

REUNION 2000 IN FREDERICTON
AUGUST 10 TO 13

HONG KONG
VETERANS'
ASSOCIATION
QUEBEC-MARITIMES
BRANCH
BANJO GOSSIP
NEWSLETTER 7.4

June, 2000

Hello, again.

One of the rewards of doing this newsletter, (besides the fabulous salary I receive, of course) is the many letters I get from so many members, near and far. I would, and perhaps should, make the effort to answer each one personally, but, believe it or not, I also keep quite busy with other pursuits. I'll list all of the letters later on in this letter, but at this point I'd like to mention a correspondent who never fails to keep me up to date with happenings in his area. I refer to Lionel Speller, MM, and I reproduce here a photo he sent me taken in the Military Museum in Victoria. He is shown seated on what is reputed to be the very same bike he rode in the battle in Hong Kong. Beside him is a dummy with WW II uniform. We will reserve comment as to who is the better looking



At the going down of the sun, and in the morning
we will remember them

I should also mention that the poem that appeared in the March newsletter was written by the same Lionel Speller. He also sent me some others which I'll save for a future letter.

WIDOW'S SILVER CROSS

This award, originally given to the "Silver Cross Mother" of the year, the mother who had lost one or more sons or daughters in battle. As the years went on, however, it became increasingly difficult to find such a mother. Most, if not all, mothers of service persons killed in World War II, are dead, and now the medal will be granted to a widow who meets the following conditions: (1) She must provide a statement from Veterans' Affairs Canada of her late husband's pensioned disabilities; (2) she must present a death certificate or a letter from a doctor stating that death was a result of the pensioned disability condition. Application forms are available. Let me know.

LAST POST

Since the last newsletter, I have heard of the following comrades who have gone to their reward:

William Laidlaw, WG, March 20,
Wilbert Lynch, WG, April 20.
Theodore Schultz, WG, April 11.
Abel Arseneault (1998)
Alec Archibald, RRC
Charles Watson
Charles Rame
Ferdinand Lloyd

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

CONGRATULATIONS

Not many of us reach the 60 year mark in marital bliss, but that happened to Henry and Isabel Lyons. Henry and Isabel were married on March 20, 1940. Their first child, Vimy, so named, I believe, because Henry's father

REUNION 2000 IN FREDERICTON
AUGUST 10 TO 13

was a veteran of Vimy Ridge, was born before Henry shipped out to Hong Kong in October, 1941. Henry was a great -grandfather at age 64.

NEWSLETTERS

Again I have to thank Carol Hadley for turning out an excellent letter. For a newcomer, she knows where it's at. John Stroud's letter, as usual, always has a lot of pertinent and timely information. I'm still awaiting letters from Lionel and Gus. If you get these newsletters, write the authors a note of appreciation. A small thank you will make the job lighter.

DONATIONS

As previously mentioned, Sheila Rattie had taken over her dad's job of Membership Chairman, but now she is moving to Calgary. (See item further on in this letter). She has found the list of donations that her father had prepared and has sent it to me. As promised, here are the names of donors which normally would have appeared in the March letter.

From the ladies: Mrs Gertrude Beaulne, Mrs. Stella Parks, Mrs. Irene Firlotte, Mrs. Bernice Simons, Mrs. Sheila MacKinnon, Mrs. Nancy Walsh, Mrs. Doris Carr, Mrs. Sheila Enright, Mrs. Joyce Finn, Mrs. Louise Coleman, Mrs. Dorothy Davidson, Mrs. Florence Hawke, Mrs. Doris Murray, Mrs. Joyce Clarkson, Mrs. Agatha St. Onge, Mrs. Mildred MacPherson, Mrs. Aini Dissing, Mrs. Dora Doiron, Mrs. Ethel Stickles, Mrs. Barbara Hardy, Hazel Ladds, Patricia Billson, Nellie Laing, Barbara Strang, Hilda Grimshaw, Evelyn Hache

From the men: Robert Clayton, Martin Banfill, Wesley Hamilton, Lionel Lecouffe, John Webb, Edwin Rodrigues, Jean Lalime, Gerard Bisson, Harold Heath, Murray Stickles, Lloyd Cole, Clarence Hunt, Elmer Denison, Napoleon Leblanc, Royce

Sweet, Bob Dunlop, LTS Doull, John Duguay, Arnold Hunt,
Donations in memory of:

Jane and Keith Moorse in memory of Colleen Rattie

Audrey Murray in memory of Matt LTS Doull, in memory of Lucien Brunet Mavis Frost, Ralph MacLean, Walter & Jean Grey, in memory of Lawrence Rattie Lillian Brunet in memory of Lucien Walter & Jean Grey in memory of Harold Englehart

Unit Cast Canada in memory of Leslie Stickles

Lawrence Ross in memory of brothers Ray and Leo

Glen & Jean Gregoire in memory of Colleen Rattie

Patricia Cummerford in memory of Lawrence Rattie

Elsie Stoddard in memory of husband Grant Judy, Michael, Chad Rattie in memory of Lawrence

Gladys McCarron in memory of L. Rattie Thank you so much, comrades and friends. Your generosity is greatly appreciated, and your money will be put to good use.

HELP WANTED

No, I don't want to add to my extensive office staff, this is a different kind of help wanted. Gary Beecroft, a new member of the HKVCA, had a half-brother, Robert Ronald, of "C" Coy who was killed in action. Gary would like to hear from anyone who remembers his brother. Robert Ronald spelled his name "Beacroft", which could add to the confusion. So this is an appeal to former members of "C" Coy. Please get in touch with Gary at Apt. 411, 77 Maitland Place, Toronto. ON, M4Y 2V6, e-mail: gary.beecroft@sympatico.ca, or tell me, if you wish.

While I'm at it, can anyone give me the address of Doris Carr of Sussex, NB?

At the going down of the sun, and in the morning
we will remember them

REUNION 2000 IN FREDERICTON
AUGUST 10 TO 13

CORRESPONDENCE

A lot of interesting correspondence to report this time. Flash Clayton always keeps me informed of his activities, this time an interview at Legion Branch 345 in Toronto. Watch the TV Guide for programs on November 11. Elmer Denison has written a couple of times. He seems well. Bill Bradley at 88 years of age is still going strong. He is concerned that because he was on an officers' course in Kingston at the time the official pictures were taken, his image does not appear on the photo. Please take note. Lloyd Doull writes often, always with interesting bits of reminiscing. Kay Mann sends me notes from time to time with news of her activities, Keith Cowan, a teacher I used to know, has visited the Yokohama War Cemetery to visit the grave of Keith Ingalls. I hear from Roger Cyr that his wife, Loretta, is in long-term chronic care at St. Vincent's Hospital in Ottawa. From Frank Corbett, friend of HK Vets. Thank you all. Your letters make the task of putting out this letter a lot easier.

THE ST. ALBANS RAID

One obscure bit of history that may be worth the telling, is one part, however small, that Canada played in the American Civil War. On October 19, 1864, a group of Confederate agents assembled in Montreal and stole across the American border to St. Albans, Vermont. There they raided several banks and made off with about \$200,000.00, after killing at least one person. The raid, no doubt, was intended as much to terrorize the Northerners as it was to get funds for the Rebel cause. At any rate, the raid caused a great flurry of concern for diplomatic relations between the US and Canada in the Canadian Parliament. The raiders were arrested in Montreal and the

money was returned along with the raiders. Just thought you'd like to know.

ITEM

I have just received from Charlie Gordon two pages of the Montreal Gazette, December 23, 1941. In it is a half-page size picture of the officers of the Royal Rifles, (Yes, Lt. Bill Bradley, your picture is there in an insert, along with Lt. John McGreevy, Lt. Angus MacMillan, and Lt. A.B. Scott). Most of the two pages is taken up with reports of the battle, all optimistic, and wryly comical from today's perspective. I'll be able to use excerpts from the clippings for future items in newsletters. Thanks, Charlie.

THIS SOLDIER'S STORY

George MacDonell's book is selling well. I am working on my third box of 60 copies, and I know that Vivian Henderson, who has taken on the task of managing the distribution of the books, has been responsible for the sale of many more. Everyone who has read the book has nothing but praise for George's effort. Bill Bradley says, "From page 81- on I found my cheeks wet with tears, as were his". To remind you again, if you want a copy, and remember, the profits after expenses, go to the Military Museum in New Richmond, get in touch with Vivian at : The Commemorative Association, Suite 164, 1 Stafford Road, Nepean, ON, K3H 1B9. \$20.00 plus \$4.00 S&H

REUNION IN PLATTSBURG

I have been contacted by Mr. Geoffrey Knowles, ex-prisoner-of-war of the Japanese, now living in Montreal. Comrade Knowles was a British service man in Singapore. He, among others, is organizing a reunion of all POWs of the Japanese in Plattsburg, New York, on September 17, 2000. If you are interested, please get in

At the going down of the sun, and in the morning
we will remember them

REUNION 2000 IN FREDERICTON
AUGUST 10 TO 13

touch with Geoffrey Knowles, Apt. 540, 2525 Cavendish Blvd, Montreal, QC, H4B 2Y6. His telephone is 514-481-8349. Fax: 514-481-8079. It will be an interesting reunion.

THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER

By now you will have seen the TV coverage of the event, so no more need be said. It was attended by eight HK Vets, Roger Cyr, Arnold Ross, Bob Barter, (and daughters and granddaughter) Fred Chapman, (and son), Ken Ewing (and wife), Pat Poirier, (and wife), Dempsey Syvret (and daughters) and Phil Doddridge. Derrill Henderson and Vivian were also there. In fact, Derrill, as usual, was the shepherd for a bunch of lost sheep. We were honoured as a group by having one of our number marching with the special mourners.

MARITIMES GASPESIAN BRANCH

I have word from Neil Darrah that the M-G Branch will hold a reunion September 1, 2, 3, in Florenceville, NB. If you plan to attend, you should make your reservations now at the Florenceville Motor Inn, 506-392-6053, or the Beechwood Motor Inn, 506-278-5241. Mailing address for both: Florenceville, NB, E0J 1K0

BAD NEWS

For the Q-M Branch. Sherila Rattie will be moving to Calgary. We are sorry to see her go, but we understand and wish her the best of luck. In the meantime, at our June 24 Executive Committee meeting, on which a more extensive report will follow, Marcel Mondou has graciously agreed to take over the responsibilities. From now on, and please take note, send your dues and donations to MARCEL MONDOU, 18 RUE BARRE, GRANBY, QC, J2H 2E6. We are grateful to

Marcel for taking over this important part of the organization.

RCL DOMINION CONVENTION

I had the honour of representing the Hong Kong Veterans Association in President Harry's place at the Legion Convention in Halifax, June 11 to 15. It was a huge affair as always with 2500 delegates from across Canada as well as another 2000 observers. I was treated royally by the organizers of the event. I had the opportunity to explain to the Convention the plans for the future of the HKVA, and to thank the Legion for its role in supporting our claims over the years.

VETERANS AFFAIRS

On June 18 I went to Charlottetown with Derrill to meet with Veterans Affairs Deputy Minister and other department heads. We were treated with deference and respect. Hong Kong Veterans are held in high regard where ever we go. Derrill, as usual, carried the ball. He had things lined up for discussion with all of the officials who listened attentively and promised action. For me, who did most of the listening, it was a gratifying experience.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

On June 24, the Committee held their June meeting in New Richmond. Present were: Bob Barter, Henry Lyons, Milton MacDonald, Paul Dallain, Ossie Clark, Reggie Law, Arnold Ross, Derrill Henderson Lucette Muir, Allan Marshall, Charlie Gordon and me, Philip.

A lengthy agenda was considered and dispatched in record time. Apart from appointing Marcel Mondou as membership chairman, we appointed Ossie Clark as nominating committee chairman. Please note that there will be an election of officers at the Convention in Fredericton. This will be the

At the going down of the sun, and in the morning
we will remember them

REUNION 2000 IN FREDERICTON
AUGUST 10 TO 13

last executive elected by the Quebec-Maritimes Branch, since we will be turning over all aspects of the operation of the Branch in Calgary in October, 2001. So if you have suggestions or nominations for the offices of president, First Vice-president, Treasurer, Secretary, Membership Chairman, and/or Directors, please get in touch with Ossie or be present to nominate your choice of candidates at the Annual General Meeting in August.

Lucette gave a repeat report of the Convention in Granby last summer.

It was agreed that widows would no longer be required to pay the annual \$15.00 fee for membership in the Quebec-Maritime Branch. Life membership was granted to one of our senior members.

A discussion on the possibility of getting an award for the dog Gander, ended in the decision to ask for donations from our members, to be sent to Ken Ewing, National Treasurer, RR 4, Kemptville, ON, K0G 1J0. Ken will then forward a lump sum to the Canadian War Museum to support the request to have the dog declared an animal hero, and strengthen our claim for a medal for him. If you feel that Gander should be honoured in this way, please send a donation, large or small, to Ken. I sent a small donation and received a receipt for income tax purposes, as well as a certificate from the War Museum.

Lucette reported on the progress being made by the Quebec chapter of the Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association. She suggests a process to report on the deaths of HK Vets, so that an accurate account is made and everyone is informed asap.

(Editor's note: I am continually pleased and delighted with the effort the "Commemoratives" are putting into the work of the Association.)

Derrill reports that our numbers have dwindled to 292. Of these 152 are ex-RRC and the other 140 are ex-Grenadiers and ex-Brigade Headquarters.

HONG KONG SERVICE MEDAL

Speaking of medals, another one has been struck to commemorate service in the Colony of Hong Kong. To quote the leaflet: "The medal features a Bird of Paradise delicately modelled with all the fine detail frosted on a mirror polished background. Surrounding the design are the words Hong Kong Service Medal 1841-1997, denoting the period Hong Kong was 'The Crown Colony of Hong Kong.' " On the reverse side, "Again a brilliant polished background carries the central feature of Hong Kong written in Cantonese. The golden appearance of the medal giving prestige and a most appropriate commemorative significance to service in the "Fragrant Harbour".

The Ribbon: " Blue represents the waters, channels, and seas surrounding Hong Kong and the New Territories with the centre Golden Yellow stripe representing the rich and strategic 'Jewel in the Crown'. The exclusively designed woven medal ribbon is fitted to a uniquely designed medal suspender, which features two powerful inter-twined dragons, 'guarding the Colony'."

The medal will be available to all former civil and military personnel who served in the Colony for a minimum of six months. Eligibility is also extended to next of kin.

The cost of the medal is 27.50 pounds sterling, miniature medal 9.50 sterling. Depending on the rate of exchange at the time of purchase, the cost for a large medal would be roughly \$65.00 Canadian and about \$25.00 for the small one.

At the going down of the sun, and in the morning
we will remember them

REUNION 2000 IN FREDERICTON
AUGUST 10 TO 13

If you are interested, tell Derrill Henderson at 75 Priam Way, Nepean, ON, K2H 8S7. tel: 613-829-5033, e-mail dh468@freenet.carleton.ca. Derrill will place the order and thinks he may get a better price for a bulk order.

FAR EAST PILGRIMAGE

Derrill, who looks after everything, reports that things are shaping up for a good trip. We old-timers will be looked after well, it seems. I wouldn't mind being pampered a bit. If I have to be pushed around in a wheel-chair, my ego will not be bruised. Again, the departure date from Vancouver, November 28, return flight from Japan to Vancouver, December 7, (Dec.8, in Canada). At the moment the count is: 22 HK Vets and 56 family members on the tour.

PUNS

Bennett Cerf, famed comedian, tells the story of a relative and namesake of Syngman Rhee of South Korea, who was in the United States, working at *Life Magazine* to learn the magazine business. On his first assignment in New York, he got lost. He was finally found by a Missing Persons Bureau investigator, who exclaimed, "Ah, sweet Mr. Rhee of *Life*, at last I've found you.!"

Three brothers went to Texas and began raising cattle. They couldn't think of an appropriate name for their ranch, so they asked their father. He replied, "Call it Focus, because that's where the sun's rays meet."

That will be the extent of my ramblings for this time. Don't forget to register for the Reunion in Fredericton. Do it soon if you plan to go. That makes it easier for the organizers, and remember, they are doing all this for our benefit. Please help.

Be good to each other, and may God bless.

Philip

At the going down of the sun, and in the morning
we will remember them