



The Spirit of the Torch

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



Volume III, Number 2 (5)

December 2003

Regional Director's Message

Greetings to you all!

In this, our fifth publication, there is much to cover and relate to you.

First and foremost, the Veterans Independence Programme (V.I.P.) has been passed in the House of Commons. Our Patron, Mr. Clifford Chadderton no doubt augmented the passing of the Widows V.I.P. Bill. How so, you may ask. Through his assertiveness! Most recently through an article of his published in the Ottawa Citizen, and by promoting the V.I.P. through the National Council of Veteran Associations in Canada. We salute Mr. Chadderton for this wonderful accomplishment. Further details regarding the entire bill will be forthcoming soon. Contact your local D.V.A. for more information.

Mini-Reunions and Conventions.

The HKVCA Region has certainly been active this summer and fall. From all accounts the Quebec Region's Mini-Reunion was a total success. Both Lucette and Phil advised us that there was a good turnout of Ontario members making the trip to New Richmond. All left in good spirits and all look forward to another get-together in Granby next year.

This past August our National Convention was held in Victoria, British Columbia. Linda Stewart and her very competent executive put in many, many long hours to stage this well-organized event. Their efforts were truly rewarded as all guests who came left with many fond memories of a splendid time in Beautiful British Columbia. Our gratitude to Linda and her committee for a job well done.

Pat Turcotte represented the Ontario Executive in both Quebec and Victoria.

Back to Ontario - London to be specific. Lori Smith along with her committee organized our inaugural Mini-Reunion and its Joint Meeting with HKVA, Ontario Branch, as well as the Dinner in the evening which topped off the event. At this get-together, which took place on October 18th, there were a total of sixty-five guests, including twelve

Hong Kong Veterans, our guest speaker, Mr. Nick Brune, and the first five recipients of our Honorary Memberships. Included in the group were three happy Cash Draw winners: Joyce Sokalski, \$50., Cara Worthington, \$100. and Betty Hutchinson, \$200. Our congratulations, ladies! The evening included a wonderful dinner and entertainment, but it was the comradeship that electrified the evening's activities at this gala affair. Lori, as Chairperson of this event, you did an amazing job. All the accolades that you received from our membership will attest to that fact. I present this question to you, and all our members now. WHERE DO WE HOLD NEXT YEAR'S MINI-REUNION / JOINT MEETING ? We need everyone's input, so if you have some suggestions, kindly contact your Area Rep. or a member of the Executive.

National Convention 2005:

On November 4th, in Toronto, Derrill Henderson, Pat Turcotte and I held our first meeting. A number of issues were brought to the table, notably the hotel possibilities. Derrill presented five hotels in the Ottawa area to Pat and myself. We took into consideration the hotel location, availability, services and, of course, rates. We narrowed the choices to one or two selections, with one in particular being favoured. The final choice will be made shortly. In the meantime, Derrill's committee will have its first meeting very soon, and will be checking out the activities possible in the Ottawa area which might be of interest to members. Pat and I left that three-hour meeting feeling very confident that the Ottawa Committee's preparations under Derrill's direction were in good hands. Our role in celebrating the 60th Anniversary of V-J Day weekend will be outlined in the very near future. We will keep you all abreast of developments as best we can, and will be looking for volunteers to help.

Remembrance Day activities:

For the third consecutive year, the number of members involved in laying wreaths on Remembrance Day has increased, this year to 34. Although I wasn't able to be part of the Whitby services, Mr. John Mc Carron very kindly took my

place. I had the honour of marching the Hong Kong Colours at the inaugural Oshawa Ceremony. On November 3rd., Sergeant Robert Clayton and I did a taping on Rogers Cable Television called "Durham Living", hosted by Al Nichols, a retired Secondary School History teacher. The program aired more than once in Remembrance Day Week. Needless to say, "Flash" was excellent in the interview, during which the Hong Kong Colours and P.O.W. photos were shown. This is the second straight year that we have been able to present some of the Hong Kong Story to this area via television and local newspapers.

When I accepted the position of Regional Director three years ago, I was honoured to be associated with 288 remaining Hong Kong Veterans. However, as we near the end of 2003, I report sadly that our Veterans now number 195. On behalf of your Executive Council, I offer our condolences to the wives and families of Veterans who have passed away this year. May Eternal Peace be with them as they rejoin their comrades. WE WILL NEVER FORGET !

Elections:

If you recall, in my June 2003 message, I mentioned the need for members to take an active roll in our Association, in particular, the Regional Council of HKVCA, Ontario. A three-member Executive is truly extending itself in order to achieve what was stipulated three years ago when our Executive took over. I was anticipating new members volunteering to join us, thus increasing our Executive from three, hopefully, to five. Unfortunately, that didn't materialize.

As in the case with any organization bumps in the road do occur. Yes, we did experience that situation in our current election. However, the situation was rectified without any expense or disruption. This executive will indeed leave an accountable system for future Ontario Region executives. I ask our membership to consider being pro-active in your HKVCA. Get involved.

"Work in progress" updates:

Nick Brune and Pat Turcotte continue to work on promoting the Ten Lessons. On Nov. 8th, Nick and George MacDonell made an excellent presentation to the Ontario History and Social Science Teachers Association (OHASSTA) Conference at the Holiday

Inn in Mississauga. A number of copies of both the Ten Lessons and "One Soldier's Story" were sold there. In addition, nearly 200 copies of the Ten Lessons are in circulation around the province, and are already being used in some schools, and over 1000 copies of "One Soldier's Story" are now in high school and public libraries in Ontario, including communities like Toronto, Mississauga, Cobourg and Uxbridge. It is very likely that other centres will soon follow. The work Derrill Henderson has been doing in Ottawa suggests that that city may well be next.



Judy & Nick Brune- guest speaker at the London Mini Reunion Oct/03

At this time, there is no further report on the street-naming policy in Oshawa. When we hear anything from City Council there, we'll let you know.

As we approach the holiday season, I've asked that a poem given to me by Mr. and Mrs. Glen Lee and family be inserted into the Newsletter. It is a quiet reminder to us from a voice that was in the thick of that "horrific treatment of humanity" that began on Christmas Day, 1941.

On behalf of your Executive Council, may this holiday season with your loved ones be the best Merry Christmas and healthiest, and most prosperous New Year ever.

Best Regards,
David J. Murray

Editorial Staff: Editor- Pat Turcotte, Sandi Cameron
Set up & Distribution-Lori Smith, Dorothy Sauson

HKVCA in Ontario

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

- ✓ Enrolling all those in the Hong Kong family in the HKVCA
- ✓ Ensuring regular, periodic contact with those members
- ✓ Attending and participating in memorial services on Remembrance Day, V-J Day and other special occasions
- ✓ 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

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The Word from the Area Reps :

We are still 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. 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.

South West Area: [Ed. Note:As well as being Area Rep. for the South West area, Lori Smith is

Membership Chair and the organizer of the First Annual Mini-Reunion held in London, Ontario on October 18th. Hers is a short Area Rep.'s report - for obvious reasons.]

I have been very remiss in my Area Rep.'s duties, so much so that a few people have decided they can bail me out by helping with the phoning of the South West membership. These volunteers are: Lillian Gauvin [Albert Russell, RRC], Pat MacCallum [Lawrence Ross, RRC], Elaine Calver [Phillip Lawliss, RRC] and Lisa Bird [Thomas D. Wardell, RRC]. I truly appreciate their help. One or two more would really help out this drowning victim! Give me a call.

Lori Smith,

South West Area Rep.



Flash Clayton, Bonnie Wagner, Jessie Clayton & Stan Wagner

Central and South East Area: Muriel Warner, who had so kindly agreed to take over from Leon Sokalski when he moved to Hamilton, has, unfortunately, had to step back from the role she was just beginning to play because her husband, Howard, had taken seriously ill. We hope she may be able to continue some time in the future. Until then, Maureen Dwyer-Kline has agreed to be Acting Area Rep. I'm sure Maureen would appreciate another one or two people to assist in making phone calls in her area. Thanks, too, to Oda Barlow who agreed to call the widows in the area a few weeks ago when it was important to get the news of the Mini-Reunion out to people.

Muriel did write a special report of her Remembrance Day experience, part of which follows:
(Leonard Patrick, RRC, was her brother)

Everything went off well in Uxbridge yesterday. Even though there was a misty rain, it was not enough to drench us. There was a good crowd around the Cenotaph corner, which is quite small. There were about 30 wreaths from the different levels of governments (even DVA), from service clubs and local merchants, and the one lovely cross in memory of Leonard and his comrades. The announcement was very brief, but mentioned his name and the HKVCA as well, which was good to hear. I will go down on a sunny day to take a picture of it.

Please convey to the Association how proud and honoured I was to be asked to place this cross at the Cenotaph and I thank them with all my heart for that opportunity. I also said as I placed the cross, "Yes, we will remember".

Len and Roger Patrick, his two sons here in Ontario, e-mailed me their regrets that they could not attend due to business commitments but appreciated and commended the Association for this gesture of Remembrance for their father.

Best to you all.

Muriel Warner

Central & South East Area Rep.

Maureen Dwyer-Kline

Acting Central & South East Area Rep.

West Central Area: In early April, I moved from Gravenhurst, Muskoka, where I was the Central and South East Rep., to Hamilton, Ontario, the West Central Area, where I filled a Rep. vacancy. I was successful in contacting by phone most of the Veterans and Widows, but still need to know the following phone numbers. If anyone can be of assistance to me, I will greatly appreciate it.
A.P. GELLY, St. Catharines; MARION JAMIESON, Milton; JEAN ONYETTE, Niagara Falls; MRS. P. WILMOT, St. Catharines.

Carl Adams still works on his farm outside of Chippewa, Ont. He celebrated his 85th birthday in November, and we wish him a very Happy Birthday.

Gerald Pentland, Niagara Falls, is looking after his wife who was not well.

Gerald Sunstrum, Niagara Falls, celebrated his 86th birthday last September, and his wife is not well either. We hope you had a Happy Birthday, Gerald, and that both your wife and Gerald Sunstrum's wife are much better.

Irene Grimshaw made a sizeable donation to HKVCA, which became part of the "Spirit of the Torch" Fund. Thank you very much, Irene. She could not attend the Reunion, but planned to be at the Remembrance Day Ceremony in Hamilton on November 11th.

Peter Wing passed away last summer. Our condolences to his family.

In October, my wife, Joyce and I attended a Joint HKVA/HKVCA Reunion at the Ramada Inn in London, Ontario, and had a wonderful time. It was so nice to meet other people involved with the Association, and, most of all, the Veterans themselves who could be there to share their very interesting, heart-warming, and often tragic stories with us. It was such a privilege to meet them. Joyce was so pleasantly surprised when she won a third-place \$50.00 door prize. **Donald Geraghty** and **"Ken" Pifher** also from the West Central Area attended that reunion, and I hope they enjoyed it.

REMEMBRANCE DAY:

A wreath was purchased at the Royal Canadian Legion #58 in Hamilton. **Bud Baker**, the Poppy Chairman, donated the **Identification Ribbon**.

We were part of the Wreath-Laying Service in **Gore Park** at the cenotaph in downtown Hamilton on November 11th.

If anyone wishes to get in touch with me, I can be reached at (905) 525-6922.

Leon Sokalski

West Central Area Rep.



North East Area: I am pleased to report that Hong Kong wreaths will be laid at 13 ceremonies in this Area for Remembrance Day, up from 12 last year. My sincere thanks to those involved. I hope others will come forward for next year.

I am also pleased to mention that Eric Maloney has improved greatly since my last report. A special brace has made him mobile again, and he is in less pain from the shingles, although they're still a problem. Eric's good humour and fine outlook are helping him to keep up his spirits. He will be speaking to a local group of the Rotary Club on November 10th.

Ken Ewing often speaks to groups of school children, and the letter to be found in the Veterans' Profile section of this newsletter tells the tale. Keep up the good PR on behalf of your comrades – you're one of those who can – on behalf of comrades who cannot!

I have done a number of things over this year connected with ensuring that our veterans are "Never Forgotten". I will outline them in my next report. One of the major events was attending our Victoria Reunion where I met many new and old friends. I'm sure there will be a report on this great gathering by someone else so I will say a sincere thank you to those involved with putting on the Convention – one of the best of any I've attended.

Happy Christmas, and 2004!

Ron McGuire
North East Area Rep.

GTA Area:

Hello everyone. It was a great pleasure to meet so many members at the Mini Reunion in London, Ontario. I was given the opportunity to outline the roles and responsibilities of the Area Reps.

There are six areas in the province, the largest is the GTA with 56 members, and smallest,

the North (Thunder Bay, Sudbury etc.) with 32 members.

The Area Rep.'s role is to be in touch with the veterans and the widows at least twice a year, as well as contacting regular members. Regular members are encouraged to consider wreaths in their communities as a way to increase the awareness of the public regarding the Hong Kong Veterans and their role in WWII. The Area Rep. helps the Executive keep track of changes in addresses and phone numbers, as well as the needs of the veterans and widows. We have a small budget for get-togethers in the six areas, if the Area Rep. feels able to take on such a gathering.

At the present time our most urgent need is an Area Rep. in the North. We have no way to reach that area right now except through people with e-mail. So if you know someone who could help, or you yourself could help, please let us know.

There is one thing the Executive has realized. In any area, it would be helpful to have at least one other person working with the Area Rep., if not a group of three or four where there are a large number of members. If anyone would be interested in helping in their area, do let Pat Turcotte or Lori Smith know that you are interested.

The next Joint meeting of the HKVA/HKVCA in April of 2004 will include finalizing the plans for the next Mini-Reunion, which will be held in October. I will be working with Sylvia Mason on finding a suitable location. The following are the selection criteria we are using: cost, location, transportation and consideration of who will be attending and from where.

If any Members have any ideas or information on a suitable location for our next Mini- Reunion, please feel free to contact me. My telephone number is 416-429-4377 and my email address is ross@toronto.ca

Randall Ross
GTA Rep.



Wallace (Red) and Alice Harrington enjoying the London Mini Reunion Oct/03

The North Area: The North Area:

HELP!! We're still without an Area Rep. in the North. All those members in Thunder Bay, Sudbury, North Bay, Red Lake, New Liskeard, Keewatin, Callander, Red Lake, Dunderidge, Vermilion Bay, Vickers Heights, Barwick, Fort Frances, Emo, Kaministiquia Sundridge, Garson, Espanola and Kenora need to have a voice, and a person they can contact when there are things they want to find out about related to the Ontario Region of HKVCA. We have a National Convention coming up in Ontario in 2005, and we want you to be a part of it. That can't happen if we can't reach you and you can't reach us. As a former Sudburian for 16 years, I urge someone to volunteer to help keep the North in touch. If you're wondering about the cost of making phone calls, we would supply you with a special Northern budget – we know what the distances are like.

Let's hear from somebody out there!!! Get in touch with Pat Turcotte at Ph. (905) 274-3189 or E-mail: petsask@sympatico.ca

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!

Membership Liaison

Report for December Newsletter

As most of you are aware, last spring we started a new information-sharing system whereby we email items of interest to members who have provided us

with their email address. Since that time, we have emailed the following bulletins:

- An invitation and information package with respect to our First Annual Mini-Reunion held October 18th in London, Ontario;
- Information re the HKVCA Ontario Region's Election, and the form entitled "Call for Nominations" for the positions of Regional Director, Secretary and Treasurer, along with documentation outlining their respective duties as Officers (to all Voting Members only); Deadline reminders for the Ontario Region's Election and the London Mini-Reunion;
- A brief summary of the London Mini-Reunion; notification of the next phase of the Ontario Region's Election;
- Information re two television programs featuring Hong Kong veterans, aired on CBC Newsworld and Global on Remembrance Day; and
- Promotion of the opportunity for members to lay a wreath on Remembrance Day.

If you are interested (everyone is welcome) in receiving our ad hoc bulletins, please send an email to me, Sandi Cameron, at sandicameron@rogers.com and I'll be happy to add your email address to our distribution list.

Sandi Cameron
Membership Liaison

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

By John Stroud, RRC

There are several very important items to discuss:

Extension of V.I.P. for War Widows.

The Federal Government has reversed a decision to deny 23,000 veterans' widows the V.I.P. Allowance. The decision will cost the government \$170 million dollars over five years to set right an "injustice" that created two classes of war widows. A special telephone number has been set up for widows to call. Phone Toll Free: 1-800-443-0382. Veterans Affairs will mail a kit out. When calling this number, quote your V.A.C. I.D. number.

Licence Plates Honour Veterans:

Ontario unveiled a special licence plate designed for veterans on November 9th, 2003. Veterans can exchange current plates and get new plates at no charge. New plates have the word "Veteran" inscribed beneath a red poppy and are available to veterans who served with Canadian or Allied forces.

Disability and Widows Pensions:

Effective January 1, 2004, all pensions will be increased by 3.1% in accordance with the cost of living.

Obituary:

Joseph Hickey, RRC, passed away in Sunnybrook Hospital, "K" Wing on November 9, 2003. Joe was in Sunnybrook for a number of years. Our sincere condolences to his family.

Reader's Digest Canada:

A new book, "World War II, The People's Story" which includes a companion CD, will be available in bookstores for \$59.95. If ordered by calling Reader's Digest Toll Free at 1-800-465-0780, shipping and handling charges will apply.

National Council of Veterans Associations in Canada (N.C.V.A.):

The Annual General Meeting was held in Toronto on November 5, 2003. Our patron, Cliff Chadderton, was elected chairman, and John Stroud and Les Peate, were elected Vice Chairmen. N.C.V.A. represents 47 veterans' organizations with over 300,000 members.

National War Museum:

The new National War Museum takes shape on a piece of land called Le Breton Flats, along the Ottawa River, not far from Parliament Hill. At a cost of \$105 million, the War Museum is slated to open its doors to the public in less than two years.

Many thanks and deep appreciation for having received generous donations from our members and widows.

Your 2004 dues of \$15.00 should be mailed to our treasurer at the following address:

James C. MacMillan,
70 Delisle Avenue, Apt. 909,
Toronto, ON M4V 1S7

Please make your cheque payable to: H.K. Veterans Association (Ontario Branch)

John Stroud, President,
Ontario Branch, HKVA

Newsflash From National HKVCA-

Derrill Henderson has requested that this information be passed along re the legislation that has just been passed in the House of Commons regarding the VIP program:

1. The Widows program has been back dated to Sept. 1st, 1990. This means that any widow whose husband died after that date, AND was in receipt of the VIP program when he died, is eligible.
2. There is no "means test", but VAC WILL conduct a "needs care" assessment to determine exactly what will be covered. This is of little concern to HK widows, for their age will justify almost everything. It is primarily to assist the widow in not making any errors on her application (e.g. asking for meal preparation when she is mobile and capable of making her own meals).
3. The widow must call VAC at 1-800-443-0382 to apply and then they will send her an application package. Once that is returned, the process will start. The widow will need her husband's VAC file number and/or regimental number to complete the application. (Derrill can help out here if necessary.)

Profiles of Our Hong Kong Veterans Our profiles will take a slightly different direction this issue. We will have three items. The first, a student article in honour of one of our veterans, the second, a letter to one of our veterans, and the third, a very special letter written by one of our veterans.

Item One: Remember Mr. Ewing

Last June we profiled Ken Ewing, RRC, who lives in Kemptville. He has long been involved in visiting schools, as a number of our Hong Kong veterans do. We thought we'd include a column written by an Intermediate student (Grade 7 or 8) after Ken had visited her school.

The student begins:

Mr. Ewing told his stories as if they had just happened. I think that he is a real hero. The way he looked, he was slightly sad, but as Mr. Ewing said "I think that children should know about the war whether you want to talk about it or not."

The way that Mr. Ewing talked about his experiences in the war made me realize that the war was very unpleasant and heartbreaking. It makes me hope that in my lifetime, I will never go through what Mr. Ewing went through. Since he came to talk to us, I think that I will spend all my silent moments on Remembrance Day thinking about his stories, instead of staring around. The people my age have not and hopefully will not experience what Mr. Ewing has gone through. When I saw the pictures of the people that were prisoners in Hong Kong, it really shocked me! I never realized that they would look that bad and be in that condition.

My grandmother told me a story about when she was in the war. She was a nurse and had to go outside and over to the building next door. She had to get more supplies. As soon as she got to the other building, the one that she'd been in was blown up by a bomb. She was very lucky. I am glad that nothing happened to her during the war.

I am happy we're at peace now, and I hope that it will stay that way.

By Katy Schekkerman

Item Two: Parts of a letter to "Flash" Clayton from a nursing instructor in B.C.

Dear Mr. Clayton:

I am requesting your help. I am a nursing instructor at Kwatlen University College in Surrey, B.C., and a District Director with the Registered Nurses Association of British Columbia. I am doing academic research for a book on WWII – Far East with particular emphasis on the nurses, medics and their patients.

Back in 1963-1967 I was a young student nurse in the Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps, posted to QAMH Millbank, London, England. While I was there I was assigned to nurse a terminally ill young soldier (the same age as myself) and his parents had come in to the side ward to keep a bedside vigil. It was a distressing situation and I fled into the hospital chapel, next door to the ward

to "pull myself together". In the chapel, I saw a stained glass window, unlike any other chapel window I had ever seen before. It was a group of QA nurses, arms raised, walking out into the sea. In the lower corner of the window was a Japanese soldier, with a gun trained on the nurses.

Growing up in England I was very familiar with the war in Europe/Battle of Britain but knew precious little about the WWII Far East. The Army chaplain was in the hospital that day and I asked him if he knew the story behind the window. He told me it was to commemorate the nurses in Singapore who died trying to defend their patients.

The story lay dormant in my mind for about 40 years.....three years ago I began to search for the window, and found that the hospital had closed down and the windows in the chapel, removed. I went to the nearby museum where the chapel windows had been taken and was told by the curator that I was mistaken about the window in question – that the incident never happened, and the window did not exist. I was annoyed and vowed to get to the truth. Finally, last year, I met with the Chaplain General – British Land Forces, and the Bishop of London at the Tower of London who told me the story was true. Since I have been researching further, and found that the story depicted in the window was not just one isolated incident but a whole catalogue of obscene cruelty and brutality.

Nanking is part of this story, but the window story concerning the nurses, medics and patients started proper with Hong Kong in 1941, and continued right on down the Malay Peninsula to Singapore. I am now aware that while the rest of the world was focused on Pearl Harbor and its "day of infamy", you and your comrades were fighting for your lives in Hong Kong.

I have since found that there is a whole generation of nurses who are not privy to the stories of what happened to their colleagues and their patients in WWII Far East. As an educator, I feel compelled to rectify that and tell the story of the nurses, the medics and the patients.

I am a firm believer that statistics do not change lives....stories do.

(There is much more to the letter, but space does not permit.)



Flash Clayton

[Ed. Note: While we're referring to "Flash" Clayton, many thanks for the numerous visits he and Jessie have made, and are still making to various schools, hospitals and Legions spreading the word about Hong Kong. Here are just a few: Oct. 29th – Brechin Separate School; Nov. 3rd - Brechin Public School; Nov. 7th - Colour Party & visit to the cenotaph with both schools; Nov. 10th - Orillia Memorial Hospital, Nov. 11th – Ramara Public School, Nov. 21st – St. Augustine High School in Markham. Real ambassadors!!]



Our third letter is one of a different sort. It was written by George MacDonell, RRC, following the Mini-Reunion in London on October 18th which he attended. He decided that it was very important to let Lori know his reaction to the meeting, and, in the process, let the eleven comrades who were there with him know how he felt about the whole occasion.

Lori Smith
Chairperson
London Mini-Reunion

Dear Lori:

I am writing to thank you for the time and effort you so generously expended on our behalf to bring us all together for our meeting and dinner in London last Saturday, October 18th.

In past times, a reunion with my Hong Kong comrades often left me sad and depressed as I was reminded of the face and names of the fine young men we left behind, to sleep forever in the foreign soil of Hong Kong and Japan. Like many of us who returned, I wondered at why I was spared while so many of our regiment were not. For years, like many of my fellow survivors, I suffered unconscious feelings of guilt at my good fortune which always seemed to be heightened at a reunion with my Hong Kong comrades. But somehow, this last Saturday meeting was different. I came away thankful, my pride renewed, and I was uplifted. Thankful that I had a chance once again to meet my old comrades, to shake their hands and see once more the quiet smiles of recognition. As I met each in turn and listened to their voices greeting me and others, I sensed again the special bond between us – a bond that characterizes us as veterans and that was forged on the battlefields of Hong Kong and in the slave labour camps of the Japanese. While unfortunately we are fewer and fewer in number, the bond of comradeship is just as strong as it ever was.

I was grateful to be included once again and to have the opportunity to meet my comrades' wives, their children and other members of their extended families. I was thankful to meet so many of their family members and be able to tell them something special about their husband or father or father-in-law that the subject in question would never have told them.

The whole tenor of the meeting of the Commemorative Association was very positive and I feel that the Association is a wonderful and natural outgrowth of the Hong Kong Veterans' Association. I thought the evening ceremony, consisting of the announcement of the new Honorary Members (including Birchall, Farmer and Brune), the sing-along and the wonderful, thoughtful speech of Nick Brune at the end made the whole affair a very, very memorable event.

The infusion of the young people of the Hong Kong veterans' families into the Commemorative Association and their enthusiasm, friendship and common interest are wonderful to see. It appears that they have begun and are more than able to carry the torch.

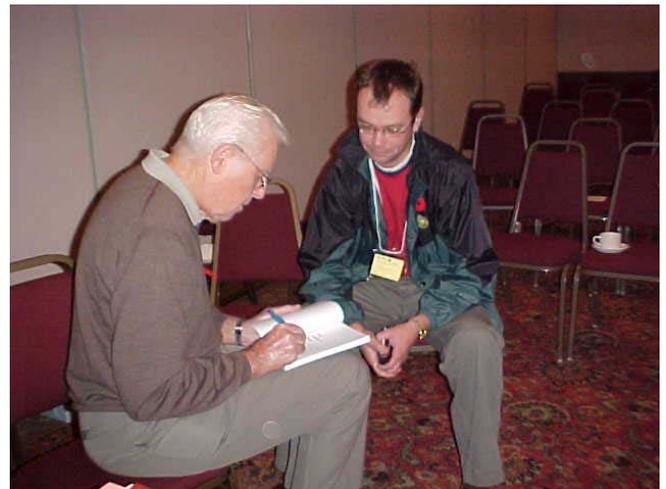
It struck me that, during the meeting, when I asked each of my comrades, "How are you?" their replies were almost all the same. "Not bad," they'd say, "But I'm getting old, you know, and things don't work as well as they used to." And then after a smile they'd ask: "But aren't we all?" During our discussions, I never heard even a trace of self-pity. This lack of complaint and self-pity and their refusal to whine about the mistakes of the past to me is the remarkable thing about my comrades. When you consider their past, the trauma of the hopeless outmatched battle of Hong Kong, their horrible prison experiences and then their struggle to return to civilian life while most of them were suffering from some prison induced illness or debilitating physical condition, you cannot help but wonder at them.

I am sure that the simple bedrock values that held these men together during their four-year nightmarish ordeal are just as strong in them now as they ever were. Not only are these men above self-pity but, try as they might, the Japanese could not break their spirit. And so these veterans will go on, with their integrity and their dignity intact, until the ends of their lives, secure in the knowledge that at their moment of truth on the distant green-clad battle fields of Hong Kong, they were loyal to their values, loyal to each other and loyal to their country. Their gallant story, to be told and remembered by coming generations, is not about how they were defeated at Hong Kong but about how, against impossible odds both on the battlefields and in the prison camps, they showed the world the mettle of which they were made.

Just being with them and their families and friends for a few hours last Saturday gave my spirit a lift and renewed my pride to be numbered as one of them. As they are a modest, unassuming lot, no doubt they would be surprised at these words of mine, but, nonetheless, these quiet men are the stuff of which legends are made and upon which great nations are founded.

Yours sincerely,
George MacDonell

[Ed. Note: George, along with Nick Brune, was involved in a very special workshop on Saturday, Nov 8th, with their two publications, "One Soldier's Story" and the "Ten Lessons" as the basis of the presentation. It was the OHASSTA (Ontario History and Social Science Teachers Association) Convention. The audience was very enthusiastic, to the point that one participant came up and said it was the best workshop he'd been to in the five years he had been attending. Congratulations, gentlemen!]



George MacDonell after the OHASSTA Workshop held on Sat., Nov. 8th in Mississauga.

The Ladies' Side of the Story Mrs. Maude Crawford

Lillian Maude Crawford, at 96, has lots of interesting stories to tell. A prairie girl, she was born in Arcola, Saskatchewan in 1907. Her maiden name was Hopper, and her father had come to the West in 1901 or 1902, from Beauharnois, Quebec.

Maude lived in Arcola until she was sixteen, attending the local high school before going away to Winnipeg to continue her studies at university. She enrolled in Wesley College, the United Church College at the University of Manitoba, taking a General Arts course which included classes in English, History, Biology and Economics. She had been advanced from Grade Twelve to Second Year and soon completed her Arts degree at that

university. She met her future husband, John Crawford, in a Science course before he transferred into Medicine. The two became engaged the night of her graduation dance in 1927.

In those years, many jobs were not even available to women. Maude did manage to find work with the T. Eaton Co. in the advertising department. Employed in the boutique on the 4th floor of the Winnipeg headquarters, she went from the personal shopping service into advertising itself but it wasn't long before something else caught her eye.

A lot of University students were applying for work with Chautauqua, the very special performing company that toured the United States and Canada in those early years. Friends of Maude's had put her name in for a position with this company, and although she was not sure she was ready for it, she decided to consider the possibility when a position was offered to her. Her employers at Eaton's, knowing how important the opportunity was assured her that she would have a job when she was ready to come back. Maude became one of the organizers of this travelling performing group. Although there were some Canadians involved, it was made up mainly of American professional dancers, singers, actors and three-play companies. Maude stayed with Chautauqua for a year, travelling all over the United States and Canada. She found it great fun, different and exciting, being with the many artists who were performing, and visiting the cities and towns near their performance sites. The last place the company performed on tour was Trail, B.C. When the performances there were over, Maude went to Vancouver for awhile, and then came back to the job which was waiting for her at Eaton's in Winnipeg.

Having lived in Winnipeg since 1923, Maude was ready for her next challenge. Women were not allowed to work, or earn a salary, when they married, but having been engaged for some time to John Crawford, the decision to marry was made. The marriage took place in Arcola in 1932. John was the only child of a pioneer family in Winnipeg, and was just one year older than Maude. Maude, too, had been an only child. Ultimately, they would have two children, six grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

John Crawford had become a pediatrician after graduating from the University of Manitoba in 1930 with the Gold Medal in Medicine. When he was persuaded by a colonel from Toronto whom he knew to join the army, he did not hesitate to join the war effort. In the nearly four years that he was in prison camp in Hong Kong, Maude received five letters and a few cards. She, along with the other wives and mothers, spent a lot of time involved in projects that would contribute to the support of the troops overseas. One of the most important tasks for many women, and Maude was among them, was to pack Red Cross parcels at least once a week.

John's mother had died during the war, and his father was still living in Winnipeg. The family had bought a home while John was away, and when he came back to Elm Street after the long train trip from Vancouver, the street was lighted and the trees were full of youngsters welcoming him home. John wasn't well enough to resume his practice, having gone from 220 lbs. to a weight of around 162 lbs. but it wasn't long before he was making trips across the country, from Halifax to Victoria, to deal with the medical problems, and the difficulties of adjustment, that the men were facing. In the midst of this, Maude suggests that "Authority at home went from one end of the table to the other". When John went to work in Ottawa, there were many more adjustments to be made.

John, having kept carefully hidden notes in Hong Kong of the diet, and diseases of the Canadian soldiers, had been part of the War Crimes trials held in Tokyo. On the 25th Anniversary of the end of the war, Maude was able to travel with him, and visited Pusan, Tokyo and Yokahama. John had stayed in the army for some time after coming home. In 1946, the family moved to Ottawa, where John became the Director of Research for the Canadian Army in his role as Chief Medical Officer, a post later titled Surgeon General. Having gone to war as a Major, he retired as a Brigadier General in 1956.

Life in Ottawa meant getting to know an entirely new community. When John first went into government, he acted as an Assistant Deputy Minister in Veterans Affairs. Then, in 1965, he was asked by Lester Pearson to become Deputy

Minister of Health. Maude really enjoyed those years. She and her husband were able to travel to Europe on several occasions as part of delegations for conferences in Geneva related to the Red Cross. Maude found these trips a great experience, as she hadn't travelled to Europe before. Her daughter, Natalie, was living in Metz, France at that time, and visits with her made the travel even more pleasurable.

After John's retirement for health reasons in 1969, there were many happy years in Ottawa. A unique situation had developed in the family. Maude's parents had moved first to Winnipeg some years before and then had come to live with the Crawfords in Ottawa. John's father had also come to live with them, and with three of their four parents in their 80's and 90's in the same household, a busy and happy household, the family had some very special times together. As Maude has said: "I wouldn't have missed those years for anything".

Maude became President of the Ottawa Women's Canadian Club at one point, and was a lifetime member of the May Court Club, a club established by Lady Aberdeen to foster special work in the Commonwealth. She was also on a number of Boards that worked with children and the handicapped. Among the special moments in her life she lists the visit of the Queen and Prince Philip in 1951 as one of the highlights. John had been chosen as the Canadian Medical Officer to meet the royal couple in Halifax and accompany them to Victoria and back on their visit to this country. There were a number of functions in which Maude was able to take part.

After John's death in 1997, Maude continued to live in Ottawa for a time. She has recently moved to Perth, to be near her daughter, Natalie. She has been in quite good health, and is close enough to Natalie and her family that they are able to visit frequently. With a memory that is sharp and with many more stories to tell, Maude Crawford continues to enjoy a full and happy life.

by *Pat Turcotte*



Audrey Murray & Jean Killoran getting reacquainted at the London Mini Reunion Oct/03

In Memoriam

Remembering the Hong Kong Veterans who left us in 2003:

Duncan A. Benton, WG
Norman R. Henderson, RRC
Coleman Pollock, RRC
Donat Bernier, RRC
Joseph S. Hickey, RRC
Roy Robinson, RRC
Gerard S. Bisson, RRC
Wilbert Lester, RRC
Raymond Smith, RRC
Robert Chamberlain, RRC
William R. Maltman, WG
Emile Van Raes, WG
Adolphe Cyr, RRC
William Nicholson, WG
Peter Wing, RRC

"We Shall Remember Them"

We shall also remember:

Laura Louise Findlay-Ross, widow of George Findlay, RRC.
Phyllis Johnson, wife of Richard T. Johnson, WG
Clara Matchett, widow of Eugene B. Matchett, RRC
Ethel Query, wife of Edward "Chick" Query, WG
Myra Spier, widow of Alfred W. Spier, WG
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"

[Ed. Note: On Saturday, Nov. 15, 2003, a number of Hong Kong Veterans including Flash Clayton, Fred Mason, James MacMillan, and George MacDonell, as well as Herb Worthington, Jessie Clayton, Margaret MacDonell, Rickie Edey, Dave Murray and Pat Turcotte from HKVCA, attended Joseph Hickey's funeral, along with family and friends of the Hickey family. Joe was known to those who knew him best as "Manny". It was both a wonderfully warm and dignified service. Two soloists, including Joe's son, Martin, sang beautifully, and laughter rang out in the chapel a number of times as memorable moments in "Manny's" relationships with some of those present were recalled. "Manny" must have been pleased.]

Wreaths for Remembrance Day

We are continuing to encourage members to ensure that there is a wreath honouring the Hong Kong veterans in their community. Many thanks to those who support the "Spirit of the Torch" Fund which helps us to increase the number of wreaths around the province. **A special "thank you" to Irene Grimshaw for a very generous donation.**

Wreath Sponsors for 2003:

1. Doug Auld & family – Oakville – in honour of George Auld, WG
2. Muriel Warner – Uxbridge Cenotaph – Uxbridge – Leonard Patrick, RRC and HK comrades
3. Irene & Sandi Cameron – Centrepointhe Cenotaph – Nepean – Kenneth Cameron, RCOC
4. Wendy Campbell – Meaford – Howard Naylor, RCC
5. Joanne Carroll – Prescott – Walter Parkes, RRC
6. "Flash" & Jessie Clayton – Brechin – All HK veterans
7. Len Cotton – Kanata – Leonard Cotton, RRC
8. Constance Darling – Trenton Cenotaph – Trenton – Edward Phillips, RRC
9. Matthew G. Evans for Ellen Evans – Cobourg – All HK veterans
10. John Ewing for Ken Ewing – Kemptville – All HK veterans
11. Grey Fair – Stratford – All HK veterans
12. Ted Farmer – Woodstock – All HK veterans
13. Michelle Fleming & Leisa Connelly – Orleans – Roger Cyr

14. Kathie Findlay & Paddy-Jean Noble and Pat Turcotte – Port Credit – Lorne Findlay, RRC & Leonard Corrigan, WG
15. Sheila Forsyth – Eursal Kaine, RRC & John Kaine, RRC
16. Lillian Gauvin – Kitchener – Albert J. Russell, RRC
17. Natalie Gibb-Carsley & family and Mrs. Maude Crawford – Perth – John Crawford, RCAMC
18. Derrill Henderson with Dempsey Syvret, RRC – National War Memorial – All HK veterans
19. Joy Hodgkinson – Beckwith – R.W. Queen-Hughes, WG
20. Marcine James (Mrs. John) – Barwick – All HK veterans
21. Bruce James – Atikokan – All HK veterans
22. Jean Killoran, John Killoran & Janis Jennings – Sarnia – John Killoran, RRC
23. Stanley Lasenba – Smiths Falls – Earl Lasenba, RRC
24. Glen Lee and family – Oshawa – William J. Lee and all HK comrades
25. Conrad Lyons, with father Henry Lyons, RRC – New Brunswick – All HK veterans
26. Ron McGuire – Medex Nursing Home (Nov.7) 11 a.m. – Ottawa – All HK veterans
27. Ron McGuire – Carlingwood Shopping Center – 11 a.m. – Ottawa – All HK veterans
28. Ron McGuire – Westboro – 2 p.m. – All HK veterans
29. Barbara & Lacey Montgomery – Ajax – Bob Barter, RRC
30. Audrey Murray and Dave Murray & family – laid by John McCarron – Matthew Murray, RRC, Ron Inche, RRC and All HK veterans
31. Major John Russell, with his father Albert J. Russell, RRC – All HK veterans
32. Lori Smith and family – London – Harold Atkinson, WG and All HK veterans
33. Leon Sokalski – Gore Park – Hamilton – George Sokalski, WG and All HK veterans
34. Pat Turcotte – Sutton Cenotaph – Sutton – Leonard Corrigan, WG and All HK veterans

Many thanks to all those who have contributed their time and financial support for the wreath-laying around the province. There are more wreaths laid in memory of the Hong Kong veterans every year.

Voices from the Past:

For the sake of the younger generation trying to understand the feelings of the past, we will introduce a piece of writing from one of the Hong Kong veterans, in this first instance in the form of a poem written in Hong Kong at North Point Camp.

IN MEMORY

By William James Lee

North Point – Hong Kong 1942

Frail young man, soon to die,
Whose mystic smile intrigues me,
As helpless on his back he lies,
The mystic smile tells me nothing.
He murmurs, twists, and sighs.

His blank looks stray away beyond.
Starvation, illness, have now gone by,
But he still stares, perhaps to see
Something in the distant sky
By yon, old solitary lichee tree.
Things I can't hear or even see,
Something given only to him?
Perhaps a secret, for those about to die,
To calm the terror of going alone,
Without being able to tender that last goodbye.
And here you lie, forever helpless
On your old, rice straw bed.

You stare at your wax-like hands,
And I know now, you have already begun
That long journey into the unknown lands,
Your thin skeletal body, greased wet
With the sweat of malarial fever,
And dysentery's relentless bloody slime.
Youth of such short tender years,
Captured, starved in this murderous hell
To never again dry a loved one's tears.
To suffer horror, terror,
That makes the grave so divine,
To die alone, abandoned, and unwept,
Unable to make the work quota on time
Strengthless to fulfill the enemy's debt
And now beyond all mortals' help,
A drained out, dying, empty shell.
You are now leaving this nightmare place,
Along with its brutal hate, bayonets,
A hell of neither heat, kindness, nor meat.
I know young friend you've been given grace,
Grace that has not found, or been awarded me,

As death passes ever close,
But for now, has let me be.
Rest, in the promise your fight is ending.
I see your sole possession, a rusted tin can,
And the uneaten, rotten, road-block rice,
Unfit food, unwanted, even by lice or mice.
Now you stare helpless, blank to all memory,
Deaf of all sentiment, and all mortal things,
But I do know this, young friend,
As I say to you an unheard goodbye,
You will not regret leaving North Point.
And as you struggle with life to die,
You leave behind all this forever
This unreal place of horror beyond ken
The devil's inhumane abomination,
North Point, that killer of men.

William James Lee

Ex-Hong Kong P.O.W., R.R.of C.

National Convention in Victoria: August 13 to 17, 2003

by Pat Turcotte

It was very exciting to be going to the West Coast after many years of absence, and to experience the Ferry ride across from Vancouver to Victoria as a precursor of the events that were to come. We arrived in our rented car at the Travelers Inn Downtown location to discover at the outset that we couldn't get into our room right away, but no matter. We had an opportunity to drive down to the Inner Harbour, which was even more beautiful than I remembered.



Dick & Ann Maze with Shelagh Purcell at the Crystal Garden in Victoria Convention/03.

Before long, we were in our room and ready to register, late in the day on Wednesday, August 13th. Walking across to the City Center Travelers Inn, we realized that there wouldn't be much of a problem getting around, as the hotel where the sessions were taking place was just a short block from our own. We registered, had a chance to chat with a number of people and took advantage of the opportunity to do a little more sightseeing downtown.

Thursday morning, bright and early, we attended the first meeting of the National Executive and Regional Directors. There was a lot to discuss and to plan for during the few days at our disposal. Following lunch, all those who had arrived were off to visit Butchart Gardens, a beautiful, relaxing spot, with that much sun that many of us purchased hats to keep cool. Lots of gorgeous, colorful flowers to see, and then we were whisked back to the hotel, again with some free time to prepare for the Meet and Greet on Thursday night. Those who hadn't had the opportunity could also be part of the session offered by Postal Historian, Ron McGuire, with many fascinating historical details related to Hong Kong to tell us about.



Betty Hutchinson and T.G. Hutchinson enjoying the Victoria Convention Aug/03

Friday morning at 11 a.m. we were bused downtown to the Memorial Service at the cenotaph in front of the B.C. Legislature, where a large group was present. It was wonderful to see the 47 veterans gathered there, and to note that there were many widows in attendance as well. Following the entrance of the Colour Party, O Canada, and a special prayer and hymn, the Last Post was played

and the Honour Roll read. Phil Doddridge recited the Act of Remembrance and a number of wreaths were laid. When the ceremony was over, we were driven just a short distance away to the Crystal Garden where we had a delicious lunch. A number of the dignitaries who had been at the ceremony said a few words, including the Hon. David Anderson, whose own father had been a Hong Kong veteran. Friday evening was free so we had the chance to do a little more sightseeing before the even more eventful day ahead on Saturday.



Jess Clayton, Pat Turcotte, Flash Clayton enjoying the Victoria Convention Aug/03

On Saturday morning, we attended the General Meeting, with a large group of members present. There was much discussion of a number of important issues. Following lunch, there were two History lectures that were equally interesting. Jan Solecki spoke first, about his life experiences, and the two of his published books that he had brought with him. Graeme Stacey, who had been part of the group that planned the resource booklet called *Human Rights in the Asia Pacific 1931 to 1945*, followed. This booklet is compulsory reading in the Grade Eleven courses in the province, and is therefore widely used and known. Graeme shared with us some of the reactions of his students in confronting the realities of the situation in the Far East during that time period, particularly in Hong Kong, an area in which he specializes. Following the afternoon's activities we just had time to enjoy another Meet and Greet briefly before getting ready for the evening's more relaxed event, a

dinner and dance. Some very well deserved awards were presented, in particular to the committee that worked on the Convention, and Graeme Stacey, with his special interest as a teacher of studies related to Hong Kong, spoke to those at the Banquet as well.



Flash & Jessie Clayton with Graeme Stacey after the Banquet at the hotel. HKVCA Convention 03

All in all, a most worthwhile visit, in a beautiful spot, with lots of opportunity to interact with the other delegates around us, to meet new friends, to look at the many memorabilia items that had been brought in, and to hear many intriguing stories, as well as having the chance to pick up some of the books authored by Hong Kong Veterans or family members. Congratulations to Regional Director Linda Stewart and her committee for a job well done.

The First Annual Mini-Reunion: Oct. 18, 2003

By Lori Smith

Membership Chair & Chair, Mini-Reunion

The HKVCA Ontario Region's First Annual Mini-Reunion was held in London on Saturday, October 18th, 2003. I must say I certainly enjoyed myself, as I know others did.

The idea of a reunion was something I truly believed was lacking and needed for the HKVCA of Ontario. So I suggested if we had one I would help, and if it was held in London, I would see to the arrangements.

Local London cadets joined forces with our Colour Party for the official opening of the afternoon Joint Meeting of the HKVA, Ontario Branch veterans, and the HKVCA, Ontario Region

members. Considering it was our first time at sharing 'the floor' I believe it went very well. Certain passages of business were voted and carried for both of the groups involved.

The Department of Veterans Affairs representative, Nancy McRae, spoke and thanked us for including her. I see this first meeting as the



Leon and Joyce Sokalski enjoying the London Mini Reunion Oct/03

beginning of a great working relationship here in Ontario between the two groups, the veterans and the Commemorative members to which all of the veterans belong as well.

Following the meeting we enjoyed cheese and crackers, munchies and soft drinks at our Meet and Greet prior to the sitting for dinner.



Bert and Cara Worthington

After dinner, we shared stories, visited, and sang songs. We even had a surprise duet sung by quite a well-known couple. Flash and Jessie shared a

favorite song of theirs with us that was very well received and appreciated by all. This was followed by a cash draw, the winners being Betty Hutchinson, Cara Worthington and Joyce Sokalski.

Finally, we honoured five people as the first Honorary Members of the Commemorative Association in Ontario, and presented each of those able to be present with a very special gift. The five included Air Commodore (Ret'd) Leonard J. Birchall, Ted Farmer, Capt. Gerry Osborn, Linda May (HKVCA Website) and Nick Brune (author of the Ten Lessons). We then enjoyed listening to our guest speaker, Nick Brune, who spoke of his involvement in the writing of *Canada in Hong Kong: 1941-1945 The Forgotten Heroes*.



Lori Smith (left) & David Murray (right) - Presentation of Honorary Membership to Linda May (center) at the London Mini Reunion Oct/03

A table was set up with memorabilia a few persons had brought with them to the reunion to share. We had the Hong Kong Veterans flag. We had books for sale. And HKVCA memberships!

There were a total of 65 registrants of which 12 were veterans. I met many new people, renewed friendships, and connected with a few long lost friends. I want to thank you all, for keeping us in your thoughts if you were not able to join us for the event. It wouldn't have happened without you. It happened because of you.

Before we said our good byes in London, the plans for the next Reunion were already in the making. A few different cities are being judged to see if they are a logical choice to be the location of

our next get-together. As plans develop, we will be certain to let you know. Hope to see you there!

Lori Smith

Chair, Mini-Reunion Committee

[Ed. Note] After the meeting was held, one of the recipients of an Honorary Membership who was unable to attend, Leonard Birchall, sent a very special letter to the Committee. Part of that letter follows:

What a wonderful surprise when we received your package. Christmas came early for us this year, to say the very least.

I am indeed honoured just to have been nominated for Honorary Membership with the Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association. And now to put the glorious cap on all this is the beautiful gift of engraved, lead crystal coasters. How wonderful they are and we have them on display in the most prominent place we can find. They are the proudest possession I shall ever have. Not only that they arrived just before Armistice or Remembrance Day. You could not have selected a more appropriate time for the delivery.

My wife joins in sending you and the HKVCA Ontario Region our sincere thanks. We look forward to seeing you all at the next reunion, and with very best wishes I remain

Yours sincerely

L.J. Birchall, Air Commodore (Ret'd)

The Quebec Region Mini-Reunion, June 27 to 29, 2003

The Quebec Region's Mini-Reunion was held in New Richmond, QC from June 27 to June 29, 2003. Quite a number of people from Ontario attended including "Flash" and Jessie Clayton, Gord Hutchinson and Betty Hutchinson, and Pat and Bernard Turcotte. It was a pleasure to meet Phil Doddridge, Nancy Doddridge and others on their home turf, and to see again Lucette Mailloux-Muir and Marcel Mondou, who do such a good job of organizing these events.

We registered on Friday afternoon, went out as a group for dinner, and then spent a couple of pleasurable hours chatting at the Meet and Greet in the evening.

On Saturday morning, the first event of the day was a General Meeting at nine o'clock at the Royal Canadian Legion Bay Chaleur 101. The Special Ceremony now used by several regions introduced that meeting, and later Lucette promised to send us the very moving text of the ceremony – which she did shortly after we arrived home. As a result, we were able to open our Joint Meeting of the HKVA/HKVCA in London using that same ceremony. So we thank Lucette for that!

The second order of the day on Saturday was the Commemorative Ceremony at the cenotaph just outside the Legion at 11 a.m. The weather held, the sun shone and we had lots of opportunity for pictures after the ceremony itself. The afternoon was free, and we had time to look around the area, driving by the beginnings of the Museum which Phil Doddridge is spearheading.

Saturday evening was spent at a very special spot, with a very special meal featuring maple sugar products and lots of varieties of food treats. Again we had the opportunity to listen to music, dance and visit old and new friends. We left the next morning, having enjoyed the warm hospitality of our Quebec neighbours. Many thanks for a good time!!

By *Pat Turcotte*

Special bulletins:

Michael George Palmer of Calgary has been in touch with "Flash" Clayton. He is looking up his grandfather's history and wishes to know his grandfather's company or platoon. He says his grandfather died several years ago and was L.-Cpl. George T. Palmer of St. Peter's Bay, P.E.I. Anyone who has this or any other information about this gentleman is asked to get in touch with "Flash" Clayton or someone on the Executive.

Congratulations to the Hong Kong veterans who participated in the "Generations" Program on CBC Newsworld which was taped on Oct. 23rd for broadcast on Remembrance Day. The program

aired on Nov. 11th at 5 p.m. and 11 p.m. Three Hong Kong veterans from B.C. were asked questions about Hong Kong by Vancouver High School students, and the moderator was Peter Mansbridge. The Hong Kong Veterans were Aubrey Flegg, WG, Will Allister, RCCS, and Don MacPherson, WG. Well done, gentlemen.

FLASH!! Hot off the press!

Your HKVCA, Ontario Region Executive for 2004 is as follows:

Regional Director: Pat Turcotte

Regional Secretary: Lori Smith

Regional Treasurer: Sandi Cameron

Congratulations to all!!

A special "thank you" to Wendy Campbell for her three years of service in the Ontario Region, in addition to her six years in B.C. And a big "thank you" too to Dave Murray and Pat Turcotte for a very special campaign, as well as a warm welcome to our new Executive members, Lori Smith and Sandi Cameron. Look for new initiatives to be in place in the next few months.

Important information:

Sandi Cameron, as the new Treasurer, will be accepting New Memberships and Membership Renewals from this point on. See the Membership Application Form on the back page of this Newsletter. Many thanks to **Wendy Campbell** for her three years as the first Treasurer of the HKVCA, Ontario Region. We appreciate all she has done for the Region!

All members please note:

The Membership Application Form is on the back page of this Newsletter, so that anyone who has not paid their dues for 2003 has one last chance to do so. **Members' dues of \$15.00 paid for the present year cover the period up to December 31, 2003.**

Those who use the form to pay their dues for 2004 will find, when they receive their Membership Card, their new **2004 HKVCA decal**. Don't miss the opportunity to get yours!

Consider the Membership Application Form on the back page your reminder that Membership Fees for **2004** are due. **We would appreciate your filling in all of the information to be sure that the new Treasurer has the most up-to-date information, even if there are no 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. In that case, just send in the form.

We hope that all members who have previously laid wreaths have done so again this year. Keep your Area Rep. or Pat Turcotte informed so that we have an accurate record of our wreath-layers. We will be better able to plan where "Spirit of the Torch" funds will be spent next year if we know where the wreaths have been laid this year. **Irene Grimshaw** was the outstanding contributor to the "Spirit of the Torch" Fund for 2003, having made possible the laying of wreaths in Ajax, Whitby, Sutton and Uxbridge.

If you are a member who has not yet laid a wreath and would like to next year, contact Pat Turcotte, or your Area Rep., to check out the procedure.

Don't forget that **donations to the "Spirit of the Torch" Fund** make it possible for HKVCA to arrange for wreaths in communities that have not previously had wreaths honouring Hong Kong veterans.

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:

We hope you will consider attending the National Convention to be held in Ottawa in 2005. Plans are already underway, with Derrill Henderson chairing a committee in Ottawa and the Ontario Executive of HKVCA working with that committee. **Don't hesitate to volunteer to be a part of the team that prepares for this very special 60th Anniversary of V-J Day. Contact a member of your Ontario Executive.**

You'll notice that the second-last page is an order form for the Ten Lessons titled *Canada in Hong Kong: 1941 - 1945 The Forgotten Heroes*. It is now available for sale at \$20.00, and would be a nice Christmas gift for the History teacher at your local high school, or the young people in your family, or a friend who is interested in the Hong Kong story. And, don't forget, **any Ontario Hong Kong veteran who doesn't have their complimentary copy should use this form to get that copy – no charge! This is our "thank you" for your wonderful support of this project!**

Have a wonderful Christmas, and a Great Holiday Season!!

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Help us locate the following members:

Mrs. Pat Baxter, Marjorie Kennedy, Margaret Ostroski, Ken Skelton, Brian Craig, Marion (Madelaine) Charron, Anthony Matt, Beryl Kaine, Irene Pelletier, Mrs. Ann Bressi, Thomas Laflamme, Eileen Masson, Myrtle Inche, Lynne Howard, Mrs. P Wilmot, and Mary Patton.

Contact any Executive member if you know how to reach someone on the list.

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Ontario Executive Council: HKVCA

Core Executive from January 1, 2000 to December 31, 2003

Regional Director:

Dave Murray
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Ontario Region

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