



The Spirit of the Torch

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



Volume III, Number 2 (6)

June 2004

Regional Director's Message

Hello, to all the Ontario Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association members!

A great deal has happened since we last met with HKVCA members in London on October 18th for our very successful first Mini-Reunion. We have had an election since then, and I thank you for the opportunity to serve as your incoming Regional Director. All of the members of the Executive, including myself, are new in our roles, Lori Smith having been acclaimed as Regional Secretary, and Sandi Cameron as Regional Treasurer. These two people have been hard working, dependable and a real pleasure to work with, and I look forward to the months ahead knowing that they will be working with me.

It has taken the past few months to develop the plans we have for the future, and those plans have included expanding the Executive in some way so that more members could be involved. We have been fortunate in that two things have happened that have made such changes possible.

We learned, during the period that our election was being held, that a new position had been created by the Corporate Executive (at the National level), the position being that of Deputy Regional Director – someone who would be able to take on special projects, and also substitute for the Regional Director when necessary. In fact, we learned that it would be possible to have more than one person filling such a role. Coincidentally, very shortly after that we had two very capable individuals approach the Executive about volunteering, and realized that they would be the right persons to fulfil these roles. Both of these gentlemen have a wide range of experience, and both have valuable talents that you will become aware of as you read some of the articles in this issue of the Newsletter.

Our Area Representatives throughout the province of Ontario are also doing good things, as you'll see when you read about their activities.

There is much to tell you about and much to celebrate. Welcome to the good news of the June Newsletter, 2004!!

Cheers!

Pat Turcotte

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HKVCA in Ontario

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

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

The Word From the Area Reps:

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.**

In this particular issue, we have one Area Rep., Ron McGuire, who has outdone himself in preparing a report about a very special situation - which we'd like to feature as our current issue's "Profiles of Our Hong Kong Veterans" instead of having his material in the Area Reps.' section.

We also have a special report from Area Rep., Lori Smith, who will report in this section about her various roles in Ontario Region with HKVCA.

West Central Area: Leon Sokalski

CARL ADAMS - Niagara Falls, is going to have a cataract operation this summer.

PETER GELLEY - St. Catharines, attended his first Hong Kong Vets meeting in Toronto on Saturday, May 1st. It was nice to see him there, and we hope he enjoyed it.

GERALD PENTLAND - Niagara Falls, will be celebrating his 82nd birthday this summer. Sorry to hear that his wife Georgina passed away in February.

KEN PIFHER - Has a new residence just across the street from his old one - 32 Baker Rd., in Grimsby, ON. His telephone number remains the same - (905) 945-4125. Thanks to the kind efforts of **JOHN STROUD** - the DVA was able to assist him by covering all his recent expenses for special medical procedures.

GERALD SUNSTRUM - Niagara Falls, has not been feeling well lately. We look forward to seeing him at the reunion in Aurora in September, and hope he's better soon.

Just a reminder, that if you wish to contact me, I can be reached at (905) 525-6922 in Hamilton, Ontario.

Leon Sakalski
West Central Area Rep

GTA Area: Randall Ross

Hello to all the GTA members! I trust things are going well for everyone so far this year.

I'm looking forward to our 2nd Annual Mini-Reunion in Aurora on September 25th, and I do hope many of you are planning to attend. The Reunion Committee and the Ontario Executive have been working very hard to make sure that everyone will have a really enjoyable time, and I thank them for their dedication. I'm looking forward to it partly because it will be a good opportunity for me to meet many of you personally.

I want to suggest something to you that will ensure that we do have a chance to meet, even before the Mini-Reunion.

I think it would be a good idea to create a GTA Members Support Group. I've been looking for a way to have Hong Kong Commemorative members in the GTA meet one another, and thought that something like this might work.

What about arranging a gathering in late July or in August where we could get together over coffee for a couple of hours. It would be a chance to meet fellow members of HKVCA in a small, friendly gathering to share ideas, and to get to know one another. We live in a large metropolitan area where it's sometimes hard to connect with those who live right around us.

If even a small number of people were able to attend, perhaps 10 or 15 people, we would have taken a step in the right direction to know our organization better, and thus be able to assist our veterans and widows in a more real way.

I would appreciate a response from any members in the GTA who would like to help initiate this sort of gathering. It would be a great opportunity to get to know a few people before the Mini-Reunion in September.

Please don't hesitate to call me, if you'd like to be involved. I look forward to hearing from you.

My telephone number is (416) 429-4377 and my e-mail address is ross@toronto.ca

Randall Ross
GTA Area Rep

South West Area Rep: Lori Smith

(Ed. Note: Lori's report relates to all her different tasks in HKVCA. She wears four hats: SW Area Rep., Membership Chair, formatter and distributor of the "Spirit of the Torch" Newsletter, as well as Secretary, Ontario Region, HKVCA.)

The Lady with "Four Hats"

Lori's report:

I have not been a diligent Area Rep. for the South West area of Ontario HKVCA. Thankfully, I have a couple of people who have taken on calling the members on my behalf in our area.

I was able to attend the Joint General Meeting on May 1st, renewed friendships with many, and met others for the first time. I always find it very exciting to meet veterans, family and friends when it's their first time at an HKVCA meeting. I am glad the meeting was held on the Saturday, as I was able to attend without having to take time off work.

While at the meeting, as part of my Membership Chair duties, I tracked the attendance of the meeting and was able to update some membership information. I received a couple of new HKVCA memberships and promises of renewals from others. These I have forwarded to our Treasurer.

Dorothy Soper and Mike Babin helped get the sound system set up for the meeting so we at the back could hear the speakers clearly. The meeting was followed by a great variety of good food on the potluck table. I would like to suggest for future meetings, though, that even more volunteers could be asked to help in the kitchen to make it possible for the Executive to concentrate on the last-minute details that always need to be attended to just before the meeting starts.

An interesting comment was made during the potluck after the formal part of the meeting was over. Someone remarked how wonderful it was that the Executive of the Ontario HKVCA all lived in London and how nice it was for all of us to come to Toronto for the meeting. I explained that we do not all live in London - in fact, only I do. The other members of the Executive live in Toronto, Mississauga, Gravenhurst and Ottawa. I noted that it is due to the wonderful technology of the Internet that we are able to keep in touch on a daily basis and to get so very much business accomplished.

Putting on my Membership hat:

Who is a member of HKVCA?

- We have various types of membership in the HKVCA. These include the HK veterans, and HK veterans' widows, who do not pay fees. We also have a Regular membership, consisting of persons who pay the annual membership dues to the HKVCA.

Who can pay a membership?

- Any friend or family member (including the spouse) of the HK veterans.

What does membership give you?

- A choice of voting on HKVCA issues.
- 2 National and 2 Regional newsletters a year.

**Veterans - ask your children - are you a paid up member of the HKVCA?
If not, why not!**

Putting on my Area Rep hat:

All organizations need volunteers. The Ontario region of HKVCA has a good core group of volunteers working for the membership as a whole, but we do need more volunteers. Volunteers of all ages!

One person we really need is an Area Rep for our Northern area. This area of Ontario has 40 some members we should be in touch with at least twice a year. Unfortunately for those members, we do not have an Area Rep. in place to make this connection. If you are interested, call Pat Turcotte at (905) 274-3189 or by e-mail at petsask@sympatico.ca and volunteer to be the Northern Area Rep. Although it would be a bonus, **it is not necessary to live in that Area** to be the Area Rep. Contacts are made by telephone. If you enjoy talking with people, this is the volunteer position for you!

Another volunteer position would be that of Area Rep Phone Coordinator. This position would involve passing along information to and from the Executive and members to keep everyone up-to-date with important information. Again, if you are interested, call Pat Turcotte at the contact numbers mentioned above, and volunteer.

Currently, I hold four key volunteer positions on the Ontario HKVCA Executive.

- Area Rep for the South West area of Ontario Region
- Formatter and main distributor of the twice-yearly Ontario HKVCA newsletter "Spirit of the Torch"
- Membership Chairperson, tracking the changes and updates of the approximately 250 members of Ontario HKVCA
- Secretary for the Ontario HKVCA Executive.

Due to the wonderful forward impetus that the Ontario HKVCA Executive now has, these four volunteer positions of mine are becoming more and more time-consuming. They take more time than I have to offer - and more time than I have to give - for these positions to get a 'fair shake'. This means that the membership as a whole starts to suffer. I have found it necessary to resign from two of these positions no later than December 1, 2004. I will not be able to continue as Area Rep for the South West Area , nor can I carry on my work with the "Spirit of the Torch" Newsletter, much as I enjoy these two positions. I hope that some of you members will consider "picking up that torch" by volunteering, so that we can build an even stronger HKVCA organization in Ontario!

Lori Smith

SW Area Rep

CSM John Robert Osborn VC To Be Commemorated

"Canada Post will be releasing, this year, a series of stamps dedicated to Canadian Victoria Cross recipients. Canada's Hong Kong VC to CSM John R. Osborn will be among those commemorated in the series."

This is yet another reminder to all Canadians of the Battle of Hong Kong.

Membership Liaison: Report for the June Newsletter

Hello from the Membership Liaison:

Currently, we have 85 members receiving news items and bulletins on a regular basis by e-mail. This allows the organization an inexpensive way to keep our members up to date about meetings, special events and losses. Anyone with an e-mail address can be on the list and we encourage anyone and everyone with e-mail to join us.

As with any organization, it is always amazing to see the amount of continuing work needed to keep everything afloat. As a new Membership Liaison, my role is very small but I am impressed with the hard work that the Executive is doing and hope you will join them at the Mini-Reunion this fall.

Please take the time to add your name to our list if you have e-mail. If you have any suggestions for us, or have a special event in your area that might be of interest to our members, do tell us about it. As our membership is from all areas of Ontario, and many of us travel during the summer months, you might have extra people at your event. To join our e-mail list, send a request to Janis Jennings at pjennings@cogeco.ca.

Thank you for your consideration.

Janis Jennings
Membership Liaison

Notes from **The Hong Kong Veterans Association of Canada, Ontario Branch**
By President John Stroud, RRC

There are several very important items to discuss:

1. V.I.P. Changes To Benefit Survivors

Effective December 2003, housekeeping and/or grounds maintenance services will be provided under the Veterans Independence Program (V.I.P.) to qualified survivors of veterans who were receiving these services at the time of their death, on, or after, September 1, 1990. Call 1-800-774-7476 (toll free) for the application forms.

2. Licence Plates Honour Veterans

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

3. So Long Extra Charges

Many of our veterans living outside of Canada, like veterans living in Canada, have been receiving their Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) payments in Canadian dollars - that is, until January, 2004. Now, most of these veterans receive their cheques in the currency of the country they are living in, i.e. the United States. For information, call toll free from the U.S.A. 1-888-996-2242.

4. Flash! Flash!

It was announced on the television news two weeks ago that Chinese slave labourers of the Japanese will receive slave labour compensation from Japan.

5. Pilgrimage to Hong Kong and Japan

In 2005, Veterans Affairs Canada will be arranging a trip to Hong Kong and Japan to visit the Canadian War Graves (Hong Kong Veterans). Our Committee in Ottawa is meeting with DVA officials to work out the details. Further information will be mailed out to you in future Newsletters.

6. Dues and Donations

We thank our members for mailing in their dues and donations payable to the Hong Kong Veterans Association of Canada (Ontario Branch), that is the HKVA, not the HKVCA.

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

Remember, No dues! No news!

John Stroud, President
Ontario Branch, HKVA

Profiles of Our Hong Kong Veterans

by *Ron McGuire*



This newspaper photograph of Ken Ewing speaking to Kemptville students was to be included in my report on Page 5 of the December 2003 Newsletter.

Giving a history lesson on World War II

WWII vet, Ken Ewing was at Oxford-on-Rideau Public School Nov. 4 sharing his war experiences with students. Ewing, 71, enlisted in the services when he was just 15. He became a prisoner of war at 16 and spent his entire teenage years in Japanese prison camps. He returned home after the war was over when he was 20 and spent two years in hospitals recovering from the ordeal.

Advance Photo-Brownlee

The Meeting Between Eric Maloney, RRC and Lance Ross, RRC

It is again with great pleasure that I report bringing together two of our veterans for the first time in nearly 55 years. Last February, Royal Rifles, Eric Maloney and Lance Ross spent an afternoon in Eric's home, reminiscing about the past. They last met when Lance visited Eric in the hospital in Quebec City in 1950. Sandi Cameron, our Treasurer and daughter of Cpl. Ken Cameron, M.M. (RCOC, Brigade HQ), was also present. It is thanks to Sandi that I have two photographs recording the reunion, which included Eric's wife, Betty, and their friend, Ed Bohonsuik.



Sandi Cameron, Eric Maloney, Lance Ross and Ron McGuire



Eric, Lance and Ron with Betty Maloney

Eric and Betty met when he was in St. John's, Newfoundland with "W" Force. When the RRC returned to Valcartier Camp and their reassignment, Betty promised to wait for Eric's return. This was one of the thoughts that helped Eric survive his wartime ordeal. Betty did wait, and they have been happily married 58 years on August 5th, 2004.

Happy Anniversary Betty & Eric!

Ken and Susan Ewing were in Australia visiting their daughter, otherwise they would have been included. Next winter when Lance comes back to Ottawa, I'll arrange another meeting.

I have kept in contact through my biannual telephone calls with the members in my region and can report all is well.

Since 1998 I have prepared a special Remembrance Month Exhibit for the Nepean Museum. As I did for the 60th Anniversary of the Defence of Hong Kong in 2001, last November I had a 500 square foot exhibit to remember Canada's veterans of the Korean War, another overlooked and forgotten group of Canadians. As I do at every opportunity, I included a reference to our Hong Kong veterans. The following was on the wall in the area concerning our Korean POWs:

A special message ...

"This group is dedicated to ensure Canadian WWII Veteran POWs are "never forgotten". Therefore, I wish to pay special tribute to the Hong Kong veterans who survived the defense of Hong Kong, the horrors of the Japanese slave labour camps who remained in the Canadian Army and again served during the Korean War."

... Ron McGuire, Area Representative of the
Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association

On April 8th I gave my slide illustrated talk on “C” Force to members of the Ottawa Philatelic Society. Ian Doull, son of RRC Lloyd Doull and Editor of our National Newsletter, was among those who attended.

My best wishes to everyone for a good summer and safe travel to and from the regional reunions that are planned across the country.

Ron McGuire
N.E. Area Rep

The Ladies' Side of the Story :

Dorothy Soper

She's a lady with lots of intuition and heart. When Dorothy Soper first saw a picture of George, she said right then and there: "That's the man I'm going to marry!" and she did.

Dorothy's story begins during the Depression in Walkerton. She was born there in 1925, the eldest of three children in the Albright family. The two boys were quite a bit younger than she was, a gap of 6 ½ years between she and them, but they got along. These many years later, her brothers are still living, and not too far away. One is in Kitchener and the other at Wasaga Beach. Her parents farmed in the Walkerton area, and Dorothy went to school there, going from Grade Eleven out to get a job.

When Dorothy was sixteen, she worked in a silk stocking factory in Kincardine, in the days when silk stockings were all the rage. She then went to Hespeler where she worked for Dominion Woolen Worsted Mills. She had itchy feet though, and before long she had moved on to Hamilton, where she did some waitressing. It was here that she was approached by a friend who urged her to join the army. She felt, as so many did at that time, that being a part of Canada's war effort was the right thing to do, so in 1943, at the age of eighteen, she joined the Canadian Women's Army Corps (CWAC). Her parents accepted what she was doing, since she was already out on her own, and they knew that many young people were volunteering.

Stationed in Kitchener first, Dorothy was then sent to the West coast, first to Victoria and then to Esquimalt. While there she suffered serious injury in an accident in which there was one fatality. She was embedded under the wheel of an overturned jeep which cost her blindness in one eye and hearing impairment, as well as terrible headaches. She was hospitalized, and has lost all memory of events between April 29th and June 6th of 1944.

Dorothy spent some time at Sunnybrook in 1945, still feeling the effects of her accident, particularly because of the migraines. In the course of her rehabilitation she was able to take advantage of the opportunity to apply for courses available to those who had been in the service. She'd always been interested in young children, so she took courses for about a year, and then began working at the Mothercraft Hospital. The Mothercraft Hospital was where those who were with Children's Aid were looked after. She helped young mothers learn to take care of their babies, and was involved with pre-school programs for young children as well. She felt that this sort of work was very important. Her philosophy was "If ever there was a child in need, I would be there."

Dorothy had met George when he was in therapy at Sunnybrook, and it wasn't long after that they began dating. They were married in Toronto on April 12, 1947. Their oldest child, Pat, was born ten months later. Soon, their eldest daughter was followed by three brothers, Paul, Robert and Alec, and then three more daughters, Kathy, Pam and Janet.

Married life with seven children was not always easy, particularly with a veteran trying to readjust to life in Canada. Dorothy, as a strong, independent person did the best she could, taking in boarders, and running the household. When she and George decided to move in 1960, Dorothy made sure it wasn't too far away as she didn't want the children to have to change schools. From where she lives now, Dorothy can still see the house she and George lived in during those early years.

Early on, Dorothy was not encouraged to consider becoming a member of the Royal Canadian Legion, since it was thought at the time that the organization was more for the men who had served in the armed forces, rather than the women. George had become a member of the Legion at Branch 22, 1240 Woodbine Avenue, and at one point was elected President of the branch. It seemed logical for Dorothy to join the Ladies Auxiliary, which she did in 1959. She became the secretary of that group, eventually holding most of the Executive offices. However, in 1968, it became compulsory for the organization to accept women veterans, so that was when she joined the Legion as a full-fledged member.

For her time in the army, Dorothy has no regrets, and her life since the war has had many special memories for her. She is enjoying her life today, has a trailer up in Stouffville, and visits the branch often, although she is not quite as involved as she once was. She maintains that even though she didn't have a lengthy education, daily living is an education in itself. Dorothy is a feisty lady, who at 79 has a lot more living to do.

by *Kate Chesser*
& *Pat Turcotte*

In Memoriam

Remembering the Hong Kong Veterans who have left us in 2004:

Paul Arsenych, WG	Elmer Denison, RRC	Philip Lawlis, RRC
Glyn Chipping, WG	John Doiron, RRC	John McGreevy, RRC
James Darrah, RRC (Dec.'03)	Gordon Hutchinson, RRC	Wendell Thompson, RRC
	Alton Jewers., RRC	Sidney Vale, WG

“We Shall Remember Them”

We shall also remember: Dorothy McGrath, widow of John McGrath, RRC
Doreen Mills, wife of Alfred Mills, RRC
Irene Craig, wife of Bryce Craig, RRC

In addition: Ted Farmer, RCR, Honorary Member, HKVCA, Ontario Region

“Our condolences to their families”

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 donations to the "Spirit of the Torch" Fund which helps us to increase the number of wreaths around the province. If you are planning to sponsor a wreath, let us know, so we can post the information in the December Newsletter. **Be sure to arrange for a wreath in your community no later than the end of September, or very early in October.** If you need more information about the procedure for going ahead with a wreath, contact Pat Turcotte, or any other Executive member, or Area Rep. (See contact information on the final page of this newsletter.)

Of Special Interest: A Show to watch for on the History Channel: FOR KING AND COUNTRY

Currently under production for the History Channel is a new series on Canada in World War II, with six one hour episodes entitled "**For King and Country**". The series is a follow up to the highly successful six episodes about Canadians in World War I entitled "**For King and Empire**", which can still often be seen on the History Channel.

The series is hosted by concept originator and historian Norm Christie of Ottawa, Ontario, formerly of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and owner and publisher of CEF Books, whose imprints are dedicated to the history of Canadians in both world wars.

The producers, Breakthrough Productions of Toronto, filmed segments in Hong Kong and Japan in March 2004. **Invited to take part in scenes at Stanley Cemetery were Hong Kong Veteran Alfred Babin, accompanied by his son Mike.**

Producers were also provided excerpts from Ken Skelton's father's diary as well as period photos of Canadians from his collection.

The segment on Hong Kong and Japan will be at least 30 minutes in length.

The series is scheduled to be shown, commencing with the first episode during Remembrance Week, in November of this year. It can be anticipated that the Hong Kong episode will be early in the series, most likely within the first two episodes.

Our Joint HKVA/HKVCA Meeting on May 1st

Held in Toronto at Branch 22 of the Canadian Legion, John Stroud, as HKVA President, presided over the HKVA portion of the meeting, while Pat Turcotte, as Regional Director of HKVCA, MC'd the proceedings. John acknowledged the veterans we have lost since the last meeting, and, following two minutes of silence, the various reports were given, including those of the HKVA and HKVCA Treasurers.

John Stroud at May 1, 2004 meeting in Toronto



To be sure that all HKVCA members are aware of what our financial plans are for 2004, we're including our Budget projections for this year as a part of this article. Before we do so, we must once again thank the HKVA, Ontario Branch, for their help and generous support in making what we are trying to accomplish possible.

HKVCA - ONTARIO REGION ~ 2004 BUDGET PROJECTIONS

(in \$/dollars)

		2004 Budget	Totals
Balance Forward			4,329
Income			
	Membership Dues (70 @ \$15)	1,050	
	Donations - Charitable Status	2,640	
	Donations - General	1,000	
	Mini-Reunion 2004	4,500	
	Ten Lessons - Sales	3,100	
	▪ Current Printing (130)	2,600	
	▪ Next Printing (25)	500	
	Miscellaneous	100	
	- Total Income	12,390	
Expense			
	Corporate Dues (70 @ \$10)	700	
	Mini-Reunion 2004	4,500	
	National Convention 2005	1,000	
	Committee Members	1,700	
	▪ Regional Director	600	
	▪ Treasurer	300	
	▪ Secretary	200	
	▪ 2 Deputy Regional Directors	200	
	▪ 6 Area Representatives	400	
	* Ten Lessons	2,750	
	▪ Next Printing (200)	2,500	
	▪ Mailing (150)	250	
	* Newsletters (June & December)	940	
	* Wreaths re Deceased Veterans	300	
	Contingency	500	
	- Total Expenditure	12,390	
	Closing Balance		4,329

Notes:

- Committee Members - listed above have estimated their expenses for such items as telephone, postage, office supplies, etc.
- National Convention 2005 expense to be reimbursed in 2005.
- Items denoting an asterisk (*) are CRA-approved Projects.

15/05/2004

Following the reports, those present were introduced to HKVCA's two new Deputy Regional Directors. The following was a summation of what was said at the meeting about this new position, and the two gentlemen who now hold the office.

Our New Deputy Regional Directors

The post of Deputy Regional Director is new to the Ontario Region and new to the other regions across the country as well. It has long been felt at both the Regional and National levels that there need to be more opportunities for members to participate in the Executives in their respective areas. The Manitoba and Saskatchewan/Alberta Regions heard about the possibility of a new position opening up just in time for their elections, and at least one of them, Manitoba, decided right away that they wanted two people to have the opportunity to participate in this way. Our Region had held its election in the Fall last year – too early to put the position on the ballot. Nevertheless, when we heard about the post we began to look for possible candidates, and in the last two months we've had two very fine people call us and ask how they could be involved. The result is – we now have two Deputy Regional Directors, both sharing with us their energies and their special talents, and we are delighted to have them!

Here are short biographies of each one – just to give you an idea of what wide-ranging experience they bring to the Executive.

Mike Babin is the son of Hong Kong veteran Alfred Babin, RRC, and Christina Babin. He retired from IBM on Feb.1, 2004, culminating a career spanning over 32 years. In his most recent position he was the executive responsible for the worldwide sales of IBM's flagship database software product, DB2, and managed a business generating in excess of \$800 million US annually. He led a sales force of over 1,000 professionals around the world.

Earlier in his career at IBM, Mike held various senior management positions, including Marketing, Sales, Technical and Business Planning roles.

Mike's family includes wife Dawn, and daughters Shelley and Julie. Among his leisure interests are cycling, tennis and skiing.

Ken Skelton is the son of Hong Kong veteran Sydney Skelton, RRC. He grew up in Scarborough, Ontario and recently retired (2003) from the Toronto Transit Commission, after 30 years, when he moved to Gravenhurst, Ontario.

Responsibilities at the TTC included streetcar operator, driving instructor, accident investigator, supervisor of the TTC Public and School Safety program, safety officer, Quality Assurance Auditor and Manager of System Safety, following the TTC's only train collision in its history in 1995.

He has a degree in Occupational Health and Safety from Ryerson, and among other safety and traffic investigation certificates has an Ontario Provincial Police Civilian Citation (for recapturing an escaped prisoner) and Traffic Safety Commendations from the Toronto Police Service.

Ken has been a military history student from an early age, and is a member of several historical and collector associations. He is currently working on turning his father's wartime diary, kept throughout his imprisonment in Hong Kong and Japan, into a book.

Postscript:

Mike Babin is the Chair of the 2nd Annual Mini-Reunion to be held on Sept. 25th.

Ken Skelton has just coordinated our participation in Asian Heritage Month, recently celebrated at First Markham Place May 1st and 2nd, and at the Central Library in Mississauga, on May 7th.

At the May 1st HKVCA meeting, we also had the opportunity to pick up pre-Registration forms for the Mini-Reunion to be held in Aurora. A word to the wise – it's going to be a wonderful event – **so don't delay sending in your Registration form.**



Members enjoying the potluck luncheon at the May 1, 2004 meeting

Following the formal part of the meeting, there was a potluck lunch enjoyed by all. It's always amazing that no dishes seem to be duplicated, and those present were more than satisfied by the meal. It was a real pleasure to meet everyone, in particular the several veterans who, with family members attended after a long absence, including Cliff McDavid and his wife Etta, and Peter Gelley. Welcome back! Welcome too to Muriel McDavid, Denise MacLachlan and members of the 3rd generation also present, including Valerie Fortune and Tim Hodkinson. Good to see you!

Many thanks to the Area Reps. attending: Randall Ross, Lori Smith, Maureen Dwyer-Kline and Leon Sokalski. We appreciated your help, and the help of the various ladies who helped make the meal a success. Marge Dwyer, we'll have a real head start on the things we'll need for next time.

By: *Pat Turcotte*



Dorothy Sauson & Maureen Dwyer-Kline at the May 1, 2004 meeting

Our National President, Carol Hadley, and a Special Request:

Hello, everyone,

Some of you may know of this appeal for information from Irene Payne, an English author of WWII history books. But in case you don't - she would like to have stories from our vets but has asked to have any accounts from the 'kids' if their parent or relative is deceased. Here is her request:

These books are the personal memories and experiences of the men who served in WWII, I am looking for the memories and experiences from all WWII campaigns, I am also dedicating one of these books to prisoners of war, if you or a family member or any one you know served in any of these conflicts or served time in a POWs camp, and would like your story added to one of these

books, I would love to hear from you. I have already completed one book on Normandy, which will be published this year.

Irene can be reached at -

Irene Payne
1 Highridge Crescent
Bishopsworth
Bristol
BS13 8HN
England
e-mail irene.payne@btopenworld.com

Thanks for your help.

Carol Hadley

MINI-REUNION!

Mark your calendar now for the Ontario Region Mini-Reunion the weekend of September 25. This is a great opportunity to renew acquaintances with old friends, and to make new ones.

Here are the details you need:

Reunion Location: Howard Johnson Hotel in Aurora (north of Toronto)

Pub Night at Aurora Legion on Friday at 6pm

Meeting at 3pm Saturday at Howard Johnson Hotel

Meet & Greet, followed by dinner on Saturday evening

Wreath laying at Aurora War Memorial Sunday morning

We've negotiated a special room rate of \$95+taxes at the Howard Johnson. Take advantage of this and check in on Friday so that you can join us at the Aurora Legion on Friday evening!

If you haven't yet received a registration package, please contact Sylvia Mason at 905 476-3909, or by email at sylviam@istar.ca and she will rush one to you. The package contains hotel reservation information, maps, registration forms, agendas, draw tickets and other useful information.

And we would love to have you bring any Hong Kong memorabilia you have for display at the meeting and dinner. This is a wonderful opportunity to share your memories, especially with the younger generation. Details on making arrangements are in the registration package. Questions? Call Mike Babin at 416 239-9192, or email at msbabin@sympatico.ca .

See you in Aurora!

Asian Heritage Month – a Celebration: May, 2004

By *Pat Turcotte*

When we were called by Nancy Siew of the Asian Heritage Month Committee for the GTA to assist in their celebration of Asian Heritage Month in Canada, Ken Skelton was asked to be our representative on their Committee. Ken made our participation very special by coordinating all the material to be used as artifacts and memorabilia to reflect the Canadian soldiers' participation in the Battle of Hong Kong. Ken did a superb job, and the resulting displays in both Markham and Mississauga reflect that.



Nancy Siew - Organizer, Asian Heritage Month
- GTA Committee

Ken was unable to be at our May 1st meeting in Toronto, because at that very same time he was showing the Governor General our exhibit at First Markham Place Mall. Mme. Clarkson was present at the initial ceremony held that day, inaugurating the celebration of Asian Heritage Month in Canada. Several displays for the public to view provided the backdrop for the Governor General's



Part of the display at First Markham Place Mall

remarks at the official opening of the event. Displaying side by side were our HKVA/HKVCA display and the Royal Hong Kong Regiment's (that is, the Hong Kong Volunteers) 150th Anniversary display. Ken spent both Saturday and Sunday afternoon explaining to the public who dropped by the exhibit the significance of the various items he had brought as reminders of Canada's role in Hong Kong. His display included copies of the Ten Lessons titled "Canada in Hong Kong: 1941-1945 The Forgotten Heroes", photos of Hong Kong Scouts at Sai Wan Cemetery, courtesy of "Flash" Clayton, a display frame of memorabilia by Fred Mason, and vintage photos and artifacts from Ken's personal collection.

Following the opening on Saturday afternoon, there was a reception at 6 o'clock which Ken, "Flash" and Jessie Clayton, and Bernard and Pat Turcotte were able to attend, followed by a very special



"Flash" Clayton, Jessie Clayton & Ken Skelton at 10 - course
Chinese dinner in North York

10-course Chinese dinner, with continuous entertainment throughout the meal. We were very pleased to have an HKVCA presence at the dinner, especially when it included a Hong Kong veteran, so we thank "Flash" and Jessie for responding when the opportunity came for them to join the group. The five attendees were asked to stand in recognition of the fact that they represented the Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association, and were acknowledged as such by the 350 people present.

May 7th event in Mississauga:

On May 7th, Ken made the trip from Gravenhurst to Mississauga with the display to be part of a reception and kick-off for Asian Heritage Month at the Central Branch of the Mississauga Public Library.



Ken Skelton with Marjorie Overton, HK widow, at Mississauga Central Library ceremony



"Flash's" pictures on display in Mississauga

Two classes of school children performed, and Hong Kong widow, Marjorie Overton, was able to be there as well. Nancy Siew, from the Asian Heritage Committee, had some very nice things to say about the Canadian participation in Hong Kong. Rogers Cable recorded the event, and both Ken and Pat Turcotte were involved in the photo session which followed. It is quite likely that HKVCA will be involved again next year, as this event has become an annual affair, and it is an important opportunity to bring people's attention to a special moment in Canadian history, as well as raising the profile of HKVCA in Ontario.

Bulletin from Quebec:

Dates for the Quebec Region's Reunion are August 19th to 22nd in Granby, Quebec. All are welcome. Upon request "Registration/Reservation" kits will be sent to those from other provinces who would like to come. Contact Lucette Mailloux-Muir at Ph. (450) 375-7439 or e-mail lucette.mailloux.m@sympatico.ca

National Convention in Ottawa: August, 2005

Derrill Henderson has a committee of seven working in Ottawa on the early preparations for the 2005 Convention. Our **HKVCA representatives** on the committee include **Sandi Cameron, our Ontario Treasurer, and Ron McGuire, our Area Rep. for the North East area**. Both live in Ottawa. Although the Ontario Region of HKVCA is hosting, since the event is being held in Ottawa, a Co-ordinating Committee working in Ottawa was established early to get the event underway.

At this stage, there are a number of things we can tell you:

1. The event is either Friday, Saturday and Sunday (12, 13, &14) of the Aug. 15th weekend or Saturday, Sunday and Monday(13, 14 & 15)of that same weekend. The reason a decision has not yet been made is that the Governor General's schedule for that weekend is still not settled, and other events will take place within the context of her schedule. Since August 15th, which is the Monday, is also the anniversary of VJ Day, there are strong reasons to support Saturday, Sunday and Monday. We'll know soon.
2. Among the events to be held, there is to be a reception at Rideau Hall, and, of course, a special ceremony at the National Monument.
3. The hotel chosen is the Lord Elgin, which has some historical significance in that some of the soldiers enroute to Hong Kong stayed there before they went overseas.
4. The Lord Elgin is very centrally located in that it is just down the street from the National War Memorial, where the National Cenotaph is located as well. Not only that, two of the dinners will be held at the National Arts Centre, and it is just across the street.
5. Plans are progressing and we will update you with more details at the Mini-Reunion in Aurora on September 25th.

Don't hesitate to volunteer to be a part of the team that prepares for this very special 60th Anniversary of VJ Day. Contact a member of your Ontario Executive.

A Canadian singer/songwriter and the Hong Kong Veterans: **John Spearn**

For someone born and raised in Edmonton, John Spearn has a large Ontario connection. On his father's side, several generations ago, three brothers immigrated from Limerick in Ireland and, in 1831, built a house in Ontario, a house which is now the centerpiece of the Simcoe County Museum in Barrie. On his mother's side, the family name is Sigouin, a French-Canadian family that came to the Trois Rivieres area of Quebec in the 1600's. Hardly surprising that the combination of an Irish and French-Canadian background should produce a stellar singer-songwriter these several generations later, someone who is conscious of our Canadian history, and the significance it should have for all of us.

John Spearn, graduate of the University of Alberta, has taught in schools in Edmonton for more than twenty years, and for fifteen of those years he has been working on the Canada Songs Project. He specializes in bringing to our attention through song some of the important moments in our history and making those moments come alive. He has worked his magic in many venues, but most particularly in the Public Schools in Edmonton. His songs captivate his audiences wherever he performs, and he now has several CDs on the market.

His first CD, "Northern Sightlines" was completed in 1999, and was a multiple award nominee in 2001, his second, "Canada Songs" was released in November of 2002, and his third should be available in October of 2004. It is this third CD which has brought John Spearn to our attention.

John is a good friend of Nick Brune, and Nick, as the author of the Ten Lessons entitled "Canada in Hong Kong : 1941-1945 The Forgotten Heroes", had told John about his involvement with the Ten Lessons project. John's response was to create a piece of music, with the appropriate lyrics, which

would reflect the historical moment. The result rings true, and is a song that every one of us in HKVCA should have a chance to hear. Perhaps you'll have that opportunity, as the CD will be out this year. In addition, John may be coming East in the Fall. With a little luck, we could possibly hear John sing the song he calls "Hong Kong Christmas, 1941". In the meantime, just to give you an idea, here is one of the stanzas he has written:

"Our little garrison, 10,000 strong,
Guarded the seaport town of Hong Kong,
Dec. 8, 1941, we heard the news Pearl Harbor had gone,
And down came the Imperial Japanese.
Messages came, Shanghai overrun
War in the Pacific, the headlines began,
Send reinforcements, soon as you please
Cause we won't go down on our knees
To the Imperial Japanese.
And the sergeant cried: Give 'em some heroes, boys!" (Repeat last line)

Anyone wishing to learn more about John Spearn and his music may contact him at : E-mail: jspearn@telusplanet.net or you can check his Website at: www.canadasongs.com

Ten Lessons Update:

The Ten Lessons project is moving ahead. Orders continue to come in, and we are now at the stage where we are in contact with History departments in some schools, as well as individual teachers. There is a growing interest in what we are doing, and Carol Hadley, our National President, has begun to make inroads in Manitoba. She has been involved with workshops encouraging the use of the Ten Lessons in Manitoba classrooms, and the School Division there is interested in the possibility of placing a special order for copies of the booklet for the fall term.

Our next goal, other than having many schools using the Ten Lessons across the country, **is to have the Ten Lessons translated into French**. The cost would be in the neighbourhood of \$8500. for an initial run of 200 plus the translation, so we know it may be awhile before we can afford to make the attempt. What we do know is that there are many schools from Quebec to Manitoba and beyond that would like to have the Ten Lessons in translation. We are considering applying for a Trillium Grant, but that is by no means a certainty, unless we can convince them that our project meets their criteria.

In the meantime, we thank the many people who have picked up individual copies, and would be delighted if many more would like to do so. **We have included an order form as the final page in this Newsletter** so you can pass the word, and create additional interest in "Canada in Hong Kong: 1941 to 1945 The Forgotten Heroes".

Our ultimate goal is to make more Canadians aware of this important part of our history. The public does want to know about Hong Kong and the involvement of our Canadian soldiers, and it is up to us to tell them.

"We shall remember them"

All members of HKVCA, please note:

Lori Smith, our Membership Chair, has introduced **a new policy** regarding Membership. For those members whose memberships are not up-to-date, after two mailed reminders, and a final contact by phone, the membership is to be terminated. Most, of course, do wish to carry on, but for those who do not, **this will be the time of year when memberships will expire**. Lori has felt that this is a necessary policy in order to track our members properly, and to make sure that funds are not being used in cases where individuals continue to neglect their dues.

Lori would appreciate your keeping the following details in mind:

- The Association's **Membership Year is January through December**.
- We would request that you **complete the Membership Information form every year in December. You'll find it on the last page of your December Newsletter**. Whether you are a **veteran, a widow, a new or a renewing member**, we need to keep updating our Membership database. We now have **250 members** in the Ontario Region, and it is important for us to have accurate information about all our members to be able to communicate with everyone.
- **New and Renewing** member dues are **\$15.00** per year.
- **Veterans and widows** do NOT pay dues. Their memberships are **free**.
- **One special item to note: We can now give you an Income Tax Receipt for your donations, as we do have Charitable Status.**

Have a wonderful summer, and we'll see you in Aurora!!

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Thank you to all those who have contributed so much to the Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association, Ontario Region, in the past and have agreed to continue to do so in the future!



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Nick Brune

**Author, "Canada in Hong Kong: 1941-1945
The Forgotten Heroes"**

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