



Hong Kong Volunteer and Ex-PoW Association of NSW



Editorial Letter to Accompany December 2012 OPs

Dear Readers,

December is with us once more, with its memories of the fighting and the fateful events of December 1941 in Hong Kong.

With Henry's production of three more Occasional Papers, it is also timely to review what, with your help, we have been able to do since the first Papers in the Series were issued in August 2011.

To date, and including the three Papers which accompany this Letter, fourteen OPs have been produced. Others are in the pipeline, and there is no sign that we are running out of suitable topics, material, and inspiration. Writing as editor, I can truly say that becoming involved has enriched my knowledge of Hong Kong and the dramatic events of the Pacific War and Occupation 1941-45, and in particular has made me more aware and better informed of the heroic part played by the members of the Hong Kong Volunteer Defence Corps during that dark time in Hong Kong's history.

I have always been a proud "Volunteer". And the Series has certainly enhanced this feeling: although I should also stress that this is with a humble spirit, since there is no place for histrionics or hyperbole here. The record speaks for itself, and it is our hope that our readers will share the feelings being expressed here.

Turning to this batch of Papers, their theme is that of family and service. We are indeed fortunate to have received assistance from members Robert Lapsley and John Penn, which has made it possible to bring you Robert's own personal story of the fighting, together with one of John's father's letters to the families of men of his No.1 Company who had lost their lives during the War.

The letter brings to mind Canadian Benny Proulx's letter to John's mother in Vancouver in mid-1942 sending on news of her husband's survival, as recounted in an earlier OP, No 5 in the Series. Readers are also referred to previous OPs of related interest, such as No.3 on Volunteer Casualties and No.2 on Second World War memorials in Hong Kong.

Like Robert Lapsley's personal account, Bea Hutcheon's "Macau Refuge 1942-45" (OP No.10) has also added significantly to the "Volunteer" wartime record. And here I would again remind readers that original material of this sort is infinitely precious, and that more of the kind is yet needed to give us a fuller understanding of the times and their impact upon members of the HKVDC and its auxiliary units, and their families.

So please set aside your modesty, rack your brains and cupboards, and send along anything, however inconsequential you may feel it to be, which relates to the wartime experience in Hong Kong.

All the OPs and Editor's Letters may now be seen on our Association's new website, www.rhkrnsw.org. The website also includes useful information on our Association's activities and news.

Henry and I hope you will enjoy this further batch of OPs, and send you all our best wishes for good health and happiness in the coming year.

James Hayes

December 2012