



勳章及獎章研究學會香港分會

Orders and Medals Research Society

HONG KONG BRANCH

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[OMRS Hong Kong Branch](#)

[August 2020 Newsletter](#)

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Message from the Branch Committee

Many members have enquired about the arrangements concerning the funeral of Mike Broom, a former Branch Committee member, who very sadly passed away at his home in Tung Chung recently. These arrangements have now been announced and are produced hereunder in full.

A brief committal service will be held at Cape Collinson Crematorium at 15:30 hrs on Wednesday 19 August 2020. It is intended that the committal will be a small affair with only close friends present, together with a representative attendance on behalf of the various organisations with which Michael was connected.

A 56-seater coach will depart for the Crematorium from Connaught Place, outside the General Post Office, at 14:45 hrs and will return to Central after the service.

Family flowers only, by request.

Although the current restrictions on gatherings do not apply to funeral ceremonies, it is quite understandable that given the prevailing health situation in Hong Kong some may be reluctant to attend the committal. It is therefore hoped that a larger memorial service, or some other celebration of Michael's life, can be held on another occasion when it is safe and appropriate to do so.

No. 8, Tai Hang Chung Sum Wai,
Tai Hang Village, Tai Po, NT,
Hong Kong

The Branch will be represented at Michael's committal.

It may surprise many people, particularly those who did not know Mike well, to learn in how many organisations he was actually involved. He was very devoted to Freemasonry in Hong Kong and was an immediate Past President of the Royal Asiatic Society here. He was a member of the Royal Society of St. George, (hence his distinctive e-mail address); the Royal Hong Kong Regiment (the Volunteers) Association and more recently the Orders and Medals Research Society, both the Hong Kong Branch and the main body in the U.K. He was also an occasional participant in the popular retirees walking group; in fact I first heard the term "Walsh's Walkers" from Mike.

We have received many touching tributes and messages of condolence from Branch members at the sad passing of Mike, and with his permission I would like to reproduce part of this one from Alan McTaggart which is beautifully expressed: -

"I saw Michael at many different events over the years and he always had a big smile, enthusiasm, energy, discipline, input and bubbled with so many of the qualities of life that attracted and made me choose Hong Kong as my home when Jardine Matheson sent me here over 30 years ago."

Thank you for all the tributes to Michael.

Recent Activities

Although we weren't to know it at the time, a window of opportunity presented itself when the Government eased restrictions on social gathering last month for a short period. An excellent turnout was achieved on Sunday 12 July, when members and friends braved the scorching summer heat to visit Stanley Military Cemetery. The main aim of the event was to honour the 5 holders of the George Cross who were executed by the occupying Japanese forces in 1943, and who are buried in the cemetery.

Full details of the visit can be found on the website; please click on "Recent Events."

Future Activities

As I'm sure everyone will appreciate, it is very difficult to make firm plans for future activities at present, given the extraordinary times in which we live. All I will say at this stage is that we are considering another outdoor event, possibly a visit to Devil's Peak and Lei Yue Mun, when a degree of normality returns to life.

Other events which we have pencilled in the diary are: -

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| Tue 6 th Oct 2020 | Lecture "Along the Southern Boundary." A talk by former RHKP Marine Police officer, Les Bird. |
| Fri 11 th Dec 2020 | Dinner Branch Christmas Dinner at the USRC in Jordan |

Further details of all these events to follow in due course.

Of General Interest

Medal Auction in the U.K.

When all's said and done, we are a Branch of the OMRS so there should be at least ONE article in this newsletter with a medallion connection! One of the most prestigious auction houses in the U.K. specialising in the sale of militaria, is Dix Noonan and Webb, (DNW). On 20th Aug 2020 this company is auctioning an extremely rare group of medals awarded to a Sgt. A. D. Manning of 1st. Bn. Middlesex Regt, consisting of the Distinguished Conduct Medal; 1939-45 Star; Pacific Star and War Medal 1939-45. Sgt. Manning was taken prisoner in the vicinity of Stanley on Christmas Day 1941 and died in captivity in Sham Shui Po camp on 2nd Sept 1942.

Sgt. Manning was awarded the D.C.M. for the extraordinary gallantry which he displayed during the battle in general, but in particular from 22nd Dec onwards when he was told to evacuate his pillbox (no.19) in Middle Bay and take his men to Stanley. If anyone would like more information, either on Sgt. Manning or DNW's auction of his medals, please contact the undersigned. A word of caution, however. The auction house's guide price for the group is £5000 to £7000!

Lisbon Maru Memorial – National Memorial Arboretum

Those people who participated in the visit to Stanley Cemetery will recall that we spent a short time at the grave of a soldier who was killed during the 1941 battle in Stanley Fort; Gunner Flanders of the Royal Artillery. This soldier was, in turn, the “mucker” of another veteran of the battle, Jack Étienne, who was a survivor of the sinking of the Lisbon Maru.

(The latter was a Japanese freighter which in September 1942 was transporting 1816 POWs from Hong Kong to Japan. She displayed no markings to indicate that she was transporting these men who had been imprisoned in 3 holds which had been battened down by the Japanese. The vessel was torpedoed by the USS Grouper, a USN submarine, near Shanghai and eventually sank with the loss of approximately 830 men who were either drowned or shot by the escorting Japanese military. The submarine’s Captain has no idea, of course, that the ship was carrying POWs. Many more men died during the weeks and months subsequent to the sinking).

Ron Taylor, during our visit, then spoke of the decision by the authorities in the U.K. to commission a granite memorial to the loss of the men on board the vessel to be placed in the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire, the cost of which will be met by private funding as this is a private initiative. (Just Giving).

If anyone would like further information on the initiative, including on how to make a donation, or more on the sinking of the Lisbon Maru, please contact either the undersigned or write to Brian Finch at bfinch1941@gmail.com.

Hong Kong Volunteers Defence Corps **“Hong Kong Volunteers in Battle”**

During our Stanley visit we discussed the background of a number of members of the HKVDC, both men and women, who were killed during the 1941 battle or subsequent occupation. Ron Taylor took the opportunity to speak about a book which will be published any day now.

The book is titled “Hong Kong Volunteers in Battle,” and is basically a reprint of a record of the action of the HKVDC in the battle for Hong Kong December 1941. The book first appeared in 1953 under anonymous authorship which was known as “the

little red book.” It was in fact written by Evan Stewart, (1892 – 1958), born the son of China missionaries whilst they were on home leave in the U.K. and who served as an officer with the Corps.

The diary has been republished many times over the years by the Volunteers Association and this latest republication maintains Evan’s original “record” unamended, but with improved maps and a few footnotes. An update to make it easier to read by those not familiar with Hong Kong in the 1950’s, which includes most of us!

Evan Stewart, (who served as a Company commander), was keen for the book to be a memorial to all HKVDC members and this is reflected by the inclusion of a full listing of all HKVDC members as of Dec 1941. This edition, in recognition of Evan, includes 2 tributes to him when he died.

It also includes Evan’s account when he led the HKVDF, (yes, by then the HKVD Force and no longer the HKVDC), contingent to the Coronation of H.M. the Queen in 1953, and finally a foreword by a member of No. 2 Coy of the Corps who fought (and who clearly survived!) the fighting in Stanley.

An essential addition to the library of all those who are interested in the battle for Hong Kong.

Proposed Amendments to the OMRS U.K. Constitution

Branch members who are also members of the parent OMRS body in the U.K. should be aware of 2 proposed amendments to the Constitution, on which all members are requested to vote before the A.G.M. to be held later this month.

These proposed amendments concern: -

- (a) the removal of a Committee member from the Committee; and
- (b) the imposition of an increase in subscriptions by the Committee.

I do not propose to take up too much time and space on this subject as I know not all our members are members of the OMRS in the U.K. However, any of the latter who would like sight of this correspondence before voting are very welcome to contact me. Suffice it to say that one dissenting voice to the proposed amendments has been

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widely circulated.

Best regards to all and stay safe in these troubled times!

Martin Heyes

Hon. Secretary

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