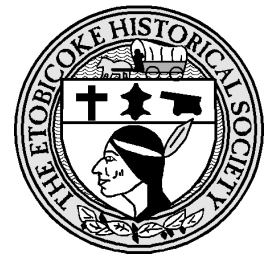




# The Aldernews

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**MONTGOMERY'S INN**  
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**ETOBICOKE HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
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## Fred Kagawa's war

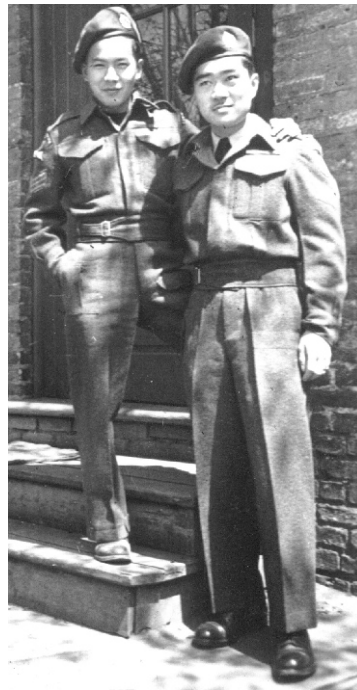
**Etobicoke veteran served King and Country  
with psychological operations**

by Gregory Wowchuk and Katharine Williams

There is no doubt that it was the Second World War which caused Canada to emerge as the modern, independent, industrial nation it now is. Canada had performed militarily far beyond anyone's expectations in the First World War, largely emerging from under Britain's wing in doing so. It was WWII, however, which propelled this country into national adulthood. Canada declared war independently on Germany on 10 September 1939, more than a week after Britain and France had done so.

Canada's military growth was phenomenal: our army grew from 4,500 to 600,000 men, while the navy, originally with 13 ships and 3,600 sailors, by 1945 had 700 vessels and 100,000 men.

(see **Kagawa** p 2)



Fred Kagawa (right) poses with buddy in London, Ontario

### MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETING

**Thursday, 25 November  
2004, 7:30 pm, at  
Montgomery's Inn**



### Ted Wickson,

TTC archivist, historian,  
and author

Join us for a look back at Canada's first subway, one of the most successful in the world. Learn about the politics and logistics of building this great system. Did you know that, in a plebiscite held 1 Jan 1946, the people had voted to build a subway along *Queen St.*, as well as Yonge? Fifty years after the opening of the Yonge subway, it is hard to imagine life in Toronto without our subway and the TTC.

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**Kagawa** (...cont'd from p 1)

Adolescence frequently is a period of turmoil and pain, however. The conscription crisis threatened national unity. The war changed life on the home front overnight. Industrial production exploded under the direction of Munitions and Supply "super-minister" C D Howe. This industrialization overnight grew our factories; many today still employ Canadians and use Canadian raw materials. Wartime demand for paper and fuel wood, for example, led to the use of German prisoners of war in northwestern Ontario to cut and process trees. Rationing and recycling (even fat and bones were collected for the war effort) were endured. Hoarding was punishable by two years in jail. Homeowners grew "victory gardens" so that agricultural production could be redirected to feed Canada's (and its allies') troops.

Although there was no indication the war would be brought directly to the North-American continent, there was distrust toward Canadians of German and Japanese ancestry. Government propaganda campaigns about supporting victory and being alert (home defence) no doubt stoked these fires. (The city of Berlin, Ontario, had changed its name to Kitchener during WWI despite having a population about 70 % Germanic.)

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941 changed life for a lot of Canadians overnight. Canada declared war on Japan the next day. Within a few days, the Canadian Pacific Railway and other firms fired all their Japanese-Canadian workers. The hopeless defence of Hong Kong on 18 December 1941, with the death or capture of 2,500 Canadian soldiers, stirred and frightened Canadians, particularly in British Columbia, which was closest to Asia, and had substantial numbers of persons of Japanese origin.

Despite objections by the RCMP and senior Canadian military officials that these persons were *not* a threat to home security, the government in Ottawa invoked the *War Measures Act* and rounded up 21,000 ethnic Japanese living within 160 km of the Pacific coast. They were told this action was taken to "protect" them from "mobs", al-

though a mere 150 letters and resolutions against them had been received. The transparency of this excuse was exposed by federal minister Ian MacKenzie who said, "Let our slogan be for British Columbia: 'No Japs from the Rockies to the seas.'" Those who resisted relocation and confiscation of assets were sent to camps behind *barbed wire* in Petawawa, Ontario. They were given clothing with large red circles on the back (perhaps "zeroes"?) to dissuade escape.

No Japanese Canadian was *ever* charged with disloyalty to Canada. In fact, despite decades of racial abuse (in 1941, even Japanese-Canadian *veterans* of WWI weren't allowed to vote), they remained peaceable, hard-working, and considered themselves Canadian. The second-generation "*Nisei*" spoke English perfectly. Many became well-educated, although many UBC grads ended up in menial occupations, and mostly remained in Japanese-Canadian towns and ghettos.

Even as the war drew to a close, the internees, whose real property, fishing boats, and businesses had been seized without compensation, were given the choice of dispersing east of the Rockies or being deported to war-ravaged Japan. Many bitterly chose the latter, including many who had never even *seen* Japan before.

One of the families relocated after Pearl Harbor was the family of Tatsuo Fred Kagawa, presently an Etobicoke resident. In his driveway is a Toyota with a red-poppy Ontario veteran's licence plate. Over the next ninety minutes, out come the photos and scrapbooks, along with one man's remarkable tale of struggle to assert his "Canadianness".

In the aftermath of Pearl Harbor, Fred Kagawa begins, some Japanese Canadians were very vocal in opposing government attempts to relocate them. He, however, felt "we can't change anything that's gone before. We're Canadian citizens; we shouldn't go against our own government."

"We felt Pearl Harbor was a big mistake. Japan *asked* for it by challenging the Americans."

Kagawa's parents and three younger brothers were sent to "ghost towns" in the BC interior, first Sandon, then Greenwood. (After the

...(see **Kagawa**, p 3)

## President's message



**Gregory P Wowchuk,**  
P Eng

### Canada's military— vital tradition and history

As you receive this newsletter, Remembrance Day 2004 has passed. We saw the usual sombre wreath-laying ceremonies, another Silver-Cross Mother. We paused for a few minutes to think about our country and those who made sacrifices to keep it free.

In this issue of the *Aldernews*, we've done something special by presenting a first-hand look at some of the history unfolding at home, as well as some largely unsung contributions to the war effort.

The military in Canada has always had a vital role in our history, and is steeped in tradition primarily rooted in the British Empire.

Early colonists relied on the militia, a part-time defence force composed of ordinary citizens who trained occasionally and could be summoned together to meet any threat on short notice.

The militia of New France was renowned for its use of tactics borrowed from the Indians. It made numerous successful raids on New England settlements, until the Seven Years' War, when regular French regiments arrived.

In 1791, Lt-Gov John Graves Simcoe raised a permanent army of militia veterans, founding the Queen's Rangers for defence and public works.

Volunteer militiamen and British regulars fought side-by-side in the War of 1812 against the Americans, as well as in the Red River Rebellion in 1870.

It wasn't until 1904 that we had a Canadian chief of the general staff. In the period leading up to the First World War, Canada developed a modern army, with medical, Army Service Corps, Engineers and Signals, Ordnance, and Corps of Guides (intelligence) branches.

...(see **President's message**, p 3)

**Kagawa** (...cont'd from p 2)

war, they all reunited in London, Ontario.)

Nineteen-year-old Kagawa ended up at work camps, clearing bush and building roads, around Schriber, Ontario, on what is now the Trans-Canada Highway, #17, on the north shore of Lake Superior. "I chose to come out here." Workers were paid 25 cents per hour, but were charged 75 cents per day for room and board. At times Kagawa felt the government was just making work to keep them busy, and there even was time for leisure such as horseshoes or fishing, but the work was hard, and "the blackflies were terrible".



Hard work on the roads in northwestern Ontario

Around the time of his twentieth birthday, in the Jackfish camp, he read a letter from his sister, who was living in London, Ontario. Some of Kagawa's friends had found work there shovelling coal. She suggested Fred try to get on there. He wasn't there a month, when he saw an ad in the London Free Press for the Selective Service. He then got on at a war plant. He was always very interested in aircraft, but, needing glasses, had no illusion of becoming a pilot. He thought he might be accepted as one of the other crew members, and contacted the RCAF. "I wanted to prove myself to them (whites), so I could walk anywhere and be a first-class citizen and nobody could say anything against me." He got a call back informing he was not eligible, because his parents had been born in Japan. The Canadian forces were not accepting ethnic Japanese. Frustrated, Fred told them, "You call me; I won't call you anymore."

One day, however, he *did* get a call-back. His boss in the plant told him to take off his overalls, wash up,

and come to his office. Waiting for him there was a *British* recruiting officer, Capt Don Mollison. British intelligence was recruiting Japanese speakers for the war in Asia, and offered to fly Kagawa and his friends to England, and enlist them at the rank of corporal. Six of them from London, and six others, from Brantford, Toronto, and other towns, went to Toronto to meet with Mollison. Just at that time, the Canadian army decided it would accept Canadian-born Japanese after all, and Kagawa and his friends enlisted at the CNE, but as *privates*. Two weeks later, they were on a train to Halifax, then were transported to England.

From England, the group was sent to Suez, then on to Poona, India, where they received their training. They were never issued any arms, however. After Poona, they went east to Calcutta, where the group was dispersed, two going to Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), two to Rangoon, Burma (now Myanmar), and the others to various posts in the Asian front. These Canadians were attached to the British army's Psychological Warfare Broadcasting Unit. The PWBU in Rangoon had borrowed two trailers from the Americans, one full of electronics and broadcasting equipment, and the other to be used as a studio.

By this time (July 1945), the tide was turning against the Japanese, and Kagawa's job was to translate news of Japanese losses and Allied victories to demoralize the Japanese troops. Twice a day, Kagawa collected and translated the latest news, and then he broadcast it for fifty minutes. Kagawa said it wasn't necessary to propagandize; there were enough *facts* to suggest Japan was going to lose. Kagawa, however, never knew who heard him or how effective he was. "This was an army which resolved never to surrender. They were fanatical."

Then, on 6 August 1945, the Americans dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima. "We were so happy. The war was ending, and we didn't have to hang around in a strange country. We could go home--to Canada." Of course, this was the ultimate in demoralizing news to broadcast to the Japanese stragglers, but Kagawa had a problem: "There was no Japanese word for 'atomic bomb'."

**President's message** (...cont'd from p 2)

By the end of WWI, Canada had mustered five divisions, under Lt-Gen Sir Arthur Currie, for service in Europe. By the peak of WWII, we had three infantry and two armoured divisions, as well as three divisions for home defence. There were three-quarters of a million men and women in the army, an army which earned its independence and renown.

Our navy also had its origins in colonial times. Armed ships served both on the coasts and the Great Lakes. The Provincial Marine served on many lakes and rivers, but proved its importance in the War of 1812 against the Americans.

The Royal Canadian Navy was formed in 1910, but was hobbled by politics in Ottawa, and starved for funding and resources. It wasn't until the late 1930s, when rising world tensions convinced the government to prepare.

The U-boat threat to vital shipping in WWII proved the value of a strong RCN. A key part of protecting shipping was naval intelligence.

The Royal Canadian Air Force was created in 1924, and operated in close conjunction with the Royal Air Force. While we produced pilots and planes, we did not have sufficient ground crews and support staff, and financing was inadequate, with the result that many RCAF pilots, navigators, and gunners were separated and mixed in with RAF crews. Under political pressure, more RCAF squadrons were formed. Well into WWII, we had forty-eight squadrons in service in various theatres.

Many critics consider the 1968 unification of the armed forces, under Defence Minister Paul Hellyer, to be the beginning of real decline in our military. The force became more "mobile", "imaginative", and "flexible", and was reoriented to Lester Pearson's peace-keeping vision. Since then, our military has continued to contract.

Political controversy aside, there is no denying the great importance of Canada's military to preserving our way of life and our independence. We should think about that a little whenever we encounter a Canadian veteran, Remembrance Day or not. □

**Kagawa** (...cont'd from p 3)

Shortly after Japan surrendered, Kagawa's Major asked what he wanted to do. He got sent to downtown Rangoon, collected swing records, and started up an English-language broadcast for a local civilian radio station. He did this for a few weeks, but he was still in the Canadian army. He was sent back to Calcutta, then to New Delhi, where he was assigned to the South-East Asia Translation and Interrogation Center (SEATIC), where he worked with American *Nisei* translating the mountains of captured Japanese war documents. "1945 was the loneliest Christmas I ever spent."

When his work was done, he had to await other Canadian intelligence staff, until a "critical mass" of them, enough to justify a flight all the way over to Canada, was assembled, around the middle of 1946.

He returned to his old job in London, then got work with the CNR. An old girlfriend, taking her PhD at U of T, advised him to get his degree, too. As an ex-serviceman, he was eligible for one month of post-secondary education for each month of service, and if he got a 'B' average or better, one additional year. There were so many veterans, however, that U of T had to send him to a satellite campus in Ajax, Ontario. He did his third and fourth years back in Toronto, and graduated in mechanical engineering in 1951.

His first job offer was from a Boston firm which was expanding to Toronto. Unfortunately, he couldn't

enter the US to be interviewed because of race. "I was Canadian, but I wasn't treated like a Canadian." He moved to Montreal to work for the Dominion Bridge Company, where he met Dorothy, also from Toronto. They married in 1953 and bought a house on Blaketon Road in Etobicoke in 1954. Kagawa was hired by Ontario Hydro, and worked in Sarnia, Nanticoke, and the Bruce Nuclear Plant, and commuted home on weekends. But Dorothy had her hands full with the kids, so Kagawa got himself transferred to head office in Toronto. He retired in 1987.

At 82, he looks back on his life, thinking about the dozens of photos in his scrapbooks--this week everything is being put into boxes, as he and Dorothy prepare to move to a condo nearby--and marvels at how he fought his own war, overcoming adversity and proving himself a true Canadian. "I often think about it as a life of decisions. The results of the decisions seemed to work out in my favour, compared to what other people went through in the war. We were fortunate--we were in intelligence, not combat. In the American army, their *Niseis* were sent and died in Italy."



Fred Kagawa relaxes at home and reminisces about the war

We close with this understated self-assessment. It is almost quintessentially Canadian, to be so modest about our history or our contribution to the world. This veteran, however, doesn't need to convince anyone he played an important role in the war, both overseas, and here at home in Canada. □

**MERRY CHRISTMAS /  
HAPPY HANUKKAH /  
HAPPY NEW YEAR**

THERE IS NO DECEMBER  
MEETING OR ALDERNEWS.

We wish you the best of the season.  
See you again 27 January 2005 !

## COMING EVENTS:

**(through 2005)** Exhibit: *Toy Stories* looks at toys and games from the 1800s to present day. A fun Christmas treat for kids of all ages. Art Gallery of Peel (Peel Heritage Complex), 9 Wellington St E, Brampton. Details: 905.791.4055.

**Friday 19 November 2004:** Unveiling of a plaque commemorating the 100th anniversary of the *Santa Claus Parade*. Nathan Phillips Square, City Hall, 1:00 pm.

**Saturday 27 November 2004:** *French-Canadian Family History Resources workshop*. The Drouin microfiches (marriages from 1760-1935), the PRDH (vital records from 1621-1799) and the *Dictionnaire généalogique du Québec ancien*. Fee: 15.00 \$, handouts included. Space limited. Register 905.949.0333 or [toronto@sfohg.com](mailto:toronto@sfohg.com). Toronto Public Library, North York Central, 5120 Yonge St. 12:30-4:30 pm.

**Friday 17 December 2004:** *A Celtic Christmas*. Sandy MacIntyre and "Steeped in Tradition" present an evening of toe-tapping Celtic Christmas music. Adults \$15.00, by advance registration only. Call 416.394.8113. Montgomery's Inn, 8:00 pm.

**(to 31 December 2004):** *Frozen Ocean: Search for the Northwest Passage*. An exhibition of materials from the Toronto Public Library's Special Collections. Books, maps and prints dating from 1578 to 1907 document 300 years of Arctic exploration. TD Gallery, Toronto Reference Library, 789 Yonge St.

**Thursday 27 January 2005:** Join **Ron Brown** for a talk on towns which thrived and towns which died. A tour of notable towns across Canada and a look at some ghost towns in Ontario. EHS monthly meeting, Montgomery's Inn, 7:30 pm..

**The Aldernews** is a publication of the Etobicoke Historical Society. Opinions expressed herein are those of the authors, and not necessarily those of the Society. Authors are encouraged to submit articles of interest to our members for consideration and publication.

The EHS is a non-profit corporation devoted to the preservation and sharing of Etobicoke's history. Donations are gratefully accepted, and receipts for income-tax purposes will be issued.

The EHS is affiliated with the Ontario Historical Society.

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