

MERRY CHRISTMAS 53 YEARS LATER

HONG KONG VETERANS' ASSOCIATION QUEBEC MARITIMES BRANCH BANJO GOSSIP NEWSLETTER 6.2 BAMBOO TELEGRAPH DECEMBER, 1998

It's Christmas again, and at last count, 348 of us are still here to celebrate (??) the passing of another year.

During the past year we crept ever closer to some of the objectives that have been hanging in the balance for a long time.

Harry Atkinson's fight for 100% pensions has taken a new turn, with the involvement of the War Amps.

Our Patron, Cliff Chadderton's, unyielding pressure and the active participation of Ms Faye Lavelle of the War Amps bring hope of a final settlement of the petition.

The slave labour question is still very much alive. Again, our Patron has used every means in his bag of many tricks to bring the claim to a successful conclusion, and his optimistic attitude points to good news for all.

During the year, of course, we suffered the loss of more of our comrades. In the LAST POST section of this letter I'll list all who passed on in 1998. Let me just say at this point, that their loss grieves us painfully, and leaves us to wonder who will be the next to go. Morbid thought.

Your Executive met twice over the past year. Once in New Richmond in June, and once in Lennoxville in November. Our secretary, Bob Barter, has kept our records intact, Harold Englehart, Treasurer, has managed our money well, Lawrence Rattie, our membership chairman, reports 140 paid up as of November 9.

At our November meeting, our Honourary President, Lionel Hurd, who is also a

director of the Branch, was present to lend his usual advice. Lionel is one of our oldest members, and age does not seem to have slowed down his faculties.

Ossie Clark reported on the success of the 1998 reunion, and his team was present to supply the details.

1999 REUNION

The 1999 National Convention and Reunion was to take place in Calgary, but something went awry in the planning stages and the Committee had to abandon plans. Therefore, at the National Council meeting in Winnipeg in October, the decision was made to join the Quebec-Maritimes Branch at our intended reunion in Sherbrooke. So, when that idea was floated before the Q-M Reunion Committee, they agreed immediately. However, for a number of reasons, the National Convention will be held in Granby, Quebec, in mid-August, 1999. The hotel, Le Castel, I'm told has already been booked.

Le Castel is the hotel where we had our reunion several years ago.

Granby is about half way between Montreal and Sherbrooke so will be more easily accessible for people arriving by air at Montreal. Much more later.

LAST POST

At our meeting in Winnipeg, President Roger reported that Hong Kong Veterans still alive number 353.

They are distributed as follows:

Nova Scotia RRC	6
New Brunswick RRC	28
Quebec 63 RRC, 1 WG, 3 Bde	67
Ontario 68 RRC, 14 WG, 5Bde	87
Manitoba, 60 WG	60
Saskatchewan ,8WG	8
Alberta , 4 RRC, 20 WG	24
B. C.,9 RRC, 38 WG, 13 Bde	60
USA, 7 RRC, 5WG, 1Bde	13

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That makes a total of 185 RRC, 146 WG, and 22 Bde, 353 in all, 351 when you deduct the two mentioned above. Now down to 348.

Since the last newsletter we say goodbye to DOUGLAS MARTIN, MATTHEW SANFORD, ALFRED HUNT, LEONARD DOIRON,

Wives and widows departed since our last letter include: MRS. HAZEL COULL(JACK), MRS. MURIEL JONES,(TOM), MRS. SADIE WILLETT(PERCY), MRS. GERTRUDE DOW(ELWOOD), MRS. WILLIAM RIDEOUT, MRS EVELYN SANFORD

In 1998, in addition to the four mentioned above, the Q-M Branch lost the following: Chris Webb, Everest Lawrence, Howard Ward, Leopold Leblanc, Arlie Enright, Charlie Campbell, Rosaire Dorion, Leonard Wood, Laurie MacKay, Edward Chenell, Clifford Flanagan, for a total of fifteen.

From other Branches we get the names of: Fred Abrahams, Thomas Blackwood, William Clarke, Alex Colvin, James Court, Albert Cox, Charles Dicks, Stanley Edgar, Stanley Gold, Gordon Hollingsworth, Steve Kashton, Michael Kudlovich, Bob Manchester, Angus McRitchie, Leo Miller, Roy Pottinger, George Robinson, Reginald Schofield, Donald VanClief, Len Watson, Nelson West, Roger Zane, who died from September 1997 to October, 1998.

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

REMEMBRANCE DAY IN OTTAWA

This year Hong Kong Veterans were to be especially honoured at the parade in the National Capital, including a group of twelve leading the parade to the Cenotaph. It didn't work out that way. A self important and arrogant parade marshall, at the last minute, too late to change it, put our group further back, and although Harry Atkinson

acted as marker, the rest of the Hong Kong Veterans were not in the front of the column as promised. Comrade Roger says, "Imagine for a minute, me standing with the Governor General, telling him to keep an eye on the leading four ranks on parade. and, discovering to my utter dismay that our boys were scattered among all the other veterans making up the first squad."

As it turned out, however, when the parade halted in front of the Cenotaph, the head of the column had gone past, and we were directly in front, the best spot, because the Governor General, the Prime Minister, and the Cenotaph party were not fifty feet from us. We got most news coverage as well, because the TV cameras moved back and forth in front of us all the time.

HK Veterans present were: Larry Stebbe, George Peterson, Al Babin, Fred Chapman, Ken Ewing, Lawrence Rattie, Harold Englehart, Bob Barter, Arnold Ross, Albert Russell, Pat Poirier, and Phil Doddridge, and, of course, Roger took the salute with the Governor General in front of the main entrance to the Parliament Buildings.

A very moving experience.

CANCER ALERT

We have a recent report that the United States government has passed legislation which will consider the cases of ex-POWs who were close to the detonation of the atom bombs in Japan in 1945. I understand that if a POW was within 75 miles of Hiroshima or 150 miles of Nagasaki when the bombs exploded, or if they passed through one of the areas after the blast, they were in danger of contracting one or more of thirteen kinds of cancer, especially a type of leukemia. If you had a similar experience near either Hiroshima or Nagasaki, please get in touch with Derrill Henderson, Harry Atkinson, or me, so that a list can be prepared if and when the necessity arises.

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The Canadian Government may be persuaded to follow the lead of the USA.

DONATIONS

The following people have generously added to our coffers, and, as usual, we express our thanks and promise to use it wisely for the benefit of our members.

Mrs. Annie Nolan, Mrs. Florence Hawke, Mrs. Sadie Willett, Mrs. Rolande Miller, Mrs. Ruth Kellas, Mrs. Cecile Pelletier, Mrs. Florence Drover, Mrs. Marjorie Kennedy, Mrs. Dorothy Davidson, Mrs. Louise Coleman, Mrs. Stella Parkes, Mrs. Irene Firlotte, Mrs. Sylvia Lockwood, Mrs. Elsie Mills, Mrs. Joan Gillis, Mrs. Irene Clark.

Napoleon Leblanc, Westley Hamilton, Jean Lalime, Leandre Leblanc, Charles Thompson, Kenneth Court, Bliss Cole, Gerard Bisson, Lloyd Cole, Alfred Mills, Leonard Doiron, Robert McNaughton, Elmer Denison, Martin Banfill, Thomas Jones, Glenford Gregoire, James MacMillan, Samuel Disensi, Clarence Hunt, Edwin Rodrigues, John Duguay, Edward Hamilton, Alfred Hunt, Lloyd Doull, Wayne Birmingham.

IN MEMORIUM

Mrs Alma Wood in memory of husband Leonard

Mrs Nancy Welch in memory of husband Ernest

Mrs Audrey Murray in memory of husband Matthew

Mrs. Rita Bujold in memory of husband Joseph

Mrs. Eva Robertson in memory of husband Francis

Mrs. Agatyha St. Onge in memory of husband John

Jack Delaney in memory of brother Morris.

CORRESPONDENCE

From Lionel Speller, copies of correspondence relating to item listed above,

titled CANCER ALERT, also mug shots of POWs in Japan. Thanks, Lionel. From L. Guylick (daughter of Gus Cyr) regarding the newsletter; from Frank Corbett (an honorary member who financed the refurbishing of the Royal Rifles Plaque which hangs in the Drill Hall in Quebec City) with greetings; from Flash Clayton, a long letter. Flash and Jessie are living in Mississauga. Flash is having circulatory problems and is in danger of losing a foot. I'm sure he would be glad to hear from you, 3100 Kirwin Ave, Penthouse 7, Mississauga, ON, L5A 3G6. From Hazel Martin (Doug), thanks for the wreath at Doug's funeral, from Lloyd Doull, a couple of notes, one telling me about brother Bill now living in BC, who has undergone a serious operation; from Neil Darrah with a couple of pictures taken at the Maritimes-Gaspesian reunion; from Tom Jones with news of his wife's death, from Bonnie Vincent, a nice Christmas card with greetings and good wishes for all, from Charlie and Cecile Thompson, a nice card, from Bill Bradley, our Honourary Vice-President, thanking us once again for the Reunion in Sherbrooke. Bill is still bothered that his complete "uniform" had been left behind and his appearance on parade was not up to his standards. (He can be assured that his presence was the important thing). He would also like to have it known that in any picture of the officers of the RRC, he does not appear because he was on a course in Kingston when the official pictures of the Regiment were taken. He asks that anyone who has a copy of the picture, please write in, "Absent: W.B. Bradley, Lieut."

MANITOBA NEWSLETTER

Angus McRitchie, who wrote and published the newsletter for the Manitoba Branch for a number of years, died last winter, leaving a void in the organization. Now Carol Hadley,

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who is Borg Agerback's daughter, and an active member of the Commemorative Association, has taken over responsibility of the office of Secretary of the Branch and is doing the newsletter as well. I have received the first issue of the newsletter and I am much impressed. It is packed with news for the Manitoba members. Bravo Carol. Your contribution will receive a huge welcome.

THE LIGHTER SIDE

In an attempt to cut down on airplane hijacking, one enterprising airline recently hired two psychiatrists as special security officers. The two men were instructed to arrest anyone who showed signs of mental instability. Within minutes of their first spell of duty, one of the psychiatrists arrested the other. (From Ben Wick's *BOOK OF LOSERS*.)

Some "Funny Epitaphs" from *A PLEASURY OF WITTICISMS AND WORD PLAY*.

Here lies the clay of Mitchel Coots
Whose feet yet occupy his boots.
His soul is gone- we know not where
It landed, neither do we care.
He slipped a joker up his sleeve
With vile intention to deceive;
And when detected, tried to jerk
His gun, but didn't get his work
In with sufficient swiftness, which
Explains the presence here of Mitch.

And over the grave of a dentist:
Stranger, approach this spot with gravity!
John Brown is filling his last cavity.

One more, from Sargentville, Maine:
Beneath these stones do lie
Back to back, my wife and I!
When the last trumpet the air shall fill,
If she gets up, I'll just lie still.

VIGNETTES OF LIFE IN SHAM SHUI PO

Hugh Anderson was a Grenadier who had been a labour organizer. His head was bald,

and he had scars on his bare scalp that he would have us believe were the result of encounters with "those reactionary bastards" affiliated with management. Hugh was also a bridge player, and one day in the hospital we were playing between the bunks, north and south seated on the bunks and east and west on small stools between the beds. Reg Taylor was watching when suddenly an American fighter plane came over at low altitude and loosed a burst of machine gun fire at the docks across the cove from the camp. The action was so sudden that everyone dived for the floor. Reg, a little more skittish, perhaps than the rest of us, dived under a bed, and in so doing hooked his foot in Hughie's stool and dumped him, A over K into the corner. Hughie came up with a roar, fists clenched, and ready to punch out the "reactionary" that had abused his dignity!

FROM LAWRENCE

Lawrence wishes us to know that there are 150 paid-up members for 1997-98. He also has a supply of pins, etc., which you can purchase from him at his address: 508 Thorncrest, Dorval, QC, H9P2M6. Maple Leaf pins, \$75.00, Lapel pins, \$30.00, Charms, \$30.00. Blazer crests, \$6.00, Beret crests, \$8.00

FROM ROGER

Our National President has asked me to send on to all, his Christmas wishes and the best of everything for the New Year. He thanks everyone for their support over the past 12 months.

FROM ME

In the limited space left, let me wish one and all the best of the season. This is my sixth year of doing the newsletter, and I have received the best of co-operation from all. It makes the job much more pleasant. My sincere thanks.

Be good to each other and may God Bless.
Philip

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