

HONG KONG VETERANS' ASSOCIATION QUEBEC MARITIMES BRANCH

BANJO GOSSIP NEWSLETTER 5.2 BAMBOO TELEGRAPH
DECEMBER, 1997

Here we are again. Another Christmas. Fifty-six years after that disastrous day in 1941. I can still see the tears on Major Parker's face as he counted the ragged remnants of "D" Company as we struggled back up the cliff to Stanley Fort after being unceremoniously chased out of the graveyard at Stanley Village. That was "D" Company's worst day. We lost most of our comrades in that fiasco. It still hurts to think of the futility of the whole undertaking, but it's too late to dwell on what might have been. Now we are holding hands with the Japanese and Hong Kong belongs to China. Wierd.

LAST POST

Since the last newsletter I sadly report the passing of the following comrades:

BC Branch: ALEX COLVIN, ROGER ZANE, BOB MANCHESTER.

Alberta-Saskatchewan Branch:

STEVE KASHTON

Ontario Branch: JAMES COURT

Que-Maritimes Branch. CLIFFORD FLANAGAN
EDWARD BUJOLD

Somehow I missed the news that Comrade Clifford and Comrade Ed had died. Their deaths would have been reported in the September letter. My apologies to their families for that oversight.

As well, we learn of the death of Mrs Isabel Mann, widow of Weston Mann, and Mildred Birmingham, friend of the late Quentin Mulroony

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

BIOKI

I don't have much to report in this space. I hear that Charlie Chesser has been having knee trouble, but Henry Lyons tells me that he is out and around a bit. Reg Law was afraid he would lose his driving permit on account of his eyesight, but they tell me that it is OK for now. Charlie Campbell is still going. Henry Lyons spent a short time in the hospital with a lung problem. Arnold Ross has been down with flu. I have been trying to get in touch with Charlie Brady, but without success. What else? We all have problems of one kind or another.

REUNION 98

Derrill Henderson and Lucette Muir have volunteered to take on the heavy work in organizing the reunion next summer. Ossie Clark has got things moving and Charlie Gordon (Honorary Member) is

helping out as well. So far I can tell you that the Reunion will be held on August 13, 14, 15, at the Hotel le President, in Sherbrooke. There are 80 rooms available at a daily rate of \$64.95 double, \$54.95 single, and \$90.00 for a suite. Breakfast is served in the hotel at a cost of \$4.00 and there are a number of restaurants nearby. Also, for shoppers, the Price Club warehouse store is right across King Street from the hotel. More later.

APOLOGY

1. In the last newsletter I reported the demise of Laurie MacKay. We had it on good authority in Toronto that Laurie had left us. Imagine my surprise (and delight) when I received a phone call from Laurie to tell me that he is still "on this side". So, Laurie, my apologies, and along with all of us, glad you're still on this side.

2. In the last letter also I reported on the re-organization of the National Council and listed Ken Ewing as secretary-treasurer. Not completely so. Derrill Henderson is the secretary and Ken is the treasurer.

3. While I am in the apologizing frame of mind I may as well comment on the reason for this letter coming out a bit late. The postal strike has delayed a lot of things, and in our case, a little more than usual. Lawrence, who receives most of our donations, news of departed comrades, etc., sends me a report on the first of the month. I have to wait for his letter before I can complete this one.

CORRESPONDENCE

Before the postal strike I received some mail which I'll report here-- in no particular order: from Lionel Speller, who keeps me up to date on happenings, with newspaper clippings and salty remarks; from Derrill Henderson, both by e-mail and by regular post, always pertinent information; from Jim and Mary Darrah with newspaper clippings of the reunion of the Maritimes-Gaspesian Branch; from Lawrence Rattie, with routine information; from Kathleen Mann (Glenford); from Marcel Ouellet (through Lawrence) telling of his medical condition; from Mavis Frost (Ken) with questions about donations; from Laurie MacKay (through Lawrence) assuring us that he is still here; from Nellie Laing (John) asking about the gravestone disk for HK Veterans; from Walter Francis (son of Earl) reporting the his father is in the Camp Hill Veterans' Memorial Building in Halifax, and

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enquiring about the HK Disk; from Elmer Denison with comments on the newsletter; from Wilbert Lester informing me that he has moved into the Wales Home in Richmond, Quebec; from Dorothy Soper with membership dues and a donation to our museum; from Harold Englehart with routine business; from Bob Clayton with comments on the reunion; from Glenford Gregoire with a donation to our museum; from Audrey Murray (Matt) with a donation in memory of Matt; from Alice Gallie (Phil) with comments on the poem I included in the last newsletter; from Mrs Iona Jones (sister of Lorne Newell, killed in Hong Kong) with comments on the memorial to Lorne in the Richmond Legion; from Joyce Clarkson Harmon with greetings from California; from Bonnie Vincent with season's greetings to all of us; from Ken Pifher with newspaper clippings and season's greetings; from Catherine Irving with season's greetings; from Bob and Jessie Clayton, a Christmas card and note. Flash recommends a book called "Canada's Glory, Battles that Forged a Nation". I can't give you the name of the publishing house but the author's name is Bishop. You might want to watch for it. Flash says that the account of the Battle of Hong Kong is well recounted and well worth reading. "Makes you proud", says Flash.

DONATIONS

The mail people finally allowed Lawrence's report to come through and I gratefully acknowledge the following donations:

From the ladies: Mrs. Lucette Muir, Ms Bonnie Vincent, Mrs. Eva Robertson, Mrs. Stella Parkes, Mrs. Sheila McKinnon, Mrs. Jean Rose, Mrs. Catherine Irving, Mrs. Barbara Hardy, Mrs. Joyce Clarkson, Mrs. Joyce Finn, Mrs. Rolande Miller, Mrs. May Price, Mrs. Sylvia Lockwood, Mrs. Annie Nolan, Mrs. Marie-Ange Pitre, Mrs. Barbara Strang, Mrs. Angela Jessop, Mrs. Nellie Laing, Mrs. Hazel Ladds, Mrs. Gertrude Dow, Mrs. Beryl Kaine, Mrs. Gladys McCarron, Mrs. Irene Firlotte, Mrs. Audrey Murray, Mrs. Elva Steele

From the men: Milton MacDonald, Lionel LeCouffe, Thomas Jones, Elmer Denison, Everest Lawrence, Leonard Wood, Edward Campbellton, Paul Dallain, Charles Dallain, Murray Stickles, Marcel Oullet, Douglas Martin, Robert Jessop, Robert MacNaughton, Charles Thompson, Alfred Mills, Samuel Disensi, Laurie MacKay, John Levitt, Bernard Thompson, Robert Clayton, Lloyd Doull,

Orlay Benwell, Gerard Bisson, Edwin Rodrigues, John LeBelle, Dr. S.M. Banfil, Bliss Cole, Lucien Brunet, George MacDonell, Fraser Firth, Denis Rioux, Clarence Hunt, John Duguay, Leandre LeBlanc, Ray Sauson.

If any others should come in later, they will be reported in the next newsletter.

Donations in memorium;

Glenford Gregoire in memory of Glenford Mann and Joseph Bujold,

Mrs. Betty Firth in memory of Glenford Mann and Joseph Bujold

Clifford McDavid in memory of Glenford Mann and Eugene Matchett

Mrs. Dorothy Pollock in memory of Glenford Mann

Mrs. Agathat St. Onge in memory of husband John

Mrs. Sylvia Lockwood in memory of Mrs. Dolly Dobb

Mrs. Bridget LeBlanc in memory of her father, Clifford Flanagan

Mrs. Nancy Welsh in memory of her husband

Mrs. Myrtle MacNaughton in memory of her husband

Mrs. Velma Nicholson in memory of her husband

Jack Delaney in memory of his brother Maurice

Mrs. Gladys McCarron in memory of Joseph Bujold

Mrs. Audrey Murray in memory of husband Matt

Jamie and Jennifer in memory of grandfather Clifford Flanagan.

MEMBERSHIP

Lawrence reports paid-up membership stands at 152. Please make Lawrence's life easier by sending in your dues for 1998 if you haven't already done so; 508 Thorncrest, Dorval, QC, H9P 2M6

A SMILE OR TWO

A married couple went to the hospital to have their baby delivered. Upon their arrival, the doctor said that he had invented a machine that would transfer a portion of the labour pain to the father. They agreed to try it. The doctor set the control at 10% saying that it would probably be all that the father could stand. But as the labour progressed, the husband felt fine, and told the doctor to bump it up a notch. The doctor adjusted the machine to 20%, and still the husband felt OK. After checking his pulse and blood pressure, they agreed to put it up to 50%. Still OK. The husband insisted that they transfer 100% of the pain. The husband felt fine and the mother delivered a healthy baby with no pain at all.

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They were happy with the results until they went home and found the mailman dead on their front porch.

Can you stand another one?

A pirate walked into a bar. (wooden leg, hook for a hand, and a black eyepatch).

The bartender said, "What happened to you? What about that wooden leg?"

"Well", said the pirate, "we were in a battle at sea and a cannon ball took my leg off. But it's OK now. The doctor fixed me up."

"Well, what about the hook?"

"We were in another battle and I got my hand cut off in a sword fight. The doctor fixed me up with this hook."

"Oh yeah", said the bartender, "what about the eyepatch?"

"One day I was out on deck and a bird flew over and dropped a load right in my eye".

"Nuts", said the bartender, "you couldn't lose an eye that way."

"Well, I wasn't used to the hook yet..."

VIDEO

You may have seen the film "Lost over Burma" which was aired on November 11 on the CBC. It is the account of the experiences of the team of Canadians who went to find the remains of a supply plane that had crashed in Burma during World War II. The crash remained a -mystery until very recently when a native found a watch in the jungle. The watch was identified as belonging to one of the Canadian airmen on the plane. It is a story worth seeing and it can be purchased by phoning 1-800-267-7710. The cost?

I don't know. I haven't asked for a copy. It is on my list of things to do.

Today, at a friend's house I watched a video by the Normandy Foundation called "The Final Reunion" It tells the story through interviews with three Canadians and a German who were in the Normandy Invasion. I have asked my friend to get a copy for me and will have more information later.

SOLDIER

In the June 13 issue of the Sherbrooke Record there appeared a story from the North Nova Scotia Highlanders Memory Club, Fiftieth Anniversary, submitted by Phyllis Marsh. It finished off with a

poem which I think is worth repeating here. It is called, simply,

SOLDIER

I was that which others did not want to be

I went where others feared to go

And did what others feared to do.

I asked nothing from those who gave nothing

And reluctantly accepted

The thought of eternal loneliness...

Should I fail.

I have seen the face of terror;

Felt the stinging cold of fear;

And enjoyed the sweet taste of a moment's love.

I have cried, pained, and hoped...

But most of all

I have lived times others would say were best forgotten.

At least some day I will be able to say that I was proud of what I was

A soldier.

SLAVE LABOUR

By the time you read this, you will probably know more than I can tell you now about the ongoing struggle for compensation for slave labour at the hands of the Japanese. For the last several weeks rumours have been heating up over the possibility that the Canadian Government will do something about the claim. The December 13 issue of the Ottawa Citizen carried a front page story with a colour picture of Roger Cyr, in which hopes are raised for a final settlement. I know that there are mixed opinions as to this method of settling the problem. I, for one, will accept the money gladly, but I would prefer to have it come directly from Japan with a formal apology. (Fat chance) Let us hope that we can write "Finis" to the whole affair.

If you want to say a word of thanks, remember Roger Cyr, Cliff Chadderton, Brian Forbes, especially, and a host of other support persons.

WASURERU-NAI

In today's mail I received the November issue of the Commemorative Association's newsletter. I must say that I am impressed with the format and content. It makes me feel inferior to know that I have all the tools to produce a similar one, but I guess I'll have to learn how to operate my toys a little better. Derrill has recruited the services of Len Cotton as editor of the newsletter. I take my hat off to him for a

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job well done. Len's e-mail
address--cotton1@cyberus.ca

There are some bits of information I'll pass on to
those of you who don't receive Wasureru-nai.

First, the monument badges are available and can be
obtained from Derrill Henderson at 75 Priam Way,
Nepean, ON, K2H 8S7, E-mail
...dh468@freenet.carleton.ca. The cost is \$43.75,
taxes included, plus \$2.00 shipping.

Second, if you want the HK Bar for your miniature
medals, Derrill also has a limited supply.

Third, Derrill reports that 48 of the taped interviews
made in various centres are now ready. Presumably
these will be sent out soon. If you have already been
interviewed and recounted your experiences to
A. Neil Robinson, director of legal services for
Veterans' Affairs, you can expect to get a copy of
your interview in the near future. Also more
interviews are planned, so watch for further
announcements

PENSIONS

As everyone knows, the struggle to have the
pensions of every last Hong Kong Vet adjusted to
100% has been in the works for some time. Harry
Atkinson has laboured long and hard for the
successful conclusion to the problem. Now word from
the administration of the National Association
affirms that the issue is being looked at again and
holds out some hope for success. Derrill Henderson
has agreed to act as Harry's understudy as Pensions
and Welfare Officer, and has already been
introduced to the staff in Veterans' Affairs.

Bob Baker of Economics and Special Benefits
Program has sent me copies of the pension tables for
1998. There is an increase of 1.9%, based on the cost
of living index, effective January 1, 1998. Because
of their bulk it would be almost impossible to send
copies to everyone. However, if you have specific
questions, I would be glad to give you whatever the
pension tables reveal. In the meantime, with your
first cheque in the new year you will probably be
given an explanation pertinent to your case.
Bob also extends season's greetings to all

NEWSLETTERS

I have received copies of newsletters from the
BC, Alberta-Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Ontario
Branches. Their letters are always interesting and
informative and help to bind us together as the
strongest-knit veterans' organization in Canada. My
personal thanks to Lionel Speller of Victoria, Don
Nelson of Calgary, Angus McRitchie of Winnipeg,
and John Stroud of Toronto for their continued
efforts in keeping us informed.

AND IN CONCLUSION

I am a little bit rushed to get this letter done because
the office where I get it reproduced will be closed
down next week for the holidays. So I must get it
printed tomorrow or the next day. In the meantime,
on behalf of the Quebec-Maritimes Branch, its
executive committee, the directors and all the
members, I wish you all the best that can be had for
Christmas and the New Year
That's all for now, folks. Be good to each other and
may God bless.

Philip

Would you buy a used car from this man?

