

Hong Kong Veterans' Association Quebec-Maritimes Branch March, 1995

BANJO GOSSIP NEWSLETTER 2.3 BANJO GOSSIP

Hello again from the Gaspé. The time lapse between newsletters seems to be getting shorter and shorter, but this one is more or less on schedule, four times a year. We've had a lot of snow in New Richmond this winter, more than usual. The local skiers are happy, but they could have used some of the snow last year before they bought their snow maker. I don't think they've had to use it this year.

NATIONAL REUNION , 1995

Notices have been sent out to all members from the National office in Ottawa. I have received word that some people have not received the notices. That is normal in an operation of this size. If you have not received information and wish to attend (I hope), you should contact the hotel immediately for reservations at the following address: NOVATEL HOTEL, 33 NICHOLAS ST. OTTAWA, K1N 9M7, Tel. 230-3033. (There was an error in the telephone number on the sheet you received.) You should also write to Derrill Henderson, 75 Priam Way Nepean, Ont., K2H 8S7, Tel. 613-829-5033, to register for the convention.

We are hoping for the biggest turn out ever, percentage-wise, that is, since this could very well be our last National Reunion. Please make a special effort to be there. There must be some of your old friends you haven't seen in a long time. Besides all that, it is shaping up to be a grand affair with the organization "CANADA REMEMBERS" picking up the tab for many of the activities. Do your best. I hope to see you there!

LAST POST

Last Post is always the sad part of this report, and this time is no different. Since our last newsletter we have to report that the following Comrades have gone to their reward: From the Quebec-Maritime Branch: CLIFF ROBINSON, MAURICE MCCARRON, GUY SIROIS, DICK MANN, TOMMY LUCAS, CLEM BLACQUIERE, BILL RIDEOUT, and Mrs. Mina Ross. (Leo). Not confirmed, Mrs. Bertha Duguay. (John) BERNARD DUPLESSIS ? From the Ontario Branch: COMRADES WALLACE GREEN, AND WALLY GREY From the Manitoba Branch: COMRADES NELSON GALBRAITH, ARTHUR MUNN, AND ELMER A. GRAHAM.

AT THE GOING DOWN OF THE SUN AND IN THE MORNING, WE WILL REMEMBER THEM.

DR. JOHN HUMPHREY

Dr. Humphrey, McGill Law Professor, chief crafter of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and director of the UN Human Rights Secretariat for 20 years, has died in Montreal at the age of 89. Dr. Humphrey added his voice to the conviction that Hong Kong Veterans were given short shrift when the Canadian Government signed away our rights to a further claim on the Japanese in 1952. If we ever receive compensation for slave labour, there is no doubt that Dr. Humphrey's opinion will have carried a great deal of weight in the decision.

DONATIONS

Lawrence reports the following donations: Mrs. Willa Allen, Mrs. Thelma Misson, Mrs. Joyce Harmon, Mrs. Rita Normand.

More, from the men: Edwin Rodrigues (Hi, Ed) Arthur Roberts, Robert Barter, Thomas Wilson, Walter Henderson, Charles Brady, Laurie MacKay, James Badger, Donat Bernier.

IN MEMORIAM

From Bev and Phil Johnston in memory of Clifford Robinson.
From Robert H. Dunlop in memory of Fred Drover.

HONG KONG VETERANS' COMMEMORATIVE COMMITTEE

From its start at a National Executive Committee meeting in Pointe Claire in 1993, the Committee has evolved into an active and efficient organization. Derrill Henderson (son of HK Vet Stewart) has taken on the task of co-ordinating the activities, and has got help from sons and daughters from across Canada. It is heartwarming to see the interest of these younger people. I believe that we can be assured that the memory of the Hong Kong Veterans will not fade after we are gone. Bravo, and many thanks for your efforts. It would be nice to see a large number of the committee members at our reunion in Ottawa.

NEWSLETTERS

It is interesting to receive news from other Branches. Lately I have heard from, BC, Southern Saskatchewan-Alberta, Winnipeg, and Ontario Branches. These letters are what makes being a Hong Kong Veteran interesting. Can I say, without fear of contradiction, that ours is the closest-knit of any Veterans' organization in Canada? I now know from experience, that it takes a lot of effort to get these letters out, in terms of time spent as well as personal expense. The payoff is in personal satisfaction and the many letters and phone calls one gets as a result. I am happy in the service.

HONORARY MEMBERSHIP

If I haven't already done so, I report here the award of Honorary membership to Mme. Yolande Ross, widow of Comrade Raymond Ross. Since Raymond's death a few years ago, Yolande has remained active in the service of Hong Kong Veterans. Her main activity is in persuading HKers to renew their membership and in the collection of dues.

LOST TRAILS

Donald Southworth gave me his new address last September in Fredericton, but his newsletters keep coming back. If anyone knows his correct address, please tell me or ask him to get in touch. I also have mail returned from Mrs. Ralph Buchanan, Mrs. Kittie Smith, and Mr. Kenneth Bannister. Any help would be appreciated.

CORRESPONDENCE

As always, it is great to get news from Comrades from near and far. Since last time I have heard from: Bill Tuppert, Angus MacMillan, Flash and Jessie Clayton, Colleen and Lawrence Rattie, Lionel Hurd, Lionel Speller, Phil Lawlis, Pat Poirier, Alan Beauchamp, Kay and Glen Mann, and, of course, letters from President Roger, Derrill Henderson, and Harold Englehart.

50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

Ceremonies commemorating VE Day will be taking place all over Canada in early May. Legion Branches will be putting on shows of their own and our Branch #172 is one of them. I had a call from Lt. Col Garbutt of the Sherbrooke Hussars, who wishes to have it announced in this letter that there will be a parade and ceremony in Sherbrooke on May 6. Col. Garbutt, incidentally, is the son of a Hong Kong Veteran. Members in the Sherbrooke area, and anyone visiting would no doubt enjoy the occasion. If you can make it, please attend.

DUES PAID

As of our last Executive Committee meeting on November 19, one hundred ninety one members had paid their dues for 1995. We have a long-standing rule that if dues are more than two years in arrears, the newsletter is withheld until dues are paid. Although we are not broke, it does take money to keep the ball rolling. Also, and just as important, we want to know where you are, how you are, and if you are (still with us, that is). Please show your support by contributing to the

expense of keeping the show on the road.

PERSONALITY

Oswald F. Clark, First Vice President, Quebec Maritimes Branch, somehow got the nickname "Toots", but anyone who looks and acts less like a "toots" would be hard to find. I don't know how he got the name, but I suspect that it may be for the same reason that we call a giant of a man "Tiny".

"Ossie", to all his friends, has been a member of the HK Association since its beginning, and a member of the executive committee for many years. He has organized more than one reunion, and will take on any job that needs doing. He is always ready to offer help or spearhead any project. He has raised more money selling raffle tickets than anyone, with the possible exception of Lawrence Rattie. He rarely, if ever misses a meeting, and always provides a steady hand in matters of importance.

As a Legionnaire, he holds the LMSM, the highest honour the Legion awards. He is also a longtime holder of the HK Merit Award. In his hometown he oversaw the conversion of space in the Legion Hall for apartments for Seniors, and continues to supervise its activities. Here's to you, Ossie!

SNAFU

Somehow or other, a misunderstanding must have occurred concerning the availability of rooms at the Novatel Hotel in Ottawa. National President Roger informs me that there are, in fact, rooms still available as of March 21. He suggests that callers asking for reservations must have neglected to say that they were part of the Hong Kong Convention and were told that no rooms were available. Please try again. Derrill Henderson is supervising the reservations, and you might want to get in touch with him at 75 Priam Way, Nepean, ON, K2H 8S7, tel.613-829-5033. Don't give up. There are other hotels close by, and Derrill can get you placed if you can't get into the Novatel.

MILITARY MUSEUM

There is a project afoot which is dear to the heart of this writer, at least, and that is, plans to create a museum annexed to our Legion Branch in New Richmond. Our mayor is keenly interested and in fact, is a member of the planning committee. What makes it interesting is the fact that the mayor insists that the museum feature the Battle of Hong Kong and the ensuing years of prison life. We have already met with a design company from Quebec City and they have submitted preliminary plans which they have suggested as a title "Voyage au bout de l'enfer de 52 jeunes soldats de la région de New Richmond". In English, "Voyage to the depths of Hell for 52 young soldiers of the New Richmond area." If we can pry some money loose from whatever source or sources, we will be on our way. Another way to perpetuate the memory of that far-off calamity and those of us who served.

BOOKS

Georges(Blackie) Veerreault's book, French version only, so far, "Journal d'un prisonnier de guerre au Japon, 1941-1945" is still available, His son was recently here to promote the book. You can get it by sending \$ 25.00 to: Les Éditions Septentrion, 1300 Maguire, Sillery, QC, G1T 1Z3.

I have heard, through Lionel Hurd of a book written by Geoffrey Marston, entitled, "50 Personal WW II Stories by the Men and Women Who Were There" It sells for \$12.95, shipping and handling included, and may be obtained from JOMET PUBLISHING, Box 73037, Edmonton, AB, T5S 2C7. Mr. Marston claims that 10% of all sales will go to charity, and says, "thus I prefer The Hong Kong Veterans' Association of Canada, and The War Amps to be the recipients of my share."

When I was in Hong Kong last fall as a guest of Chrétien's trade mission, I had, as did all of us, the pleasure of meeting Jack Edwards, author of "Banzai, You Bastards" and bought a copy of his book. If you have a collection of books on the war with Japan, this book is a valuable addition to your library.

VARIA

I met Charlie Brady at a Legion Service Officers' meeting in Verdun last month. Somehow he had got wind of the fact that my daughter, Nancy, is president of our local Legion Branch #172. He insisted that I mention it in the newsletter. Well, to please Charlie, (and me), here it is. First lady president, first non-veteran, of Br.#172.

A while ago, our local weekly newspaper published a list of Hong Kong Veterans who had enlisted from the Gaspé. The list, however, in spite of meaning well, and providing a service to us, was lacking a few names. In trying to straighten it out I became hopelessly entangled and decided to forget it until I can get my hands on an official list.

TRIVIA

What is a crick? The noise a Japanese camera makes.

Ogden Nash, an American poet famous for his word play, wrote the following:

A turtle lives 'twixt plated decks
Which practically conceals its sex
It's very clever of the turtle
In such a fix to be so fertile.

Also from Ogden Nash:

Go clothe your nether limbs in pants
Yours is the choice, my sweeting.
You look divine as you advance;
Have you seen yourself retreating?

Another poet:

Mary Jones took her skates upon the ice to frisk
Now wasn't she a foolish girl, her little * ?

YOUR EXECUTIVE

This is a list of your executive officers as elected at our last annual general meeting in Fredericton, September 3, 1994. All things being equal, they will remain in office until elections take place again at the 1996 annual meeting.

Honourary President; Lionel Hurd

Honourary Vice-President; Vacant since the death of Ian Breakey

President: Denzil Firth

First Vice-President: Oswald Clark

Second Vice-President: Arnold Ross

Treasurer: Harold Englehart

Secretary: Philip Doddridge

Membership Chairman: Lawrence Rattie

Directors: Alex Archibald, Joseph Bujold, Lionel Hurd, Reginald Law, Lloyd Doull.

Regional Directors: Paul Dallain, Arley Enright, Richard Keyes, Henry Lyons, Milton MacDonald, Laurie MacKay, Leonard Wood, Mrs. Yolande Ross.

IN CLOSING

This letter is becoming a bit too personal. I warned you that that would happen away back when, if you don't give me grist for the mill. So, please, I need more input from you. At the same time, thanks again to all of you who took the trouble to write to me.

That's all for now. Be good to each other, and may God bless.

Philip

OTTAWA IN AUGUST