

Ontario Region Report
AGM - December 10, 2016

Since our last AGM in August, 2015 Ontario Region has lost three veterans: Eric Batley (RR), Bruce Cadoret (RR) and Les Canivet (RR). We will remember them.

We also lost four widows, including Marjorie Chatwell, Ruth Cunningham, Etta McDavid and Evelyn St John, as well as Delilah Cooper, the wife of veteran Fred Cooper. We extend our heartfelt condolences to their families.

I'd like to take this opportunity to give a very special thanks to Lori Atkinson Smith and Mark Purcell. Lori is our Membership Chair, and has not only done a terrific job of keeping track of our members, but has also been instrumental in getting people to volunteer as Area Reps and has helped to organize the area luncheons that have been held. Mark has been our region's treasurer for several years, and as always, keeps an impeccable set of books.

I'd also like to extend a special thank you to our Ottawa crew, in particular, Ted Terry and Ann Hyland, Mitzi Ross and Ian Doull. They have sought out opportunities to get the Battle of Hong Kong story out there, and have also put a tremendous amount of work into organizing events such as last year's convention and the annual ceremony in December at our Memorial Wall in Ottawa.

And finally, thanks to our Ontario Area Reps: Dorothy Felix, Tim Hodgkinson, Pam Newhouse, Shelagh Purcell, Mitzi Ross, and Marilyn Wilbur Morgan. They are the ones who do the essential work of keeping in contact with our veterans and widows.

For years we have had a display at the Ontario History and Social Studies Teachers' Association (OHASSTA). This annual event gives us exposure to the very people who teach (or should teach) the Battle of Hong Kong to high school students. We participated in both November 2015 in Niagara-on-the-Lake, where Linda Guglick and Sandra Strom did the heavy lifting, and in 2016 in Ottawa where Ian, Ann and Ted ran the show.

Another teachers' event in Ottawa is the annual Parliamentary Library Teachers' Resource Fair, where high school teachers from across Canada come as guests of the federal government. Once again, Ann, Ted and Ian ran a display both this year and last.

And that tireless Ottawa bunch also finds time to mount a display at a local shopping mall!

In addition to her Area Rep responsibilities, Shelagh Purcell organized the first-ever luncheon for eastern Ontario members in Trenton this past August. The luncheon, which took place outdoors on a lovely August day, was followed by a very interesting tour of the National Air Force Museum of Canada.

Almost an annual tradition now, Pam Newhouse gathered western Ontario members to a well attended luncheon in Niagara Falls in June.

The Parkwood Institute in London, ON has been the home of many veterans over the years. In recognition of this, Lori Smith arranged for a plaque to be installed in the lobby of Parkwood recognizing the Battle of Hong Kong. About 40 people attended, including Hong Kong Veteran Lawrence Ross and a number of his family members.

I had the honour of speaking several times to groups in the Toronto area, including the Hong Kong Global Network, the Hong Kong Cultural Studies group, and at the Richard Charles Lee Canada Hong

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Kong Library at the University of Toronto. On a less formal note, I played in the annual Hong Kong-Canada Business Association golf tournament in September. No holes-in-one for me!

Just this past week the Ontario Legislature paid tribute to the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Hong Kong, followed by a reception hosted by Ontario's Lieutenant Governor. MPPs representing the three parties in the legislature each read a very moving tribute, and veteran Fred Cooper (RR) accepted the honours on behalf of all the Canadians who served in Hong Kong.

I had the privilege of leading a group of 31 on a visit to Hong Kong and Japan in December of last year to learn more about the battle, and to commemorate our fathers and grandfathers who gave so much for us and our country.

Finally, I have just returned this week from a personal visit to Hong Kong where I participated in the annual commemorative ceremony at Sai Wan War Cemetery. The Consulate of Canada did its usual stellar work in arranging a very moving ceremony that properly honoured those who fought and died in the Battle and in the POW camps.

Respectfully submitted,

Mike Babin
Regional Director, Ontario