

[Page 38 - Austin Roberts' Second World War](#)ISSUE : [Issue 47](#)

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1988/1/1

discovered that they were too much trouble, and they shot them. Well, now--this may happen. But to me, that's not the kind of stuff that you'd tell people. I don't think those kind of stories do anybody any good. (Do you think it does people good, though, to have a notion that war is easy, and those kind of things don't happen?) Well, I've listened to quite a few people talk about war, you know, at conventions, and here and there and somewhere else. And the people that were really in war, that really saw real good action and that, will always tell you about the funny things that happened. (I think the experience you had was a lot uglier than you tell.) As I say, most people... I always figured that the ones that tell you a whole lot of big, bad things, didn't actually see these things. (But you actually did see big, bad things.) Yeah, I know, but they sort of go way back in the back of your mind, and you'd rather talk about the things that, you know.... (But that's not the true picture.) Yeah, but the true picture's a hard picture to put in. You see, the hundreds of thousands of people that never came back at all. The other ones that came back with their minds gone, and legs and arms and all this gone, you know. Well, that is the true picture of it. You take ourselves, now--we came back from over there, with beri-beri, malaria, dysentery. Some of us turned out all right. Ninety per cent of the boys that came back from overseas were a complete loss. I can count on one hand the people in New Brunswick that came back from overseas, that made a success of life after they came back. You know, out of the hundreds that went from my own home town, our own area there. They couldn't cope with civilian life, they had ailments that-- they'd start to work somewhere, and all of a sudden you'd wake up in the mornings, and you couldn't leave the toilet. Their bosses wouldn't believe all that stuff, you know. Finally, they were out of their job. One job to the other job, and so on. So. (But the truth is, when it comes to the war, you don't really tell all that you've seen.) No, no, no, no. (That's fair enough. You tell enough.) Well, I think you have a story. You know, a lot of big gory details is not going to make it that much better. Our thanks to the participants in The Westside Royal Canadian Legion. Branch #126: Oral History Project. Those interviews served as a guide and encouragement in our own interviews. The project was spearheaded by Harold McArdle, with the help of Jim Kelly (Canadian Coast Guard College) and Don MacGillivray (University College of Cape Breton). The students involved were: Beverly MacDonald, Verna MacNeil, Jamie MacInnis, and Janice Perry. Our thanks as well to Mac Johnston, editor of Legion Magazine, who provided us with the photo of Hong Kong Veterans aboard the Prince Rupert. A Hong Kong Veterans' Association was created after World War Two, to fight for appropriate compensation for those men who continue to suffer the more subtle wounds of their experience. A special pension is paid to all Hong Kong Veterans. Bonnie Beverage Room Home of Scottish Hospitality - and • Home Cooked Meals Steaks a Specialty REEVES ST. 562-4484 SYDNEY Home of the PEERLESS 'Ott/Mofi' SHOWPLACE 'VACT;Le' m>" A Division of // %" Provincial Floorina Ltd. V 'Qo 400 GEORGE ST., SYDNEY P. O. Box 1660, Sydney, N. S. B1P 6T7 Telephone: 562-8453