Flash" Clayton, George MacDonell and Don Geraghty for their time and their Ontario HKVA organization's financial help. Nick Brune was able to put together a remarkable document with HKVA's generous assistance. We have had workshops and school visits that these veterans, and others, have been involved with in order to promote the Hong Kong cause, and they have promoted the Ten Lessons as well. Now that Veterans Affairs is assisting us with the French translation of the Ten Lessons, we feel that all Canadian students across the country will have the opportunity to learn about the Hong Kong story, and we are very proud of that.

So, essentially, what has gone on in Ontario in the last four years has been a team effort, and these people I've mentioned have been the important players. It's been a very special time, and the Executive and I will have very fond memories of those we have been working for - the Ontario Region's HKVCA members - and, most particularly, the Hong Kong veterans and their families.

As Phil Doddridge would say, "A la prochaine". Cheers! Pat Turcotte Ontario Region, HKVCA.

From Quebec.....

Greetings from Quebec.

Hopefully everyone has enjoyed a beautiful summer. Yes, another busy season has come and gone. It has been a quite busy time with all the 60th Anniversary Celebrations across Canada, families, vacation trips and we do

not forget the HKVCA National Convention in Ottawa.

So much has been said about the success of the Convention in Ottawa. The HKVCA Ontario Region organizing committee did a fine job as did VAC and all others involved. It was great from start to finish, leaving very little free time. QC's total BOD was present as well as a very strong delegation of HK Vets, Widows, Family members and large Family groups with as many as three and four generations.

QC held their regular Joint-Executive meeting in July and has mailed their newsletter The Torch in March, June and September with the next one for the end of December. The Quebec newsletter "The Torch" is now posted on our HKVCA web site for all to read.

Many HKVA and HKVCA members across the province attended the November Remembrance Day Ceremonies.

We wish all HK Vets, HKVCA members and All who will be travelling to Hong Kong for the pilgrimage a very safe and memorable trip.

QC Region will be holding their regular Provincial Reunion for 2006 in Granby on August 10,11,12 and 13. Hotel reservations will be treated as usual, only through your organizing committee (for special rates). The Reunion Kits will be included with the next March 2006 edition of The Torch.

An invitation is extended to all members who would like to attend our Reunion to just take a moment and call or e-mail and it will be a pleasure to send you a reservation kit 450-375-7439 or lucette.mailloux.m@videotron.ca.

Your Quebec friends extend all their best wishes for a Merry Christmas and happy, healthy and prosperous New Year. May all your wishes come true.

Lucette Mailloux-Muir, Quebec Regional Director

A little humour -

I feel like my body has gotten totally out of shape, so I got my doctor's permission to join a fitness club and start exercising. I decided to take an aerobics class for seniors. I bent, twisted, gyrated, jumped up and down, and perspired for an hour. But, by the time I got my leotards on, the class was over.

* * * * *

Know how to prevent sagging? Just eat till the wrinkles fill out.

--I'm getting into swing dancing. Not on purpose. Some parts of my body are just prone to swinging.

---Don't let aging get you down. It's too hard to get back up.!

--- Remember: You don't stop laughing because you grow old, You grow old because you stop laughing.

- --THE SENILITY PRAYER: Grant me the senility to forget the people I never liked anyway, the good fortune to run into the ones I do, and the eyesight to tell the difference.

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Plan now!!

**To attend the National
Convention 2007 – Calgary**

Alberta/Saskatchewan
Region hopes that many of the
veterans, widows and regular
members will be attending. Book
your calendar now and continue to
look for updates.
