

HONG KONG VETERANS' ASSOCIATION QUEBEC-MARITIMES BRANCH JUNE, 1996

BANJO GOSSIP NEWSLETTER 3.4 BAMBOO TELEGRAPH

There is egg on my face. In the last letter I reported that Comrade Len Burchall had passed on. John Stroud was quick to point out my serious error and for that I thank you, John. If I can make any excuse for my error, let me say that there was a Leonard Burchill (note spelling) reported in the obits in the Montreal Gazette. Then when someone mentioned to me that our Len had died, I foolishly didn't question it. If, perchance Comrade Len Burchall (note spelling) should read this letter, I beg him to forgive my careless reporting. To others who were misled by that same careless reporting, please forgive, and be assured that Comrade Len is still with us.

REUNION, 1996

As previously reported, Carolyn Albright is spearheading the organization of our reunion in Dartmouth in August. Attached to this letter you will find another information sheet and a registration form. If you plan to attend, send your completed form along with a cheque for \$60.00 per person to the address on the form BEFORE AUGUST 1. Why not do it now, and get it over with?

LOST TRAILS

I hope that nobody objects to the use of Legion Magazine terminology, but Lost Trails seems to be as appropriate a way of saying it as any.

Because some of my letters have been returned, I ask your help in giving me new addresses for the following: Elva Steele, Lyla Beattie, Irene Grimshaw, Susan Clark, Hazel Bishop, Vincent Firlotte. Mrs Emma Driscoll, Mr. Joseph McCarron. I would be grateful for any information.

CORRESPONDENCE

A more than usual amount of mail has been received, mainly because of Wife Edwina's illness, who, incidentally is receiving good reports from her doctors as a result of recent tests. We are overwhelmed by the concern expressed by so many of our comrades and wives and widows. Here is the list, in no particular order: from Charlie Gordon and Betty who spent the winter in Florida; from John Stroud re. Len Burchall; from Hazel Ladds reporting the death of husband William and brother Lyle Dempsey. Lyle's death was reported in my September letter; from Lawrence Rattie with Association business; from Harry Atkinson with information on the claim from the Japanese ;Laurie MacKay sent me some photos and a copy of the Nova Scotia Legion Command Magazine reporting on the award of the HK Bar to HK Vets living in Nova Scotia; from Fred Chapman with dues; from Evelyn MacAuley (widow of Major Tom) a warm letter wishing all HK Vets well. She is 92 years old, living in Florida.; from Harold and Marg Englehart with good wishes; from National President Roger Cyr; from Derrill Henderson with details of the Commemorative Committee; from Flash and Jessie Clayton, one from Florida, and one from Victoria where they attended one of Jessie's reunions. They sure get around. From Alma Wood with comments on Len's health and good wishes to all; from Alex Archibald. Unfortunately he won't be attending the reunion; from Lloyd and Peggy Doull, good wishes to all; from Gladys McCarron a nice letter.

Get-well cards from Gladys McCarron, Marg and Harold Englehart, Doug and Hazel Martin, Myrie and Alex Archibald, Leonard and aaaaaaaaAlma Wood, Peggy and Lloyd Doull, Nap and Marie LeBlanc, Allison and Beth Pollock. I hope I haven't missed anyone.

DONATIONS

Again we gratefully acknowledge donations from the following members: Mrs. Betty Cameron, Mrs. Bertine Comeau, Mrs Lyla Beattie, Mrs. Kittie Smith, Mrs. Mary Robinson, Mrs. Rita Normand, Mrs. Hazel Breaky, Mrs. Marjorie Kennedy, Mrs. Hilda Grimshaw, Mrs. Olive Josey, Mrs Audrey Murray, Mrs Réjane Bourassa, Mrs Ruth Addie

And from the men: Raymond Murray, Charles Edwards, Gerard Pentland, James Darragh, Arthur Roberts, Kenneth Dawe, William Bradley, Morgan Davies, Laurie MacKay, Richard Keays, Philip Doddridge, Wayne Birmingham, Fred Chapman, Royce Sweet, Eugene Bond, L.T.S. Doull, Bliss Cole

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"As we go to press" I hear from Lawrence that he has received several donations in memory of Comrade Seldon Stoddard. I must get this letter copied today for a variety of reasons, and I don't have the names of the donors. I'll print the names in my September newsletter.

MEMBERSHIP

I now have the latest figures from Lawrence. 222 members paid up to date. Dues are outstanding from some members. Lawrence would be very happy to receive your 1996 dues and we need you to keep the organization alive and well. If you haven't paid up for 1996 (you'll have the 1996 windshield sticker and membership card if you have paid), please send \$15.00, more if you can, to Lawrence Rattie, 508 Thorncrest Ave., Dorval, QC, H9P 2M6.

LAST POST

Since our last newsletter I have to report the passing of a number of our Comrades. If I have all information on recent deaths, they are as follows: BERT WOODMAN died peacefully in his armchair. MAURICE MALLEY passed away since the last letter. SELDON STODDARD had been living in special care for a while. He was buried on June 6. WILLIAM LADDS died last December, but word did not reach me until recently. I have an unconfirmed report that Mrs. Wilfred Smith's wife, Stella has passed away, also Mrs. Lewis McFawn. Those of us who are left will remember them.

There are two other deaths in recent months that are deserving of our sympathy. Professor Gustave Gingras, who conducted the study on "The Sequelae of Inhuman Conditions and Slave Labour, etc., etc., experienced by Hong Kong Veterans, passed away recently in P.E.I. If you saw the Video, "Canada's Hong Kong Veterans: The Compensation Story", prepared by The War Amps, you will remember his part in the making of that film along with Roger Cyr. If we are ever to get any compensation for slave labour from, the Japanese or from any other source, there is no doubt that Dr. Gingras' contribution will play a major role in the outcome.

The other passing of note is Tom Price, the son of our respected Officer Commanding, Col. Jack Price. Thomas Evan Price was also a military man and honorary Colonel of the Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment of Canada).

Since this letter was started we have word of the passing of yet another friend of Hong Kong Vets, namely, the Honorable George Hees, who was one of the best Ministers of Veterans' Affairs, in my humble opinion.

BIOKI

As time goes by more and more of our Hong Kong Family become ill. I am reluctant to mention names because I know that I will miss someone. However, I should tell you that Glenford Gregoire is recovering at home, after brain surgery in Moncton. Charlie Campbell is at home recovering from a stroke. Henry Lyons seems to be well again after surgery. Laurie MacKay phones to say that he is suffering from cancer, but keeps going. Marg Englehart has been unwell, as has Hectorine Law, and, I'm sure others whose names don't come to mind. I would be grateful to hear from you of anyone in poor health.

COLLECTING SALT

Don't we all remember how precious a commodity was ordinary table salt during those happy days in the Far East? Of course, everything that is taken for granted in normal times became a precious commodity in Sham Shui Po. Salt and sugar, however, ranked first as agents to help make the rice and green horror more palatable.

Not much could be done about getting sugar, although now and then a little seemed to filter into camp, as did small quantities of salt.

Some bright soul among us, realizing that sea water contained a lot of salt, struck upon a method of extracting the salt for table use. So, under whose instructions I cannot now recall, we set to work forming "beds", or depressions in the dirt of the parade square. We then bailed water out of the harbour and poured it into the "beds", and waited for the sun to evaporate it.

That worked well, and a thin coating of salt crystals was left behind. It was pure NaCl, no doubt, but there were other objects present as well. When we tried to lift the salt off the ground, little balls of mud came with it. It was bothersome, to say the least, to have to pick the mud out of your meager ration of rice. The project was abandoned.

After all these years I still marvel at the guiding spirit that kept us alive through all the beatings, starvation, mental stress, and sickness. Eating mud-filled salt off the parade square could just as easily have killed us off with dysentery, diarrhoea, and God knows what else.

Would I do the same thing again? Perhaps a little more carefully.

COMEMMORATION ASSOCIATION

Under the leadership of Derrill Henderson and Lora Wachtendorf, an elaborate and comprehensive organization has been set up, involving local participation in all parts of Canada. When this idea was first conceived, I, for one, had no idea that it would take off with such vigour, and that our sons and daughters would show such interest and confront the problem in such an enthusiastic and, indeed, such a professional way. Derrill reports about 300 members, with a potential for many more. Please do your part in encouraging sons and daughters of Hong Kong Veterans to join. If we hope that the efforts of the Hong Kong Veterans do not become just another footnote in the history of Canada, we should give whatever support we can to this dedicated group, working so hard on our behalf.

OTHER NEWSLETTERS

News from other branches is always welcome, and three of the regulars are from the Manitoba Branch, the Ontario Branch, and the BC Branch.

From Winnipeg Angus McRitchie reports on the death of his wife, Mari. I take this opportunity to extend to Comrade Angus sincere sympathy on behalf of the Q-M Branch.

Lionel Speller in Victoria sends a short letter packed with news of H K Vets in the far west. I also have to thank Lionel for his many copies of press reports concerning Hong Kong Vets.

John Stroud puts out the Ontario Branch News and is always up on latest developments in the area of legislation. In his last letter John notes that our appeal for a judicial enquiry into the claim for slave labour has been rejected. A further request has been launched for a hearing with the Standing Committee on Veterans' Affairs. He also reminds readers of the Warriors' Day Parade on August 17.

NATIONAL COUNCIL

At each national reunion, held every two years, the National Council holds an executive committee meeting in addition to the general meeting when election of officers, among other things, takes place. On the year in between reunions, it has become the practice to hold an executive meeting in Winnipeg. Why in Winnipeg? Because it is most central, and thus costs less overall for travel. The meeting is usually slated to coincide with the annual reunion of the Manitoba Branch. This year all this takes in October, starting on the 23rd. at the Holiday Inn Airport West.

PERSONALITY

Joe Bujold has been a regional director of the Quebec-Maritimes Branch for many years. Joe attends all of the Executive Committee meetings and always has a positive attitude to whatever problem comes up. He is willing to perform any task you ask him to do, and he does it with a smile. Joe is always ready to act on the Colour Party on parades, and he is always there because he never misses a reunion. Joe and Rita have recently moved back to the Gaspé after spending all of their working years in Montreal. We wish them the best of good health and good fortune.

FRIENDS IN VICTORIA

While we were there we had the pleasure of associating with Hong Kong friends, both residents and visitors like us. We had a number of interesting luncheons with Lionel and Ida Speller, Larry and Ann Stebbe, Bob Manchester, Walter and Estelle Jenkins, Ray and Eleanor Squires, Harry and Marge Atkinson, Gerry and Eldena Mabely, as well as Paul Jenkins and Don Mabely, sons of HK Vets. Just thought you'd like to know..

SCHOOL BOY HOWLERS

The following bits of wisdom come from "Tom in Sacramento" via Ann Landers' column. If you haven't seen them before, or even if you have, they should provide a smile.

When you smell an odorless gas it is probably carbon monoxide.

Water is composed of two gins, oxygen and hydrogen. Oxygen is pure gin. Hydrogin is gin and water.

When you breathe, you inspire. When you do not breathe, you expire.

Before giving a blood transfusion, find out if the blood is affirmative or negative.

The pistol of a flower is its only protection against insects.

A permanent set of teeth consists of eight canines, eight cuspids, two molars and eight cuspidors.

Equator: a menagerie lion running around the earth through Africa.

To prevent contraception, wear a condominium.

The body consists of three parts - the brainium, the borax, and the abominable cavity. The brainium contains the brain. The borax contains the heart and lungs, and the abominable cavity contains the bowls, of which there are five - A, E, I, O, and U.

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TRIVIA

Hong Kong

According to Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable, the Hong Merchants were "those Chinese merchants who, under licence from the Imperial Government of China, held the monopoly of trade with Europeans, and under the Hong system, were restricted to Canton. The restriction was abolished in 1842, after the Opium War. HONG or HANG means row, range; hence a warehouse, particularly one for foreign merchants."

It has been estimated that if a man, in proportion to his weight could jump as high as a flea, he could jump 365 feet high. There are no statistics on the bed bugs of Sham Shui Po.

MILITARY MUSEUM

In a previous letter I mentioned that the New Richmond Branch of the Royal Canadian Legion is attempting to establish a military museum on its property near the existing Legion Hall. The original plans, as prepared by professional designers, estimated an expenditure of \$400,000.

At that time the committee was counting on a grant from the Quebec Government. Since then, however there have been severe budgetary cutbacks, and we find that now the committee will have to raise a third of whatever amount is to be spent. Since the main theme of the Museum places emphasis on the experience of the Royal Rifles in Hong Kong, the project is of particular interest to Hong Kong Veterans in this area.

Needless to say, the committee has had to rethink its money-raising projects, and no doubt will have to water down the original plans. There have been raffles and bingos to raise funds, but the going is slow. We have not yet received any promise of Federal support, but the possibility exists. We also plan to establish a Foundation to acquire funds for the project.

If and when we achieve our goal, we would be glad to receive on loan any artifacts or souvenirs which Hong Kong Veterans would be willing to furnish. More later.

That's all for now. I hope to see you all in Dartmouth-Halifax on August 9. Until then, be good to each other, and may God bless.

Philip

ALLIED EX PRISONER OF WAR MEDAL

APPLICATION FORM

PLEASE SUPPLY THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION
USING BLOCK CAPITALS

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

POST CODE: _____ TEL No: _____

If next of kin please indicate here _____

Rank _____

Unit _____

Service No. _____

Where Captured _____

Year of Capture _____

Camp(s) _____

Prisoner No. (If known) _____

Other relevant information if unable to fully complete the above.

The cost of each full size medal includes a voluntary £1 donation to the
Ex P.O.W. Welfare Fund.

PLEASE SUPPLY:

P.O.W. FULL SIZE MEDALS @ £24 each

Extra ribbon full size per 6 inch length £1.25

P.O.W. MINIATURE MEDALS @ £8.00 each

Extra miniature ribbon per 6 inch length £1.25

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Overseas £2.75

QTY	TOTAL

I enclose:

TOTAL £ _____

Allow up to 28 days for processing and delivery. All prices are quoted in pounds sterling in which payment is requested (US\$ or CAN\$ only accepted at the current rate of exchange).

Please make cheques or postal orders payable to Award Productions Ltd. or debit my ACCESS/MASTERCARD/VISA account

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