



The Maple Leaf and Dragon

A newsletter of the Chinese Canadian Military Museum Society

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Larry Wong, Editor

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There Are Heroes Among Us

By Larry Wong
Editor

As a kid growing up in Chinatown during the forties and fifties, my heroes were from the Hollywood world of make-believe. I marveled at the adventures of Hopalong Cassidy, Red Rider, Roy Rogers, Gene Autry and other Saturday matinee idols at the old Lux Theatre on Hastings Street. What I wasn't aware of until I took on the job of curator of the Museum did I realize that the Chinese community has its own heroes.

These heroes were real. They were part of the community, they had families, they had friends, and they probably ate at the same cafes and restaurants in Chinatown as I did. But they also gave their lives.

Their families grieved for them as did their friends and comrades but for my generation and the following, the heroes are unknown.

Until now. Names like Quan Louie, Douglas Sam, and Fred Ho are enshrined in the Museum.

There are those who are still living and whose exploits should be recorded and preserved before they too, pass on. They too are heroes.

For me, heroes are the ones who made sacrifices. They are the ones with convictions. They are the ones who believed they could make a difference in the world

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Executive and Directors for 2001

Front row: Frank Wong, Treasurer, Willie Chong, Director, Bing Wong, Vice-President, Howe Lee, President, Larry Wong, Secretary, Quan Lim, Chinese Reporter **Back row:** Gim Wong, Director, Neill Chan, Director, Chong Joe, Director, and John Ko, Director. Missing are: Allan Quan and Roy Mah, Directors

Elections of the officers and directors were held January 11, 2001 and all positions are one-year term. ♦

New Museum Phone Numbers and Hours

The Chinese Cultural Centre has installed a Centrex phone system. The new number for the Main Office Reception is 604-658-8850 and for the Museum Reception, 604-658-8880.

The Museum hours are 1 to 5 pm Tuesday to Friday, 11-5 pm Saturdays and Sundays. Mondays are closed. These hours may change later in the season so please check ahead of time. ♦

New Gallery for Museum Thanks to the generosity of the donors of the Presentation Room who wish to remain anonymous, the room is now part of the Military Museum. Thanks also to John Ko for his renovation work. ♦

Our Website is www.ccmuseum.bc.ca

Our e-mail is ccmuseum@canada.com

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Any donations of \$10.00 and up are tax-deductible.

Thanks for the great response to the last issue.

we live in.

They didn't have to carry guns or weapons. It was their very presence that made a difference. And not just the men but the women too.

And they have. Whenever I cast a ballot in an election, I remember their beliefs that the Chinese has rights. Whenever there is Remembrance Week, I am aware they fought along side with other Canadians. Whenever I travel outside Canada with my passport, I am aware my Citizenship was fought for. And when I am in the presence of a Chinese lawyer, pharmacist or accountant, I am aware these professions were once banned to the Chinese.

Yes, these veterans, the living and the dead, men and women are heroes. And I am proud of them. ♦

A Gathering of Dragons A new exhibit highlighting the Chinese Canadian war experience from the First World War to post World War Two was unveiled in March in the new gallery. Part of this exhibit will change from time to time on a rotational basis. Together with the Women In War display, these exhibits will inform the general public history not previously known. Any photographs and or stories for the exhibit are welcomed. ♦

Special Feature

The following is from a taped interview as part of a student project several years ago.



Frank Wong was born in Vancouver in 1919 and raised in Alert Bay on Vancouver. He enlisted in May 1942 and served with the Royal Canadian Ordnance Corps/Royal Canadian Electrical & Mechanical Engineers in Europe.

Question: What were your duties?

Frank: I was trained as a storeman and then as a clerk. In England, I was waiting for the invasion and went on manoeuvres.

Question: What kind of manoeuvres?

Frank: Oh well, you just go out to the fields with the unit and practice battle drills. I recall one time we were out in the field and our sergeant was running around on a jeep throwing firecrackers. I was hiding in the

Frank: haystack and he tossed a couple at me. The next thing I know, the haystack was on fire and the poor farmer came out swearing at us, "You Canadians!" We were just practicing and they were using the crackers to simulate battle conditions. We did more drills and long route marches, preparing for the invasion.

The invasion came in June but we didn't get there till July. We boarded an American liberty ship and were escorted down to Normandy, down to the beachhead. There must have been thousands and thousand of ships there as far as I can see. Our unit went over on two different ships, just in case one was shot, then at least you still have half of the unit on one ship.

We spent the night at Caen and at night we could see the German planes coming over; they were bombing the beachhead. Our unit was to service the artillery, medium and heavy. Our job was to follow them when these artillery move up; lots of British and Canadian ones. When there's a big push, they gather together as the Army Group Royal Artillery. Often we get shellfire from the Germans.

Question: Did you ever feel like "why am I here? What have I put myself through?"

Frank: Well yeah, I said the Lord's Prayer million of times. I looked around and see some of my friends doing the same. We were on the road to the Seine and there were thousands of German vehicles; all abandoned, all armour cars and tanks and there were dead cows all over the place. The bridges were all destroyed and the Germans couldn't cross the river. The Canadian Army came and put in the Bailey bridges for us. There were dead horses too. The Germans had used them to haul some of the guns and transport. Finally we went into Caen and I nearly got sick from the smell of the dead. We had to be careful in the town because of the German snipers. The Germans were defeated and they were in retreat to Holland, so we continue to chase them. I remember all the townspeople waving at us and everytime the vehicle stops; they'll come up with wine and hand out flowers. The little kids asking for autographs.

Question: Do you want to tell about The Bulge?

Frank: Yes, the Battle of the Bulge, when the German army, just before Christmas, launched a massive attack. They pushed the Americans back about 60 miles causing a big bulge there... On Christmas Day, we put on a little Christmas party for the Dutch kids; then suddenly we heard the signal. The signal was the ack-ack guns going off three times—the Germans were coming. We sent the kids home and waited.... the German fighter plane flew low and was shooting up all of the Canadian vehicles. I just saw the plane coming overhead and I thought they were shooting at me. That particular day, the Germans made their last big push. ♦

Women In War...



The occasion was the first Canadian citizenship ceremony for the Chinese held at the Commodore Cabaret in Vancouver on February 19, 1947.

Four Chinese men and three women, all veterans were granted the right to call themselves Canadians.

The four men were: Sergeant Louis King, Warrant Officer Thomas Koo Chung, Captain Wilf Bing Tong Seto and Warrant Officer Donald Sung.

The women, from left to right, Corporal Lila Wong, Aircraft Woman Jean Lee, and Private Marion Laura Mah. ♦

From A Gathering of Dragons...



— courtesy Norman Lee
Frederick Lee

Born in Kamloops, Private Frederick Lee served in the 47th Battalion and was killed in action August 1, 1917.

Some 300 Chinese Canadians joined the Canadian Army for the First World War. ♦

Does Anyone Know...

Any descendants of the First World War veterans for possible interviews or stories?

A veteran named Howard Soong from Perth/Ottawa?

Any Chinese female member of the Armed Forces for their stories?

Any contemporary members of the Armed Forces willing to share their experiences with the Museum?

Please contact Larry Wong at 604-879-9383.

On the right is Lieut. Frank Ho Lem, a famous sharpshooter in Alberta in the 1920's and 30's. He became an instructor in the Army; the first President of Pacific Unit 280 in Vancouver, and a campaigner for Canadian citizenship.

MEMBERSHIP/DONATION FORM

Membership: \$100 per individual or corporation.

Donation: from \$10.00 and up will receive a tax-deductible receipt.

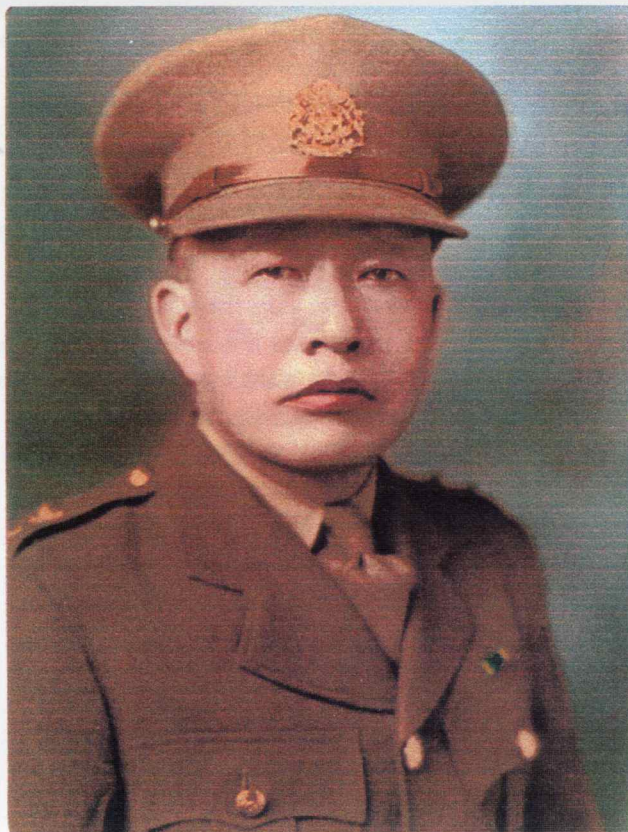
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