

To you from failing hands

Hong Kong Veterans Association

Quebec-Maritimes Branch
Banjo Gossip Newsletter 8.4
Bamboo Telegraph
June, 2001

JEAN NAPOLEON ROGER CYR

Roger is dead. After years of courageously fighting the dreaded disease, he finally succumbed to cancer on May 26, 2001. His leadership over the years, his dedication to his fellow Hong Kong Veterans, will be remembered as long as there is a Hong Kong Veteran alive.

Roger's part in achieving the settlement of the claim for slave labour is only one of his efforts for which we should be grateful. One had to admire his ease of expressing himself in French and in English, and his mastery of both languages served him well, in his chosen vocation as well as in his untiring efforts on behalf of his fellow HK Vets.

He was laid to rest in Ottawa on May 30 after a very moving ceremony conducted by his son, The Reverend Father Terrence Cyr. Hong Kong Veterans in attendance were as follows: Arnold Ross, Lance Ross, Bob Barter, Flash Clayton, Al Babin, Phil Lawlis, Harry Atkinson, Oswald Clark, Dempsey Syvret, Bruce Cadoret, Ken Ewing, Phil Doddridge.

Roger was 79 years old.

I am proud to be able to say that I have known Roger since we were children in the small town where we grew up. For both of us, joining the Royal Rifles was our first

venture into the big world. Since returning home in 1945, Roger and I have been in contact over the years, both socially and in the interest of Hong Kong Vets. We will remember him.

FAREWELL

Comrades and friends of the Quebec-Maritimes Branch, this will be the last issue of the Banjo Gossip. After eight years of putting together this little column of information on our members, some trivia, some "humour", some nostalgia, some laughter, and some tears, it is time to close up shop.

In August, the various branches of the Hong Kong Veterans Association across Canada will be dissolved, and the duties will be taken over by the Commemorative Association. After that change has taken effect, the plan is to issue a newsletter that will report on all activities across Canada and our members in the States and elsewhere.

Ian Doull, son of Lloyd and Peggy, will be in charge of the newsletter, with contributions, I expect, from members everywhere.

From what I have seen from other contributors, and from what I hear about plans for the letter, I believe that we can expect a fine publication, a newsletter that we can be proud of, and one that will carry the news of all our comrades and members from coast to coast.

REUNION 2001

This will be a combined (with the HKVCA) reunion/meeting/convention, taking place in Winnipeg on August 15 to 19 at the Holiday Inn Airport West.

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You have already received the forms and schedules pertinent to the event. I hope you plan to attend, since the reunion is a most important milestone in the life (?) of the Hong Kong Veterans Association of Canada.

The "turn over" ceremonies will take place at this reunion, and forever after we shall place our destiny in the hands of our children. That is as it should be.

I am not sure that our organization, the Hong Kong Veterans Association, is unique in this method of closing one chapter and opening another, but I haven't heard of any other of the Veterans' organizations that have done it this way. Certainly, we have gone about it in our own way, feeling our way along, and arriving at what I firmly believe will be the answer to the question, "What happens when all the Hong Kong Vets are gone?"

Let's give the H K Veterans Commemorative Association our undivided support.

SURVEY

You will remember that back in March, I sent out a letter and questionnaire asking you to register any objection to the proposed "turn over" (I can't think of a better word) of duties and responsibilities to the HKVCA. I have received only one negative response, and knowing the member who sent it, I know that he did it only as a token of loyalty and support of the old regime. Thank you, Comrades, for your input.

SOME FOOD FOR THOUGHT

- He who laughs last thinks slowest.
- Everyone has a photographic memory, but some don't have a film.

- Those who live by the sword get shot by those who don't.

- I just got lost in thought. It was unfamiliar territory.

- Despite the cost of living, have you noticed how it remains so popular?

The Rotarian, March 2001

LAST POST

I sadly report the loss of more of our comrades.

LEONARD SEABORN, WG

STANLEY LLOYD, RRC

CLARENCE (BUSTER) HUNT, RRC

BORG AGERBAK, WG

FREDERICK GARD WG

RAY SAUSON, RRC

ROGER CYR, RRC

Also, NELLIE LAING, widow of John Laing, Halifax.

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

- Derrill Henderson reports that Alphonse Mills underwent a by-pass operation, and came through with flying colours.
- We hear also that Willy (Bill) Hickie is not well. He has suffered a series of strokes. Wife Annie hopes that he will be fit enough to celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary and his 84th birthday on August 14th.
- Milton MacDonald has been ill of late, and has had to move to a nursing home in North Hatley.

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DONATIONS

From Marcel, we hear of the following donations:

Marjorie Kennedy, Arnold Hunt, Randolph Benwell, Paul Dallain, Annie Nolan, John McGreevy, Lloyd Doull., Margaret Doull, Fraser Firth, Walter Gray, Raoul Tremblay, Sylvia Lockwood in memory of Lionel Hurd,

Clarice Phillips in memory of Lionel Hurd
Elsie Stoddart in Memory of husband Grant.

Thank you, comrades, your generosity is appreciated.

MEMORIAL CROSS

Is there any need to mention again, the availability of the Cross to eligible widows? Well, since I have mentioned it, and you know the criteria, if you think you are eligible, get in touch with Derrill at 75 Priam Way, Nepean, ON, K2H 8S7.

MALTBY'S HONG KONG DISPATCH.

If you have internet access, and are interested in information about the report of Maj.-Gen. Maltby's allegations that Canadian soldiers in the defence of Hong Kong were slackers, you should go to <http://www.wlu.ca/~wwwmsds/341hongkong.htm>.

There you will find copies of correspondence exchanged between Lt-Col Nicholson, Deputy Director of the Historical Section, DND, Ottawa, and Brig. J. Price, concerning the "misunderstanding" of the conduct of the Canadian forces after the

Japanese invasion.

One excerpt of a letter to Col. Nicholson from Brig. Price, rings a loud bell. Quote: "On the Eastern Brigade front, which included the Stanley Peninsula, the Royal Rifles and one company of the Hong Kong Volunteer Defence Force were the only troops who had fought continuously day and night, without rest, since the landing on the 17th and were still carrying all the fighting. By the 21st they had been reduced in fighting strength and by the 23rd to a strength of around 500 all ranks.(It might be interesting to note that when troops in this sector were marched out of Stanley Fort as Prisoners of War, they numbered over 2000.)" End of quote.

I can add a personal note to that. When "D" Coy was ordered the clear out "15 Japs" (ha ha) from Stanley Village on Christmas Day, 1941, there was a vigorous soccer game going on at the playing field at the Fort. Need I add that there were no Canadians playing?

Another quote from the same letter:

"In my opinion Brig. Wallis' report is not to be relied upon. He was then in such a state of great nervous excitement and I believe his mental state was such that he was incapable of collected judgement or of efficient leadership. The insinuation in his report is that Brig. Home suggested a complete and final withdrawal of the Canadian force from the fighting. This is untrue, and so I told General Maltby." End of quote.

As footnote, I might add that this is taken from Canadian Military History Volume 2,

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Number 2, Autumn 1993, pp.11 -116.

Frank Corbett, a supporter of the HK Vets, sends me information on a book by Roy MacLaren, "Canadians Behind Enemy Lines"

It deals with the experience of Canadian espionage agents behind enemy lines, and, according to reviews by the *Vancouver Sun*, the *Globe and Mail*, and the *Canadian Historical Review*, promises to be an exciting account of wartime spying and resistance against the enemy in Europe and Asia.

The University of British Columbia 1981
ISBN 0-7748-0147-6 (bound)
0-7748-0185-9 (pbk)

Charlie Gordon writes to say that their recent fund raiser for the Army Navy and Airforce Hut in Lennoxville resulted in a substantial amount for repairs to the roof. Charlie sends regards to all.

Lionel Speller sends a newspaper clipping which tells of a right wing group in Japan that heaps praise on Hirohito and his attitude in World War II, and wishes "to reclaim a bit of Japan's heritage from the western values it embraced after the War."

I suppose that is to be expected. There was also a resurgence of Naziism in Germany after the war.

- Two ladies met at the Pearly Gates. One asked the other, "What did you die from?"
- "I froze to death. How about you?"
- "I suspected my husband of having

CORRESPONDENCE

an affair, so I rushed home from work. I rushed upstairs. Nobody there. I ran downstairs. Nobody. I ran to the basement. Nobody there. I rushed upstairs again and collapsed with a heart attack."

The other one said, "Why didn't you look in the freezer. We'd both still be alive."

ANNIVERSARY

Hats off and a hearty congratulations to Fred and Irene Mason on completing 60 years of wedded bliss. May they see many more!

As unto the bow the cord is

So unto the man is woman,

Though she bends him, she obeys him,

Though she draws him, yet she follows,

Useless each without the other.

The Song of Hiawatha, H.W. Longfellow

FAMOUS LAST WORDS

- *This will be a short meeting.*
- *I don't burn. I tan.*
- *We'll only stay five minutes.*
- *This won't hurt at all.*
- *Don't worry. You can't miss it.*
- *When the gas tank reads empty, there's always a gallon or two left.*

ON SECOND THOUGHT

We all know that the early bird gets the worm, but sometimes it's the second mouse that gets the cheese.

The Rotarian, June, 2001

That will be all. Be good to each other and may God Bless.

To you from failing hands

Philip

Sayonara

