

Fall 2013



The Maple Leaf and Dragon

A newsletter of the Chinese Canadian Military Museum Society

A Historic meeting:

WWII Tuskegee Airmen visit our Chinese-Canadian veterans



PHOTO: WWII Tuskegee cadets during a training exercise.

RED TAILS AND DRAGON TALES: That was the name of a historic three-day summit that brought together, for the first time ever, two groups of WWII veterans that faced discrimination: the Tuskegee Airmen and Chinese-Canadian veterans. Both groups' military contributions were instrumental to helping the Allies win the war but also to changing societal attitudes towards race in their home countries.

“While most of their ranks have passed away, a few remaining veterans, mostly in their late 80s and early 90s, met to share their stories in Vancouver in late June 2013” explained Col. Howe Lee, President Emeritus of the Chinese Canadian Military Museum. ... [READ THE FULL STORY STARTING ON PAGE 2](#)

RED TAILS & DRAGON TALES

Before we tell you what happened, here is a brief history for our readers. During WWII, the Tuskegee Airmen were the first group of African-American aviators to fly in combat for the US armed forces. At the time, the American military was racially segregated and in many states, Jim Crow Laws were still practiced. The civil rights movement was years away.

Many believed African Americans lacked the intelligence and skill to perform anything beyond basic, menial tasks in military duty. Despite this segregation and prejudice, the Tuskegee Airmen went on to become one of the most highly respected fighter groups in the war. They were dubbed “the Red Tails” after one fighter group painted their P47 and later P51 Mustang planes with red tails.

Meanwhile back in Canada, men and women of Chinese descent, even those born here, were not allowed to vote. As well, the 1923 Exclusion Act was still in effect. That Act essentially banned Chinese immigration to Canada. Despite this discrimination, when WWII broke out, Chinese men and women volunteered in the hundreds to fight for Canada. They enlisted in every branch of the armed forces and participated in every theatre of war. They helped the Allies win the war. The result: on May 14, 1947 Chinese Canadians were finally granted the right to vote.

Flash forward 70 years and one of our museum members, Don Chapman, has an idea. Why not arrange to have these two veteran groups meet each other before it is too late? Chapman had connections with a Tuskegee chapter in Arizona, and he offered to help arrange and

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PHOTOS: TOP: Tuskegee pilot Charles McGee; MIDDLE: Tuskegee airmen during WWII; BOTTOM: Chinese Canadians in WWII army.

RED TAILS & DRAGON TALES (continued from page 2)...

underwrite some of the costs for the visit. Before we knew it, the planning was in motion.

It was a jammed packed visit. Three days (June 28-30) started off with a UBC public symposium that was followed by a memorial service in Chinatown; a reception to open our photo exhibit; a lunch with Canadian-Aboriginal veterans; a SFU story-sharing event; a fundraising dinner; and lastly a public dialogue at the Richmond Public Library. At each event, dozens of people came out to hear the stories of both groups of veterans. At the SFU and Richmond Public Library events, even the audience began to share their stories.

“It was fascinating how many comments I received from folks saying they had no idea about these stories. They did not know what our Chinese vets endured, nor the battles they fought overseas as soldiers,” noted Chapman who served as moderator for the public dialogues. “People were moved and sometimes shocked by what they heard. When Frank Wong told us that, as a young man, a pool was drained after he got out, we realized that same thing happened to African-American singer Lena Horne in the U.S.”

It wasn't just the audience hearing the story for the first time. The Tuskegee and Chinese soldiers also learned about each other. It created a bond of respect that is evident in the many photographs taken by our talented photographer Vincent L. Chan.

“This visit was one of the highlights of our Chinese Canadian Museum Society's 15-year history,” Lee said at the end of the busy three days. “Our museum's mandate is to help people understand military history and appreciate the sacrifices that ordinary people made. We believe this visit will have profound effect not only on the veterans that were involved, but on the many people who came out to hear their stories.” 🍁



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PHOTO: LEFT TO RIGHT: Bob Ashby; Neil Chan; Charles McGee; Leonard Wong; the late Frank Wong and George Chow (June 28, 2013)



PHOTO: TOP LEFT CLOCKWISE: The late Gim Wong greets Charles McGee; ceremony at the Chinese Memorial; Bob Ashby tells his story to the UBC audience while our own Howe Lee, Neil Chan, Frank Wong and George Chow listen intently; Charles McGee presents our museum with a picture of a P51 Mustang complete with a red tail. For more photos from the Tuskegee visit, go to our website at : www.ccms.ca

Dual Victories Day

a touching memorial service symbolizes duality

ON JUNE 28, under a threatening sky in Vancouver's Chinatown, a quiet, touching memorial service took place. In front of the Chinatown Memorial, which honours Chinese railway workers and military veterans, two groups of aging WWII veterans sat quietly side by side: the American Tuskegee Airmen and our own Chinese-Canadian vets. They were here, along with various dignitaries and supporters, to pay tribute to their fallen comrades.



PHOTO: Veteran Monty Lee (left) stands next to Charles McGee at the Chinatown Memorial service (June 28, 2013)

The entire ceremony was punctuated with the symbolism of “duality”. The national anthems for both Canada and the United States started the ceremony. Later “Taps” and the Commonwealth eulogy “Last Post” to honour the fallen, were both played by a bugler from the British Columbia Regimental Band.

A highlight of the ceremony was when Vancouver city councillor Dr. Kerry Jang read a civic proclamation, declaring Friday, June 28, 2013, “Dual Victories Day” in the city of Vancouver. The title is a reference to a motto used by the Tuskegee Airmen “Double V” (V for victory), and a similar slogan used by the Chinese Canadian Military Museum in its recent photographic exhibition entitled “One War: Two Victories.” In both cases, the idea is that these soldiers helped secure two victories: the war for the Allies, and the breaking down of discriminatory laws in their home countries after the conflict. (In the case of our Tuskegee friends, however, it took another 20 years before they were granted equal rights.)

Another touching moment was when two commemorative wreaths were laid. Our own Col. Howe Lee escorted Tuskegee pilot Col. Charles McGee who laid the first wreath on behalf of the Chinese Canadian Military Museum. They were followed by Tuskegee LCol. Bob Ashby, who accompanied Chinese WWII veteran Frank Wong to lay the second wreath on behalf of the Tuskegee Airmen. 🍁



AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

INTERACTIVE HISTORY KIOSKS were unveiled last Fall at UBC. The kiosks offer users access to a variety of stories about the Chinese Canadian community. The stories include those of our military veterans.

The kiosks are the brainchild of UBC History Professor Dr. Henry Yu, who developed it with UBC students.

The kiosks operate in three languages: English, French and Chinese. Check out the kiosk located at the Chinese Cultural Centre in Vancouver. 🍁

Goodbyes...

We said goodbye to the following Chinese-Canadian veterans who passed away over the last two years.

2013

CHOW, Pte, Bill Wing, K.5241, Vancouver, March 12

CHOW, Park Wing, K.5987, Vancouver, April 06

WONG, Andrew, (served in Canadian and US merchant marines), Victoria, July 20

WONG, P/O Gim Foon, Vancouver, J.52601, July 29

WONG, Fong Bing (Frank), Burnaby, K.45536, RCOC RCEME, September 12

2012

LOUIE, Alexander Shukee, Vancouver, February 18

MARR, Alfred Edwin, K5292, March 17

LEW, Andrew W.C., MCpl., April 09

LORE, William (Bill), LCmdr, Hong Kong, September 22

LING, George, Cpl, Victoria, October 09

Aboriginal vets



IT WAS A FEW SPECIAL HOURS at the Aboriginal Friendship in Vancouver on June 29: Canadian-Aboriginal veterans hosted a First Nations ceremony and lunch for the visiting American Tuskegee Airmen and our Chinese-Canadians veterans.

The ceremony started with the three groups of veterans being drummed in by Dr. Richard Vedan, who is an 11-year Canadian Forces veteran and also an associate professor at UBC. Vedan performed a First Nations welcome to Musqueam territory and also provided the keynote address. He spoke eloquently about the many obstacles faced by all three groups before, during and after WWII.

Then three Aboriginal veterans presented star blankets to three Tuskegee veterans: Col. Charles McGee, Col. Dick Toliver and LCol Bob Ashby. Next, Elder Larry Grant of the Musqueam Nation offered Toliver a traditional talking stick carved by a local First Nations artist.

In exchange, Toliver gave Richard Blackwolf, National President of the Canadian Aboriginal Veterans and Serving Members Association, a beautiful framed picture of a P51 fighter aircraft. The picture will hang in the Aboriginal Friendship Centre and will commemorate this historic occasion.

A traditional First Nations lunch of Salmon and Bannock followed. Gina Grant, who prepared the food, spoke about how excited she was to be able to cook for the Tuskegee Airmen. She explained she had several documentaries on them. “You have changed the world and I’m proud to do something for you.”

We wish to thank Chinese-Canadian WWII Veteran and Museum Society member Bing Wong, who generously provided the funding for this special event.



PHOTO: Chinese Canadian Military Museum member George Ing (right) speaks to the Tuskegee Airmen and other guests at the Aboriginal Friendship Centre ceremony and lunch on June 29, 2013.

One War: Two Victories



our special exhibition arrives from Ottawa

PHOTO: Our special exhibit displayed on a wall at the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa (Catherine Clement 2012).

FOR ALMOST 9 MONTHS, the Chinese Canadian Military Museum Society's special exhibition, "One War: Two Victories," was proudly displayed in the entrance hall of the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa. The first-of-its-kind exhibition explored the experiences of Chinese Canadians who served in the Canadian military and volunteer services and in Allied war efforts during the Second World War. Using a combination of stories, photos and scanned artifacts, the exhibition presented fascinating wartime stories of unforgettable men and women. It examined their remarkable contributions to Canada and to the Chinese-Canadian community in war and peace.

The exhibition ran in Ottawa from May 2012 to February 2013 and was seen by thousands of visitors, including hundreds of school children.

With the help of the City of Vancouver, we were able to re-mount the exhibit here in Vancouver during the visit of the Tuskegee Airmen. At a launch reception at the Chinese Cultural Centre, with more than 130 people in attendance, the Tuskegee veterans viewed the displays. They then presented our Museum with a special gift: a framed picture of a P51 Mustang aircraft complete with a red tail. This famous plane, adorned with a red tail, was flown by these heroic vets during WWII. The picture will now form part of our Museum's collection.

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ONE WAR: TWO VICTORIES (continued from page 6)...

The photo exhibit stayed up for about a month in Vancouver. If you missed it, there is another opportunity to see the display. In early November the “One War: Two Victories” exhibition will move to Victoria. It will be on display at the Royal British Columbia Museum from November 5-11 inclusive.



PHOTO: At the Vancouver launch event, Chinese-Canadian veteran Peggy Lee stands in front of a photo of herself from the Second World War.

We would be remiss to not acknowledge the organizations that helped make this exhibit possible. The research and production of the original exhibition, as well as a digital archive of the precious materials we scanned, was made possible through a grant from the Community Historical Recognition Program.

Citizenship and Immigration Canada helped fund the Ottawa exhibition, and The Canadian War Museum worked with our project director, Larry Wong, to ensure the design of the exhibit was museum quality. Meanwhile, the City of Vancouver, through their Chinatown Revitalization Project, provided support so that we could bring the exhibition panels back to our own city and remount it for the people of Vancouver. 🍁

**See the “ONE WAR: TWO VICTORIES” exhibition
ROYAL BC MUSEUM, Victoria
November 5-11, 2013**



Photography

With more than 20 years experience, we honour the fine tradition of photography and treat every photograph as art. Call us for all your portrait or special events photography needs.

Vincent L. Chan | 604.253.4568 | vchan@invisionation.com



A VERY BIG THANK YOU

The Chinese Canadian Military Museum Society would like to acknowledge the many organizations and individuals who made possible this historic visit of the Tuskegee Airmen. We gratefully acknowledge the United States Consulate (Vancouver); City of Vancouver; Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Vancouver; Vancouver Chinatown Merchants Association; Chinese Benevolent Association of Greater Vancouver; the Canadian Aboriginal Veterans and Serving Members Association; the University of British Columbia; Simon Fraser University; and the Richmond Public Library.

Thank you also to the following individuals for their support, either financially or in terms of services to our events: Don Chapman; Bing Wong; Wendy Au; Toni McFee and her assistant Andy Chou; Gina Grant; and photographer Vincent L. Chan.

And of course, we are extremely grateful to the many volunteers who undertook various aspects of the planning, organizing, publicity, media liaison, cooking, cleanup, driving, mounting of photos, etc. that helped make this once-in-a-lifetime visit such a great success. 🍁

King Wan
President
Chinese Canadian Military Museum Society

UPCOMING EVENTS

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- October 12 Monthly CCMMS meeting and lunch
- November 2 Chinese Canadian Military Museum Society Annual Fundraising Dinner
- November 5-8 One War: Two Victories exhibition at Royal BC Museum (Victoria)
- November 9 Monthly CCMMS meeting and lunch
- December 14 Monthly CCMMS meeting and Christmas lunch



PHOTO: Charles McGee and Frank Wong were both born in 1919. McGee of the Tuskegee Airmen (left) was stationed in Italy during the Second World War. Wong was in the Canadian Army and served at Normandy and Holland. Both finally met in their 94th year, on June 28, 2013, in Vancouver, Canada. Unfortunately, a few months later, and just as we were going to press, Frank Wong passed away. He was incredibly active in our museum society: despite his age, he showed up to every meeting and did several speaking engagements a year educating a new generation of Canadians on war history. He even still served as our Treasurer. We are grateful he had a chance to meet the Tuskegee airmen. We will miss Frank so much.

Please join us at ...

CCMMS Annual Fundraising Dinner

November 2, 2013 | 6:00 p.m.
Pink Pearl Restaurant
1132 East Hastings Street, Vancouver

Reserve your seat or table now. Contact Paul Lee
(Tel) 604.250.4780 or (Email) pkklee@gmail.com

Tickets are \$50



We're on Facebook

The Chinese Canadian Military Museum Society started its own Facebook page. With no marketing, we have almost 100 fans and they are from all over the world. We have fans who live in Japan, Greece, Italy, Korea, China, Malaysia, the United States and even one gentleman who resides somewhere in Africa. Our museum has truly gone international.



Each week, we find and post interesting things to our Facebook page: rare or interesting WWII photos or artifacts (like the Hitler pin cushion to the left); historical information and stories; announcements of upcoming TV shows and documentaries on WWII; listings of upcoming events and exhibits; and links to online videos.

So become a fan of our Facebook page today. Go to:

www.facebook.com/ChineseCanadianMilitaryMuseum

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BECOME A MEMBER

Support our museum and help us collect, preserve, document and celebrate the role of Chinese-Canadian veterans in the service of Canada's military.