

Nothing in life is so exhilarating as to be shot at without result. Winston Churchill

HONG KONG VETERANS'
ASSOCIATION
QUEBEC MARITIMES BRANCH
BANJO GOSSIP NEWSLETTER 6.3
BAMBOO TELEGRAPH
MARCH, 1999

At long last and with heartfelt thanks to our Patron, Clifford Chadderton and his dedicated staff at War Amputations Canada, Roger Cyr, Harry Atkinson, and a host of others, who never let go, never gave up the fight, and stayed on to the end, we got settlement for our years of slave labour. Special mention should be made of the efforts of Derrill Henderson, who assembled, revised, and submitted to the VAC, lists of widows whose names should have been included, and chased up cases that were irregularly handled; for instance, some six or so HK Vets somehow had their names listed with recipients of the Burma Star. It is hoped that through his efforts, all eligible widows will eventually get their due. It is a bittersweet victory. How much more gratifying it would have been to have received the money with a gold-engraved apology from Emperor Akihito. That is something, comrades, we will never get. Let us hope that the the war is over now, and we can sail into our personal sunsets with less bitterness in our souls.

LAST POST

This is probably the best place in the letter to mourn the loss of our comrades who died since our last letter. An unkind fate took them just as we received compensation for slave labour. What they, and most of us could have done with that \$24,000 years ago when we really needed it!

JOHN LAVOIE, KENNETH COURT,
BILL HERRING, R.N. GRIEVES,
LEONARD COTTON,
WALTER BILLSON, GERALD MABLEY

This is an extraordinary payment, to extraordinary individuals, who suffered extraordinary hardship. *Fred J. Mifflin, Minister of Veterans' Affairs*

MRS. RITA SYVRET, MRS. ILA
MEREDITH,
God of our fathers, known of old,
Lord of our far-flung battle line,
Beneath whose awful Hand we hold
Dominion over palm and pine-
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget- lest we forget.
Rudyard Kipling's Recessional

NEWSLETTERS

Other Branches seem to be functioning well. Newsletters have been received from the Ontario Branch, the Manitoba Branch, the Alberta-Saskatchewan Branch, and the BC Branch. Thanks a lot, folks, your interests are our interests, and we love to hear from you.

ROGER CYR

Roger has aided his Hong Kong Comrades in many ways in his years of service. He has held many offices from president of the Q-M Branch, to Secretary of the National Council, and finally as President of the National Council.

Roger's long fight against the ravages of cancer, and his devoted care of his ailing wife, Loretta, coupled with the final victory in the long fight for slave labour compensation, has convinced him to lay down the mantle of leadership and retire to a well deserved rest.

I am sure that everyone in the Hong Kong family joins with me in wishing for Roger and Lo all the best that the future can provide.

CORRESPONDENCE

I have received a lot of correspondence, much of it concerning the award for slave labour. I am embarrassed that a number of you included me in their thanks for bringing the struggle to a close. Please believe that my input was, at best, minimal. All thanks

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should go to those already named in the introduction to this letter.

In no particular order, here is a list of people who took time to write. Thank you ever so much:

Gladys McCarron, (Maurice) Bob Dunlop, Cecile Pelletier (Algee) Lionel Speller, Ed Rodrigues wrote a long letter expressing his thanks to all, e-mail from Raymond Smith in Florida, Aubrey Flegg, Flash Clayton, Monica Royea, Bill Bradley with greetings to all, Joyce Clarkeson (Kenneth, Amy Smith (Elmer) Don and Esther Geraghty, Cecil Devouge, Dora Doiron (Leonard), with a poem written by Leonard's granddaughter, Melanie Lapointe. The poem is quite lengthy. If anyone wishes to have a copy, I would be glad to send one.

DONATIONS

From the girls: Mrs. Gladys McCarron, Mrs. Una Lapalme, Mrs. Mildred MacPherson, Mrs. Hazel Ladds, Mrs. Evelyn Hachey, Ms Bonnie Vincent, Mrs. Annie Nolan, Mrs. Myrtle McNaughton, Mrs. Thelma Misson,

From the boys: Bill Doull, Arthur Roberts, Desmond Irving, Charles Dallain, Randolph Benwell, Walter Gray, Raymond Quirion, Bryce Craig, Donald Geraghty, Harold Heath, Jean Lalime, Raymond Murray, Gerard Pentland.

IN MEMORIUM

Lawrence Ross in memory of brothers Leo and Raymond
Mrs. Lorna MacKay in memory of husband Laurie
Mrs. Barbara Hardy in Memory of husband Ralston
Mrs. Joyce Clarkson in memory of husband Kenneth
Mrs. Dora Dorion in memory of husband Leonard

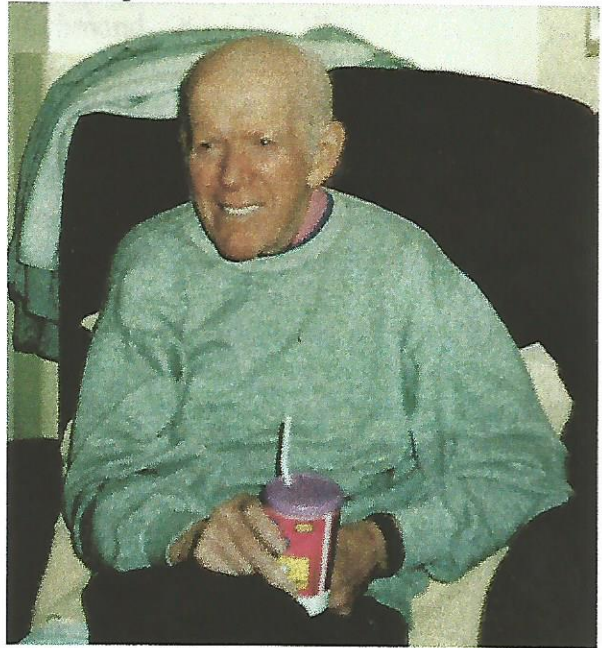
Raymond Smith in memory of Leonard Woods, Muriel Jones
Mrs. Hazel Martin in memory of husband Douglas

MESSAGE FROM LAWRENCE

"I wish to thank all Hong Kong Veterans, widows, and associate members who have sent their dues and donations to the Branch. At this date, with 179 paid up members, it should be a good year.

It would simplify our working arrangements if you would send your dues and donations to: Lawrence Rattie, 508 Thorncrest Ave, Dorval, QC, H9P 2M6. If you send them to Philip Doddridge or Harold Englehart, they, in turn, have to send them to me."

Lawrence also sent me a picture of Walter Henderson at his nursing home in Alberta. I can scan it in colour, but when I have the letters reproduced it comes out in B&W.



WALTER HENDERSON, years of service on the Executive Committee of the QM Branch, now residing in Alberta.

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REUNION 1999

Lucette Muir, our chief organizer, is presently on holiday in Thailand. I don't know when she will be back, but be assured, information on the National Convention and Reunion in Granby will be forthcoming in plenty of time.

Update: I was speaking to Lucette since her return home. By this time you should have received the package she sent out with registration forms, etc. Please let her know as soon as possible what your intentions are. If you have ever had anything to do with organizing a reunion, you will know that last minute arrivals can sometimes foul up the organization. You will also know that early replies make the job much easier for the organizers. Remember, they are working to make your reunion a success, and if you can help in this small way, it will be appreciated. If you haven't heard from her or from Ossie Clark, Ossie's address is 71 St. Paul St. Bury, QC, J0B 1J0, tel. 819-872-3746. Lucette M. Muir, 18 rue Barre, Granby, QC, J2H 2E6, tel. 514-375-7439, fax., 514-372-0781.

SPECIAL MENTION

Bernard Castonguay wrote letters to Roger, to Clifford Chadderton, to Minister Fred Mifflin, expressing in a very eloquent way his thanks for their efforts in bringing the matter of slave labour compensation to a close. He also included me in his list, but, again, I must disclaim any credit. Thanks anyway.

Ed Rodrigues also wrote a fine letter expressing his gratitude for successful closing of the matter.

As mentioned above, Leonard Doiron's granddaughter wrote a poem about her grandfather. The tone of the poem demonstrates the love and affection she had for him. Quite touching.

MILITARY MUSEUM

For a number of years we have been trying to establish a military museum in New Richmond. Things are progressing slowly, but we are moving steadily onward. The president of the MILITARY MUSEUM FOUNDATION, Mr. Bert Cyr, has asked me to insert this short message in the newsletter.

"I am glad to take this opportunity to thank those who, following the insertion of a pamphlet in one of Phil Doddridge's newsletters, found interest in the project of a Museum by which the Battle of Hong Kong will be remembered by future generations, and moreover, made it tangible by a generous donation. The help you provide is a step towards its completion, thus making our task that much simpler. Please be assured of our sincere gratitude.

The Bay Chaleur Military Museum Foundation., 105 rue des Veterans, New Richmond, QC, G0C 2B0.

I would like to add my thanks to all of you who helped out in our struggle to get a Military Museum going. We are still a long way from our goal, but little by little and with your kind help we will achieve our objective.

At present we lack funds, obviously, and we also lack space to store the artifacts we already have. We are not actively soliciting the loan or donation of items for that reason. When the time comes, we'll be going after anything that anyone wants to give or lend.

RATES OF PENSION AND ALLOWANCES

Bob Baker, Regional Manager, Economic Benefits and Special Programs, has sent me the tables of rates for pension and allowances. They are too long and detailed to reproduce here, but if anyone wishes a

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copy, please let me know. Incidentally, Bob is John Roussell's nephew.

HUMOUR

A man was reading his newspaper when his wife came up behind him and bashed him on the head with a frying pan. "What was that for?" he asked.

She said, "What was that paper in your pocket with the name Marylou on it?"

"Oh, remember I went to the races two weeks ago? That's the name of the horse I was betting on."

A few days later, she came up behind him and hit him again. "What was that for this time", he asked.

She said, "Your horse just called!"

Remember the Confucius jokes?

Confucius say: Man who run in front of car get tired. Man who run behind car get exhausted.

Confucius say, man with one chopstick go hungry.

Man who drive like hell bound to get there. Man who live in glass house should dress in basement.

Wife who put husband in doghouse soon find him in cathouse.

VIGNETTES OF LIFE IN POW CAMP

Banging the can. Remember in North Point how the Jap guards used to sit out in front of the guardhouse at the gate and smoke and throw their butts into a can at their feet? We were all smokers in those days and after a few weeks in camp, cigarettes were expensive and hard to come by. Some of the more daring, and perhaps more addicted among us would risk a beating by picking butts out of the can. This was called "Banging the Can". I know that those polite and clever chaps took satisfaction in seeing the white man humble himself in front of them. I never banged the can, for a number

of reasons, cowardice probably foremost among them. Secondly, I found it hard, no matter how strong the craving, to give them the satisfaction of laughing at me, and thirdly, perhaps I wasn't hooked on nicotine as badly as some of my comrades. I was only nineteen, and hadn't been smoking for very long.

AND IN CONCLUSION

In winding down this issue of the letter, I'll explain why it is coming out a bit late. I have a self-imposed deadline for the four letters a year. Number one, September; Number two, December; Number three, March; and Number four, June. In the last six years that I have been doing the letter, I have been able to stick to the deadlines, with one exception. This one will be the second. Blame it on a computer printer glitch. As I write this, I still haven't got my printer back from the repair shop, and will probably have to borrow one to finish the job.

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

Philip

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