On behalf of the existing HERO committee I would like to thank the recently departed members for their valued input over the past five years. Although HERO was only officially formed in 2008, its roots go back to 1999 when I first met Donald Chan, one of Admiral Chan Chak’s twin sons. As you may have already heard, Donald, HERO President, passed away peacefully after a short illness with his family by his side on Saturday 6th July 2013. Donald is buried next to his father Admiral Chan Chak and twin brother Duncan in Hong Kong. Please go to this link for a tribute to both Donald and Duncan Chan. (http://www.hongkongescape.org/images/HK/PDF/Donald_Chan-Tribute.ppsx)

The South China Morning Post published a piece on 28th December 2008 titled: In the epic footsteps of their fathers

“Englishman Richard Hide and Nanjing born Hongkonger Donald Chan On kwok had never heard of each other until nine years ago. One afternoon in 1999, the two met for the first time in London. They sat around a table and chatted for four to five hours, without noticing how quickly the time had gone by.

After that, the two men more than 10 years apart in age became great friends, almost brothers, because of a unique bonding that outsiders could never comprehend; a bond that will never be broken.”

I have had a website covering the escape since the mid 1990’s which remains the principle source of contact by descendants, culminating in the formation of HERO in 2008.

Having achieved far more than originally expected, including the opening of the HERO exhibition in Hong Kong with family descendants from eleven escapee’s joining up to retrace the route as far as Waichow, now Huizhou. HERO is looking at going further, with an aim of getting a permanent memorial erected in China to commemorate this Sino/British achievement during the dark days of WWII.

We are looking for two or three descendants willing to come on board to help achieve our goals and keep the memory of our forebears momentous achievements alive. Committee duties will not incur any regular travel or expense. We like to hold meetings via Skype using the conference facility.

The full story of the escape is far from complete, just recently I received new information on the escape party’s stay at the Red Cross HQ in Tuyunguan, Guizhou Province. I have also been contacted by more escapee descendants.

HERO currently has committee members in Australia, Europe & the USA. Volunteer committee candidates can contact the existing members via Email to Info@hongkongescape.org

Come on board and join this exciting adventure.

Richard Hide 理查德隐藏
HERO Chairman 主席
http://www.hongkongescape.org
香港群英突围协会（二战中英联军）
**New Member Introduction** By Alison McEwan

HERO would like to welcome the following descendants who have made contact...

Julie Giles – grand-daughter of Robert Stonell, Stoker Petty Officer RN of MTB 11 – one of the party of Navy men who escaped back to Britain.

Philippa Hooper (née Robinson) whose father Bill Robinson OBE, an Indian Police Superintendent, was one of the VIP escapees.

Carol Lane (née Carr) – the daughter of Samuel Carr, Acting Stoker Petty Officer RN of MTB 10. He was also one of the party of Navy men who made the long escape back to Britain.

George Forster and his grandfather, Michael, who is a nephew of J.J. Forster, the marine engineer who died shortly after being wounded during the launch escape to Apleichau. This edition of the Newsletter tells us more about him.

**Members’ News** By Alison McEwan

Rob Macmillan is still travelling from his home in Ireland (Spitzbergen this July) and remembering our Escape trek with pleasure, especially meeting Jack Rosenthal and sharing his stories. His 13 year old granddaughter is now getting interested in the story of her great grandfather!

Rachel (Kennedy) & Markus Ketola now have a baby daughter Anja, born last November. Congratulations!

Warwick Ross’ film ‘Red Obsession’ continues to gather awards and screening invitations to international film festivals - check out the website and Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/redobsessionmovie

It is a must see for anybody having an interest in wine. I thoroughly enjoyed it: Buddy Hide Jr HERO Chairman.

http://lionrockfilms.com/#4

**Emma Oxford’s New Book** By Tim Luard (Author of Escape from Hong Kong: Admiral Chan Chak’s Christmas Day Dash, 1941)

Founder HERO member Emma Oxford gave a series of very well attended talks in March in Beijing, Chengdu, Chongqing, Shanghai and Hong Kong to promote her new book, “At Least We Lived”. The book tells the romantic story of her parents, Max and Audrey, and their experiences in Hong Kong and China during and after the Second World War.

It has already received an enthusiastic welcome. One reviewer calls it a “marvelous combination … an adventure story of a young, daring couple who found love in the midst of a terrible war, and … also a slice of history that is too often forgotten”.

Now based in Washington, Emma began work on the book when she lived in Hong Kong. She supplemented the rich store of material she found among her parents’ letters and journals with her own extensive research in the region, which took her among other places to China’s teeming wartime capital, Chungking. This was where her parents met, at a tea party given by Mme Chiang Kai-shek in 1943, the year after Max and other British officers in the escape party had flown there from Kukong to tell the world about the Fall of Hong Kong – and about their extraordinary getaway.

The story of the escape itself is told in thrilling and authoritative style in just one chapter. It draws on many sources, including Max Oxford’s own official account. This praises Chan Chak for ensuring they were always made welcome in villages, while describing the SOE’s Mike Kendall as an “outstanding leader” and Henry Hsu as an “admirable organizer”. Emma also reveals how her father had reluctantly left behind in Hong Kong his Chinese lover, a doctor called Helen. Read more at: http://atleastwelived.com/
J J FORSTER - An Unsung Hero  By Tim Luard (Author of Escape from Hong Kong: Admiral Chan Chak’s Christmas Day Dash, 1941)  

For the latest in our series of individual profiles of members of the 1941 escape party, we focus on someone who is often overlooked but who is surely worthy of special tribute as a man who sacrificed his life for the escape. Jack Forster was one of the volunteer crew of the motor launch in which Admiral Chan Chak, senior civil servant David MacDougall and the rest of the ‘VIP group’ made their initial getaway from Aberdeen. In the most dramatic incident in the entire six-month-long escape journey, the launch was brought to a halt in a blizzard of Japanese bullets -- and it was the boat’s crew who took the brunt of the fire.

Twelve men, including the wounded Chan and MacDougall, threw themselves overboard and swam to the nearby island of Apleichau. But Forster was left lying on deck alongside the boat’s helmsman, Alec Damsgaard -- both of them assumed to be dead. A third crew member, D. Harley, made it as far as the water but drowned soon afterwards.

It was later learned that the stricken launch had eventually drifted ashore on Apleichau, where Forster and Damsgaard were found to be badly wounded but still alive. Next morning local fishermen carried them by junk across to Hong Kong Island, where they were taken to hospital. Damsgaard survived but Forster could not be saved.

Jack’s wife and two small children were interned by the Japanese in Hong Kong for the rest of the war, still unaware of what had happened to him. His wife, Raymonde, later remarried and took the children, Maureen and Paddy, to live in Australia.

HERO has been unable to contact them there, but we have recently been in touch with Jack’s nephew, Michael Forster, who has provided interesting details about the background of this man to whom the survivors of the escape and their descendants owe so much.

John Jacob Forster -- known to friends and family as Jack -- was born in Co. Fermanagh, Northern Ireland, in 1902. His father was an Irish merchant navy officer, whose career at sea since the age of 14 had taken him all over the world - including Australia, where he had escorted gold convoys as a member of the Mounted Police; his mother, Ida Villerius, was Dutch, and her home was on the island of Rozenburg near Rotterdam. Jack had five younger brothers, all born in Holland, where Ida raised her children on Rozenburg until about 1917, when the family moved back to Northern Ireland and settled in Armagh.

Michael recalls that his mother, who was married to Jack’s brother Albert, always told him that Jack had been the handsomest of the six boys, of powerful physique, and “very attractive to the ladies”. Jack attended the Royal School in Armagh, playing rugby for both the school and Armagh City, and in 1919 went to Newcastle to serve his apprenticeship as a marine engineer. After serving in a number of ships as Second Engineer, he obtained his First Engineer’s certificate at Belfast in 1931 and departed the same year for China. He worked there on various passenger ships before taking up an important post as Superintendent Engineer at the Taikoo Dockyard, Hong Kong. In 1936 he married Raymonde Blackmore, daughter of a well-known Hong Kong architect.

With the coming of war, like other merchant mariners in the British colony, Jack Forster came under the Admiralty. He is listed on the Plymouth War Memorial as a Sub-Lieutenant with the Hong Kong Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve. However, some accounts from the time give him the rank of Lieutenant-Engineer. During the 17-day Battle of Hong Kong in December 1941, he was initially attached to the HKRNVR’s headquarters on board HMS Cornflower. But following the scuttling of the training sloop on December 19, Jack joined the increasingly desperate fight on land. On December 20 he helped save the life of the British military intelligence chief, Major Charles Boxer, when he and another man carried the seriously injured officer to safety at the height of a fierce Japanese attack on open ground beneath Shouson Hill.

It was just four days later that Jack received his own, fatal gunshot wound in the stomach as he helped Admiral Chan and his colleagues escape on board the Cornflower’s launch. Without his marine engineering skills to get the broken-down boat going in the first place, there might have been no available getaway craft at all, and no escape.

An obituary in the Ulster Gazette and Armagh Standard described Jack Forster as a man “whose fine character and sunny personality had gained him many friends not only in Armagh but in many parts of the world... He lived adventurously and he died adven-
Dr Robert Kho Seng Lim, Father of modern medicine in China

In 2003 I received a fax from Professor Alan Lathrop at the University of Minnesota containing information about a US Army Lieutenant overseeing the US Lend-Lease medical supplies for the embattled Chinese government of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek in its fight against the Japanese. US Army 1st Lt John Grindlay had been in China since September the previous year, and was in attendance at the Red Cross HQ in Tuyunguan in January 1942 when a party of British Royal Navy officers and ratings arrived.

Earlier this year, 2014, I was contacted by Mr. Bernard Becker who had recently visited Tuyunguan where his parents had worked at the Red Cross HQ during WWII.

In September I was contacted by the author of “It’s a Rough Game but Good Sport” with more information.

Bernard’s father, Dr Rolf Becker, had been interned in southern France after the Republican’s were defeated in the Spanish civil war in 1939. Becker escaped along with others and made their way to London where they were recruited for the Chinese Red Cross based in Tuyunguan under the direction of the Surgeon-General of the Republic of China, Dr Robert Lim. Collectively these doctors were referred to as “the Spanish Doctors.” Rolf Becker met his future wife Joan in Hong Kong while he was acquiring medical supplies to transport by Junk to Macau, then onto Guiyang and Tuyunguan. Joan, Rolf’s future wife, was employed by the family of the Director of Medical Services, Sir Percy Selwyn-Claarke. Rolf and Joan were later married in Tuyunguan in a ceremony conducted by Dr Robert Lim where Joan was for a while his personal secretary, Joan also tutored his daughter Effie.

The Royal Navy had been tasked by the highest authority in Hong Kong, the Governor, on behalf of the Imperial Government, to deliver the legendary one legged Admiral Chan Chak and his mission back to Free China, as the Colony succumbed to the overwhelming military forces of Japan on Christmas Day 1941. The Admiral fell ill at Kukong and required surgery which was carried out by Dr Samuel Moore, known as Mooi by the locals.

Jean Moore: "Mooi had removed the bullet from his wrist but he had haemorrhaged from a gastric ulcer which was no longer quiescent due to congratulatory feasts en route to Kukong. He was given a blood transfusion directly from Peredur Jones, our Welsh missionary, whom he later rewarded with a bottle of whisky."

The Moore’s moved their three year old daughter Margaret in with them to allow Chan Chak to recuperate in Margaret’s bedroom complete with Mother Goose posters. Chan Chak received many VIP visitors and he would proudly show his distinguished guests the iconic photograph taken in Waichow of him surrounded by armed Royal Navy officers and ratings. He referred to them as his “Lo Hons” who had risked their all in escorting him through the Japanese lines to Free China. Lo-Hons were ancient Chinese warriors respected by all Chinese people. The Admiral was determined to do whatever he could for their welfare as they made their way overland towards Rangoon in Burma. He contacted officials in the larger towns and cities along the way to arrange receptions and hospitality on a corporate scale.

After a five day journey by train to the railhead the party embarked upon trucks for the journey through the mountains to Guiyang. With a temperature of 104⁰, Lt Ashby required an ambulance. The dirt roads were extremely treacherous, resulting in one of the trucks overturning fifty miles from their destination, injuring several ratings in the process. Sub-Lt David Legge received a severe head wound. He was a former member of the "The Armoured Car Company" rugby team, playing in the junior divisions of the Shanghai RFC before the outbreak of war. David had also competed successfully with the Shanghai (Henli) Rowing Club.

After clearing the Customs Post at the Guiyang city gates the lead party obtained directions to the Red Cross Society of the Republic of China, in Tuyunguan high up in the mountains above the city.
A/B Lenny Rann: “We arrived at the Chinese International Red Cross premises at Kweiyang, where we were again well looked after and given the freedom of the city by the governor.”

Dr Robert Lim, a Lieutenant-General in the Chinese Army, met the first two trucks to arrive during the early afternoon.

Dr Grindlay 1st Lt US Army: “About 2 p.m. great excitement - the 40 refugee sailors & Officers who escaped Xmas day from Hong Kong arrived - 32 in the first bunch. Rain & mud on road & one truck had skidded off & turned on side - resulting in several injuries -- lacerations. Nearly all bearded. The overturned truck came on a little later than first 2 & it was evening before Gandy & several officers & a sick man [Ashby] with suspected typhoid came on. Altogether 16 officers, rest ratings, Brewer, Legge, Collingwood, Kennedy, Gee, & Parsons were younger officers.
First men all slipped & skidded through mud to new barracks. These cleaned up & fires in gas drum stoves going. Officers came to Bobby’s for cocktails and dinner.”

Lt Kennedy RNVR: “The officer who greeted us so warmly in fluent English was Doctor Robert Lim, a smartly-uniformed Chinese officer. As he drew closer the ribbons on his tunic caught my eye at once, for they were the three British campaign medals of the 1914-18 war.
Doctor Lim seemed genuinely pleased to see us, by the way he filled every minute of our two days’ stay making the visit a memorable one.”

Dr Lim, known by all as Bobby entertained the officers at his house that evening. His Scottish wife had recently passed away so his daughter Effie played the role of hostess.

Lt Kennedy RNVR: “Doctor Lim was eager to hear more news of Admiral Chan Chak who was an old friend and former golfing partner of his, and we told him what we could as we sat comfortably in his house sipping orange gin on the evening of our arrival.”

Dr Lim had not bargained on a party of British matelots who had been denied their daily spirit ration. John Grindlay wrote it more like it was!

Dr Grindlay 1st Lt US Army: “In the midst of drinking (and smoking avidly of the Granger I gave him) Gandy and about six older officers who just arrived with sick man [Ashby] came in and the room became very crowded and noisy. The latter went except Gandy. Then we had Chinese food and I helped serve Brewer and Parsons!
I am sure the arrangements pleased the men, also sure they didn’t know at what effort that had been arranged, & the cost of things procured -- as the entire Chungking gin supply of Bobby’s (Dr Lim) they drank -- Dr T F Chang -- "They drank 16 catties (1 1/3 pints) of mine.”

Four months later both Grindlay & Lim endured Lt-Gen Joe Stilwell’s famous “walkout from Burma.” Grindlay kept a daily record of their endurance.

Bobby had drawn up a schedule of events from official functions, cinema shows, boating in the local park and a football match against the trainee Red Cross team. Burns night was duly celebrated by the Scots in traditional style complete with bagpipes. Michael Sullivan who went on to become a leading Chinese art historian was driving for the Friends Ambulance Unit stationed at the Red Cross Centre near Guiyang, Michael took over the welfare of Bruce the ships dog. Later in 1942 Michael settled in Chengdu working at the museum of the West China Union University.
Dr Robert Kho Seng Lim

Effie later married a Shanghai rugby player, Oliver Edwards. They met while Oliver was escaping from the Japanese at Swatow where he had been posted by HSBC, eventually making it to Chungking.

The IJA regularly ignored international law and targeted the Red Cross convoys, so Dr Lim had no qualms about the Navy party travelling in the empty convoy of Red Cross trucks going to Kunming to pick up more US medical supplies coming up the Burma Road. Arrangements were made for the injured ratings to remain behind in the capable hands of Dr Lim’s staff to recuperate.

Lt Kennedy RNVR: "It was a somewhat jaded party which clambered into the Red Cross trucks after repeated thanks and farewells to Dr Lim and the many others who had been equally hospitable."

Bobby Lim was born on October 15, 1897 in Singapore, as such he was a British subject of Chinese parentage. Lim studied in Scotland and along with over 100,000 other Chinese he sailed from Ramsgate to support the British Army during the Great War of 1914-18. He served in the Indian Army Medical Service on the Western Front. He earned his M.A. (1919), Ph.D. (1920) and D.Sc. (1924) degrees from Edinburgh University. He began his professional career as a lecturer there.

He travelled to the USA as a Rockefeller Fellow and was associated with the University of Chicago. In 1924 he became a professor of physiology at Peking Union Medical College. Following the Japanese occupation of Manchuria the Chinese Red Cross migrated from Shanghai westwards to Tuyunguan in the mountains above Guiyang. Dr Lim oversaw the new Chinese Red Cross Medical Relief Corps HQ.

Horace W Davenport: “Robert K Lim organized medical relief corps and trained doctors, nurses and technicians to meet the needs of China at war. He supervised medical services on the field of battle from the Great Wall to the retreat with Stilwell through the Burmese jungle. He built hospitals and medical schools on Mainland China and on Taiwan, and after the war he rebuilt his country’s medical education and medical research. He was “one of the great men of China,” the abundantly decorated Lieutenant-General in the Army and Surgeon General to the Republic of China.”

From his military experience in the two World Wars he became interested in pain-relieving drugs. He discovered that pain receptors are chemo-sensitive, that pain-producing agents such as bradykinin peptides are produced when tissues of the body are injured. Additionally, he discovered that aspirin and other analgesic drugs relieve pain by combining with the pain-provoking chemicals (bradykinin peptides) and altering their function.

Following World War II, Lim established no less than ten hospitals in China before leaving to accept a position with Miles Laboratories in the USA.

Lim was elected a member of the Deutsche Akademie der Naturforscher (1932), the United States National Academy of Sciences (1942), the American Gastroenterological Association (1946), and the American College of Surgeons (1947). He died on July 8, 1969 in Elkhart, Indiana at the age of 72.

Robert Kho Seng Lim was arguably the greatest Singaporean of all time.

References
* Escape from Hong Kong by Buddy Hide Jr
* http://dartmed.dartmouth.edu/spring04/html/dateline_burma.shtml
* Bernard Becker the son of Dr Lim’s secretary, correspondence
* It’s a Rough Game but Good Sport by Simon Drakeford
* Admiral Chan Chak by his son Donald Chan (Self-published) & Admiral Chan Chak’s journals
* Escape from Hong Kong Full Circle 1939-45 by Alexander Kennedy (Self-published)
* The journal of Dr Grindlay courtesy of Professor Alan Lathrop, University of Minnesota
* At Least We Lived by Emma Oxford
* Ships log (MTB07) written up by the officer of the day throughout the escape
* Able Seaman Leonard Rann Media report in the IOW County Press
* Photos courtesy of Ashby, Hide & Lathrop.

Copyright © 2014 Hamstat Publications
Admiral Chan Chak KBE CN, *Guangzhou Museum Opening 9th April 2013*  By David Hide

April 7th 2013 I arrived in Guangzhou and the below photo was the amazing sight that greeted me on the Taxi ride from the airport into the city. I knew we were in for a big show for the museum opening. The day prior to the opening we were entertained by officials who ushered us onto a bus and taken to the Chen Ancestral Hall, built in the Guangxu reign of the Qing dynasty 1888-1893. It was designed to provide temporary accommodation for Chen family visiting the provincial capital for official discussion, imperial examination or litigation. The carving and artifacts are a must see for anybody visiting this exciting city. The officials who were taking care of us took the bus party to a museum and a magnificent restaurant for lunch where we were royally entertained to a Chinese banquet.

Tuesday 9th April Museum opening day a bus collected us from the hotel, on arrival at the museum I was astounded by the amount of people attending and with the media ensured it was going to be a day to remember. We were escorted and shown to our seats and one by one presented to the audience with a brief description of our role in HERO.

There were many speeches however I am not able to say what was said as it was conducted mainly in Cantonese. Donald’s daughter Lindsay along with Donald made a lovely speech to the attendees explaining Admiral Chan Chak’s life and achievements. Our past President Donald Chan with two of Admiral Chan Chak’s grandsons (Andrew & Aaron) thanked the museum officials and presented a silver salver on behalf of HERO to the Museum.

Chan Hoi who is a relative of the Chan family and one of China’s revered artist presented a magnificent oil painting to the museum. I am currently unable to say who the other persons in the painting are. Undoubtedly one will be Chiang Kai-Shek.

Mr Chan-Hoi at the close of the speeches all the official party were requested to be on stage for a photo shoot prior to entering the museum.

At the completion of the museum opening ceremony we were entertained with a high tea and taken into the museum to see the displays. On completion we embarked onto the bus and taken to a restaurant on the Pearl River. I would make special reference to Donald Chan for the hard work he put into this endeavour to make it such a success. The Memorial Museum of Generalissimo Sun Yat-Sen officials who sponsored the Hero representatives also their courtesy when escorting us and making sure we all arrived at all the venues on time. On a personal note a thank you to the Chan family who made me so very welcome.