

OPERATION OBLIVION

“Unbidden, they freely volunteered; unwelcomed, they served proudly. Denied every citizen’s basic rights, they fought courageously for Canada, their homeland.”

Ministry of National Defence (2003)

Directed by Jeff Halligan

Running time: 47 minutes
Feature version: 61 minutes

Distributor Contact:
Blue Ant Media
Solange.attwood@blueantmedia.ca

Media Contact:
Media Monkey Productions Inc.
info@mediamonkey.ca

Join the mission at: www.operationoblivion.com

One line

Operation Oblivion (HD, animation) is the remarkable true story of 13 Chinese Canadian civilians who were trained by the British Secret Service (Special Operations Executive), for *Operation Oblivion* - a covert 'suicide' mission that would parachute them in the jungles of the Pacific to fight the Japanese during World War II.

Short Synopsis

In the darkest days of the war in the Pacific, The British 'SOE' - an elite military team trained to facilitate espionage and sabotage - faced a critical obstacle to their operations in the Far East. How could their Allied agents infiltrate the Japanese occupied territories and establish links with the Chinese resistance without sticking out like a sore thumb? The answer came from a group of 13 Chinese Canadian civilians who volunteered for *Operation Oblivion* - a suicide mission that would parachute them into the heart of the Pacific theater to fight the Japanese - all without any support or recognition from their government. After more than 60 years of secrecy, the incredible stories of the men of 'Force 136' and the covert mission that almost changed history - are finally revealed.

OPERATION
OBLIVION



Synopsis

In the darkest days of the war in the Pacific, The British Special Operations Executive (MI6), an elite military team trained to facilitate espionage and sabotage behind enemy lines, faced a critical obstacle to their operations in the Far East – how could their Allied agents infiltrate the Japanese occupied territories and establish links with the Chinese resistance without sticking out like a sore thumb?

The answer came from a group of 13 Chinese Canadian civilians who decided to volunteer for *Operation Oblivion* – a suicide mission that would parachute them into the heart of the Pacific theater to fight the Japanese - all without any support or recognition from their government.

Already denied citizenship and burdened financially by a 'head tax', the community was banned from enlisting in the Canadian military. They were forced to fight two very different wars – one in the jungles of the Pacific and one very important war at home.

The film uncovers the stories of these unlikely heroes through a combination of animation, and a series of never-before-seen pictures taken by Henry 'Hank' Wong (the last surviving member of Oblivion) who documented their covert training from the guerilla tactics taught in the wilds of British Columbia to their final training in Australia.



OPERATION OBLIVION blows the cover off more than 60 years of secrecy to uncover the incredible stories of the men of 'Force 136' – and the covert mission that almost changed history.

The Film

ACT 1 – Pre- War Life

During WWII Chinese Canadians were among the **largest ethnic group to volunteer** to fight for Canada in the early stages of the war, despite a ban that **excluded Chinese Canadians from active service in the Canadian Military**. In 1940's Canada, **Chinese Canadians faced a restrictive society**. After the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway that employed many Chinese labourers, the Canadian Government looked for ways to stop the flow of Chinese immigration to Canada. They passed the **Chinese Immigration Act** that **levied a heavy tax** on Chinese immigrants, (\$50 in 1885- \$500 by the early 1900's) and by 1923 banned almost all-Chinese immigration to Canada. The financial burden created a **bachelor society of Chinese men** that lived and worked together, separated from their wives and children who could not afford to immigrate to Canada. They were excluded from high paying jobs, owning property, their Canadian born children were denied citizenship, they were banned from employing Caucasian women, and even barred from swimming in public pools. Something had to change.

When Canada entered **WWII on September 10, 1939**, many **Chinese Canadians** strived to contribute to the Canadian War effort to **persuade Canada to fight against Japan** that was threatening their Chinese homeland. The B.C. and Saskatchewan governments at the time put pressure on Ottawa to ban Chinese Canadians from joining the military. Then in a strange twist of fate the **British military** would offer Chinese Canadians a rare opportunity to contribute to the war effort. The British had faced heavy casualties in Malaya and Singapore with 90,000 men captured or injured, countless dead, and their closest ally the Americans still reeling from Pearl Harbour, so in an **attempt to turn back the Japanese control of the Pacific** the British decide to employ their latest in military strategy – their Special Operations Executive (the predecessor of MI6) **would train Chinese Canadians to seek out and enlist local resistance fighters** behind enemy lines. To get them in top shape, the SOE would have to train them in everything from unarmed combat to speaking Chinese fluently, in only 3 months.

The **historic meeting** in a downtown United Church in the heart of Vancouver's Chinatown the Chinese Canadian community leaders and families decide to take a **daring risk** to prove themselves to the Canadian government and decide to **volunteer their 'boys' to serve Canada**. 13 of these men would volunteer for a secret mission that would hold the fate of an entire community in their hands.

ACT 2 - The War

Hank Wong the last surviving member of Operation Oblivion **describes his covert training** at Commando Bay formerly Goose Bay (in a remote area near Penticton BC). **Using images** he took with a **small personal camera** and **animated sequences** Hank tells of his fellow Operation Oblivion team members including his cousin Norm, and the mysterious Major Kendall (a Canadian who trained in Hong Kong and who led the recruitment for the British military) and their **risky training exercises** like infiltrating the Canadian Forces battleships in Vancouver harbour, and their final preparations in Australia in the days leading up to their mission. This act ends with the **shocking events** that unfolded on the **day of their mission** and the **end of the war** in the Pacific.

ACT 3 - The War

This act picks up the **post war stories of the Operation Oblivion team** and the **battle of the Chinese Canadian community to repeal the Exclusion Act** and gain citizenship rights and the vote. Long after V-Day parades and hero's welcome the boys of Operation Oblivion return almost 9 months later to little or no fanfare. This act ends with the Vets hope for inclusion in the Canadian War Museum and the hope that their contributions to the Canadian War effort are not forgotten.



courtesy Hank Wong

A Conversation with Director Jeff Halligan

They were sworn to 25 years of secrecy, but even after that the men of Force 136 and especially the original 13 Operation Oblivion men never revealed their involvement with the British Secret Service and what would eventually be known as MI6. How did Media Monkey Productions discover this story?

Producers Micol Marotti and Bradley Lee were working on another project that brought them to the Canadian War Museum and while there, they decided to see what was at the museum to commemorate Brad's great Uncle, Frank Ho Lem- a sharpshooter from Calgary who won numerous competitions for Canada in England and ironically became a poster boy for the Canadian Army in WWII even though Chinese Canadians were not allowed to join the Canadian Army. They were surprised to discover that a partial uniform stored in the archives of the sub basement was the only representation the estimated 600 Chinese Canadians that joined the war effort had at the Canadian War Museum, never mind finding anything of Frank's. I think it was especially shocking because Brad had heard among his peers stories of Chinese Canadian heroism so he knew many men and women had distinguished themselves. So they set out to find the surviving Vets and document their war efforts and then they heard about Hank.

Hank of course is the last surviving member of Oblivion -how did that meeting unfold?

You can imagine the find – initially they set out to interview him because of his involvement with the Kent Regiment and then to find out that here is a man who is a member of the very first 13 volunteers who were recruited by the British Secret Service and trained for what is now believed to be one of the earliest clandestine missions by the Special Operations Executive (later known as MI6)! Then not only is he willing and can recount every detail of his training, but in fact had snuck in a camera and took hundreds of images of that clandestine training! What made the first meeting with him even more remarkable was the understated manner, which he presented his story and his nonchalance in volunteering for what they surely knew was a very risky operation.

After all those years of secrecy why did Hank tell his story now?

Well as Hank puts it “Everyone that could get me in trouble about this is long gone!” Joking aside, I think that although Hank has recently spoken about his military training during talks at local high schools and community Remembrance Day events he told us that even when the Government interviewed him for online commemoration projects that no one has ever asked him about Oblivion in detail. I think Hank was pleased to have an opportunity to recount his entire experience - mostly for his family.

In fact, after our interview with Hank, his son Rick Wong who was on hand to watch the filming told us he was surprised to learn of the extent of his Father’s training and some anecdotes he had never heard.

For Arthur Calderwood, son of Douglas Jung, it was a cathartic process. We were unsure if he was going to show up right up until the moment he walked through the door. We had heard that he was estranged from his Father in the recent years before Douglas’ death in 2002. He recounted for us very detailed accounts of his Father’s training, recruitment, anecdotes and even graciously brought in boxes of materials that his Father had gathered to support his campaign to gain citizenship for the community and even his Father’s *Order of Canada*.



I think the common thread in all of the interviewees is that the Chinese Canadian community is still desperately trying to preserve its history. When we spoke with Larry Wong, Chinese-Canadian military historian and he decried the lack of awareness among the younger generation of Chinese Canadians about the historical role the war Vets played in winning full citizenship rights for the community. While Lieutenant-Colonel George Ing, former President of Pacific Unit 280 told us the Vets feel an urgent need to document their stories before they are not able to recount the events accurately.

How difficult was it to research a top secret military operation that the Canadian Government didn't initiate? The archival video you use is very unique.

It was definitely challenging to find visual support material. Beyond what the Operatives had themselves we knew that we had to think outside the confines of traditional research tactics.



courtesy Hank Wong

So for instance the footage of the takeover of Hong Kong is actually from films the Japanese soldiers took themselves as they were marching into the city, the training videos are actual excerpts from secret service training videos. What I think sets our film apart is our use of animation. The animated sequences, in conjunction with Hank's images, are used to highlight key moments in the Oblivion story.

Tell me about the decision to use hand drawn traditional animation?

We had an incredible team of animators led by Kevin Micallef who works on award-winning features and television series like; Detentionaire, Handy Manny, and The Simpsons – he really led the decision to use traditional animation. The idea was that as we moved from the live action footage to the animated version it would feel like you were watching one seamless film of the event.



It was a real challenge for the team as most of the animators really had little or no experience with hand-drawn techniques anymore. For the style and authenticity of the film I think it was worth it. Winning a 2013 American Pixel Award for the animation is, I think, a testament to the strength of the animation work.

Of the 13 Oblivion members only 4 saw action after the original mission was scrapped, but certainly their battle to gain citizenship and voting rights ultimately paid off?

I think we often forget what a privilege it is to live in a free and democratic country where your vote matters. For these guys they were really fighting two battles: a physical battle in the punishing jungle climate in the Pacific against a very saavy enemy, and then they returned to fight a moral battle at home. Does it really matter what transpired after their training? I think what matters is that these guys were asked to join up for a secret mission that they knew was pretty dangerous on the slim chance that if they survived they could return to Canada and be allowed an education, maybe a chance to buy a house, pay taxes and vote.

What happened to the Oblivion mission in the end?

Well as the Oblivion guys tell it the ones selected to liberate Hong Kong suited up and were ready to parachute in, but were told the mission was scrapped at the 11th hour. Officially the reason given was that U.S. General Weidemeyer who had just taken over Command from the British of the Pacific Theatre, felt uncomfortable with an operation that would ultimately support and arm Communist resistance groups, but unofficially the men suspected it was because the General wanted sole credit for liberating the Region.

Four of the original men in Oblivion however voluteered for a secondary mission with the Australian Special Z Forces that freed and repatriated hundreds of POW's in the camps in Borneo and Sarawak. That proved an even more dangerous mission as the Japanese soldiers were so isolated they didn't trust the war was over and the men had to keep the peace for months before they received reinforcements.



courtesy Hank Wong

What happened after the war?

When the men returned home – because they joined the secret service there was no paperwork to support their active service and of course they were sworn to 25+ years of secrecy. For the men who were from British Columbia it would take almost 2 years and hard fought campaigns by men like Douglas Jung, Louey King and Roy Mah to finally repeal the Immigration Act so they could apply for citizenship and voting rights.

Even after when they did obtain their papers and had proof of service they were not allowed to join organizations like The Canadian Legion and instead got together their own unit – Pacific Unit 280 and held their own Remembrance Day ceremonies restricted to Chinese Canadian community centres and memorials. Not being in the Canadian Legion is significant to these Veterans because they are prohibited from participating or even laying wreaths down with the other Vets in official Remembrance Day ceremonies.



courtesy Ramona Mar

After the Act was repealed in 1947 it finally opened the door for men like Douglas Jung to actively participate in government and he campaigned and was elected the first MP of Asian heritage in the Diefenbaker Government and then represented Canada at the United Nations, and Roy Mah founded the longest running Chinese Canadian publication – The Chinatown News.

The 13 Oblivion operatives all survived the war even the 4 that saw action - James Shiu, Roger K. Cheng, Norman Mon Low, Louey King and Roy S.T. Chan. These four men received the Military Medal for bravery by the British Military, but ironically still are not featured or commemorated in Canadian history publications, nor were they invited to join the Canadian Legion or have a permanent place in the Canadian War Museum.

Is that the goal of this project to get recognition for these Veterans?

We have been working closely with the Canadian Government in particular with Citizenship and Immigration Canada to garner support to create a permanent exhibit commemorating these men and the approximately 600 Chinese Canadians who volunteered for service during WWII in the Canadian War Museum. For that to happen we need a strong show of support from Canadians and we are asking the public to support our petition at www.operationoblivion.com/jointhemission.

Meet the Operatives (Cast Bios)

SERGEANT JOHN KO BONG

Operation Oblivion operative

Anti-Aircraft Specialist "The Handyman"

Born in Victoria B.C. 1912. He was in active service with the 16th Canadian Scottish Reserve in 1943. He had anti-aircraft and basic training in Vernon B.C. Stationed in Gander Newfoundland for 8 months in the 56th Heavy AA Battery then returned to Camp Borden for infantry tank support. He was already a Sergeant when Kendall recruited him out of Toronto. Known for his handy man skills he was also the camp barber. After Oblivion was scraped he was redeployed in the Philippines where he repatriated POWs.

SERGEANT ROY SIN TWE CHAN

Operation Oblivion operative

Tank specialist, wireless communications "The Liberator"

Born in Victoria in 1916, he enlisted with the Canadian Scottish Reserve and also went 'active' in 1943. He was posted in Red Deer, then at Camp Borden with the Tank Corps. Roy's brothers also served in WWII. His family owned the popular Panama Café in Victoria, B.C. Roy was one of the four Oblivion operatives who volunteered for *Operation Hippo* to free POWs in the jungles of Borneo and Malaysia. He worked with Iban headhunters to infiltrate the camps and freed hundreds of men. He is one of four recipients of the British *Military Medal* for bravery.

SERGEANT Roger Kee Cheng

Operation Oblivion operative

Electrical engineer, wireless communications "The Leader"

One of the first men recruited for Oblivion. Born in Lillooet B.C. in May 1915. He was recruited by Kendall out of Toronto. He had no official papers, but just told to report to Penticton B.C. He was fluent in Cantonese and could read and write Chinese. He served as the official censor for the camp in both Canada and Australia. He was a McGill University graduate in electrical engineering and took over the Command from Kendall in Australia after the China mission was cancelled.

SERGEANT Edward 'Eddie' Chow

Operation Oblivion operative

Medical Corps "The Entertainer"

Born in Vancouver in 1919 he moved to Toronto as a teenager. He was refused an interview for the RCAF because of his Asian heritage but in 1940 joined the RCAMC as a medical orderly. He joined the Medical Corps Band at Camp Borden. His singing talent won him a spot on the Major Bowes radio show. Eddie caught Kendall's attention and was recruited for Oblivion. He was nicknamed "The Entertainer" by the Oblivion operatives because of his one-man shows.

SERGEANT Douglas Jung

Operation Oblivion operative

Military Intelligence, "**The Insider**"

Sergeant Douglas Jung is one of the first Chinese Canadians recruited for Operation Oblivion. His two brothers Arthur joins the RAF and flies more than 30 missions over Germany and his brother Ross is a military doctor who post war is recruited to work at the CIA and eventually becomes one of President Kennedy's doctors. Douglas is not dispatched on the original Operation Oblivion mission due to a parachuting training incident. He returns from the war and studies law. He is called to the British Columbia Bar 1954, and in 1957 presents himself as the Conservative candidate for Vancouver Centre. He becomes the first M.P. of Asian heritage in the Diefenbaker government and is appointed as the Canadian representative at the United Nations. He is awarded the Order of Canada and the Order of British Columbia.

Arthur Calderwood is the son of Douglas Jung and Joy Calderwood. In Operation Oblivion Arthur presents never- before- seen mementos and photos from his Father's collection and recounts the very personal story of a family dealing with their Father's secret past and his struggle to gain rights for Chinese Canadians in Vancouver. In a poignant moment, Arthur recounts when his very private father uncharacteristically reveals the flaws in the depiction of the spies in a WWII film to his young son.

SERGEANT Louis 'Louey' King

Operation Oblivion operative

Tanks Corps, wireless communications, "**The Kid**"

The youngest of the Oblivion operatives, Louey was born in 1923 in Didsbury, Alberta and joined the Canadian Army in Calgary and then the Tank Corps at Camp Borden. Kendall also interviewed him in Toronto. Louey was one of the four Oblivion operatives who volunteered for *Operation Hippo* with the SRD Z Special Unit in Borneo and Malaysia. He is one of four recipients of the British Military Medal for bravery. Post war, Louey with Roy Mah and the Jung brothers were part of the campaign to seek citizenship rights for Chinese Canadians in B.C.

SERGEANT George Thomas Lock

Operation Oblivion operative

Dental Corps, sub sabotage "**The Extractor**"

Born in July 1916 in Toronto he joined the Dental Corps in 1942. He was also a Sergeant prior to joining Oblivion and served as the dental inspector for the group.

SERGEANT Norman Mon Low

Operation Oblivion operative

Tank Corps, wireless communications "**The Wire**"

Born in Vancouver and also served in the Tank Corps at Camp Borden. He was interviewed by Kendall in Toronto and was immediately sent to Meerut for wireless operator training before joining the rest of the Oblivion team in Australia. Norman, like Douglas Jung made a bad landing during parachute training – an injury from which he never fully recovered. Low would also be awarded the British Military Medal for bravery for repatriating POW's as part of *Operation Hippo*.

SERGEANT Raymond Young Lowe

Operation Oblivion operative

Wireless operator "**The Voice**"

Raymond was born in October 1913 in Victoria, but he first enlisted in Winnipeg in 1942. Raymond was also a skilled wireless operator and also sent to Meerut with Norman Low for additional training before joining the team in Australia.

SERGEANT Jimmy Shiu

Operation Oblivion operative

Tank Corps, strategist, "**The Brain**"

One of the only operatives who is fluent in Cantonese. James was born in Saskatoon but left Canada to earn his university degree in California. He joined the Tank Corps also at Camp Borden and was sent to Meerut to train in wireless communications. Major Legg considered him the operative possessing the highest intellect of anyone at camp including the commanding officer. Jimmy would also be awarded the British Military Medal for bravery for repatriating POWs.

SERGEANT Henry 'Hank' Wong

Operation Oblivion operative

Small arms specialist, "**The Trigger**"

Henry 'Hank' Wong is the last surviving member of the original 13 Operation Oblivion operatives. Born in 1920 in London, Ontario. Prior to being recruited for Operation Oblivion, Hank trained with the Canadian Army at the new Canadian School of Infantry (Canada's chief battle school) in Vernon, B.C. where he learned how to jump off a moving truck and trained in small arms and munitions. After being selected by Major Kendall to join Oblivion, he travels to a remote location near Penticton, B.C. where he is trained in commando/guerilla warfare tactics and espionage by the British Special Operations Executive (now MI6). Hank is shipped out to Australia to complete his training and although is selected for deployment their mission is scrapped. Post war, Hank find his own way back from Australia on the Kitsilano headed back to Vancouver, B.C. and must start a new life with his Australian wife on little or no money as his time with Operation Oblivion is not part of his official military record and he is sworn to secrecy for 25+ years. He currently lives in London, Ontario.

SERGEANT Norman Wong

Operation Oblivion operative

Fusilier, Sr. Staff Sergeant "**Sarge**"

Is Hank Wong's cousin. He was born in 1916 in London, Ontario and like Hank and Eddie Chow was refused access to the air force but instead joined Canadian Fusiliers (City of London). With the Fusiliers he escorted German POW's captured in Africa from NY to Calgary and then joined the Pacific Command to push back the Japanese who had landed in Kiska in the Aleutians in 1943. He was then sent to Vernon BC and Prince George for further training. When Kendall recruited him in Vancouver he was already a Sergeant and became the Sr. Staff Sergeant during training.

SERGEANT Wing Lee Wong

Operation Oblivion operative

Wireless Communications, "**Dad**"

Wing Wong was born in 1901 and was the oldest member of the Oblivion team. He is the only Oblivion member not born in Canada, but arrived at 9 years of age and worked as a houseboy in missionary houses. He enlisted in Regina in 1941 after a devastating fire destroyed his farm and restaurant. He also trained in Vernon. Kendall and Legg both selected him as the final member of the Oblivion team.

Force 136 Operatives

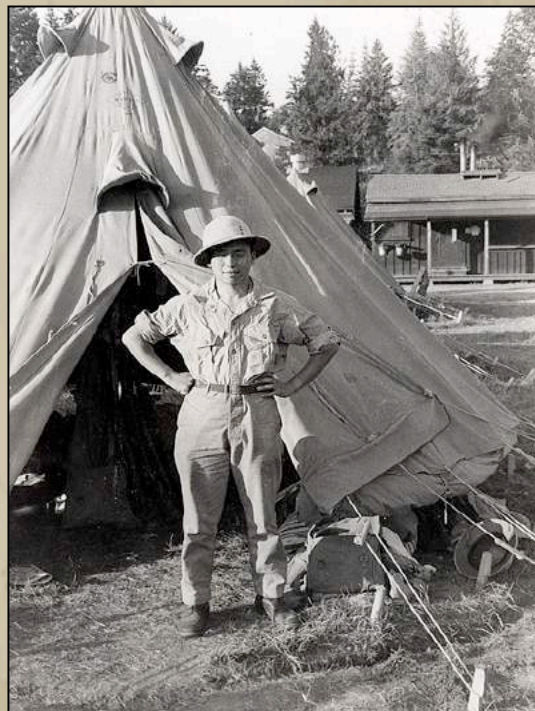
SERGEANT Roy Mah

Force 136 Operative (India unit)

Explosives Specialist

Roy Mah was already a Sergeant and enlisted with the 16th Canadian Scottish (Reserve) with Oblivion operatives Roy Chan and John Ko Bong when selected by Major Legg to lead the second group of operatives bound for India under the name FORCE 136. Officially he was recruited from Wetaskiwin, Alberta, but was pivotal in getting the Chinese Canadian community in Vancouver (his city of residence) to agree to let their 'boys' join in the war effort representing Canada. He trained in Poona as a dynamiter and led 109 men for an operation that would lead them to the Singapore/Malaysian front under the command of Lord Louis Mountbatten. He would return to Vancouver after the war and lead the effort to get voting rights and citizenship for Chinese Canadians with the support of the Unions. He founded and was the editor for 42 years of Canada's first English language magazine for Chinese Canadians -The Chinatown News.

Ramona Mar (Roy's niece) former CBC journalist worked closely with her Uncle at the Chinatown News and has interviewed him for Veteran's Affairs projects and numerous articles dealing with Chinese Canadian issues. Ramona shares family pictures of her uncle and discusses how he became one of the most influential Chinese Canadian in B.C. Roy was part of Force 136 the back up to Operation Oblivion and in post war became the editor of Canada's most influential Chinese Canadian publication *The Chinatown News*. Ramona discusses the pivotal meeting where the community (led by Roy) decided to vote on volunteering their 'boys' for the war. With Arthur Calderwood she describes how Roy Mah and Douglas Jung joined forces and start working on Douglas Jung's campaign to become an MP - the only clear road (in their minds) to achieving Canadian citizenship rights.



SERGEANT Kim Wing 'Ernie' Louie

Force 136 Operative (Kuala Lumpur and Malaysia)

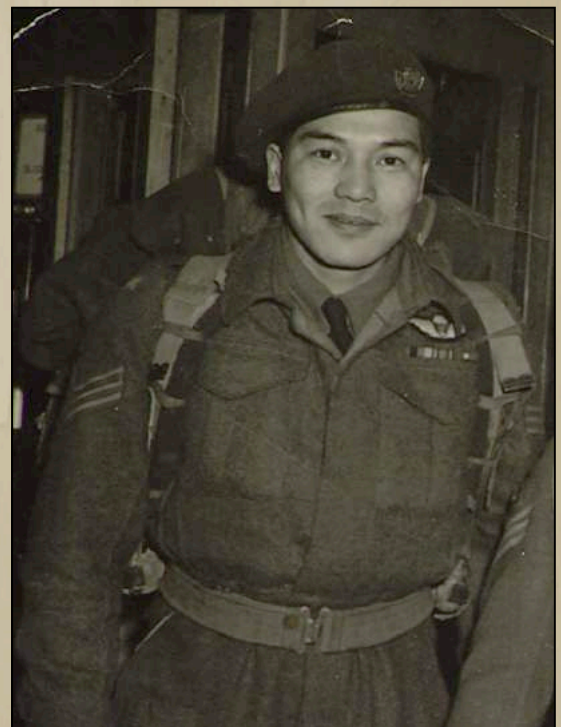
Operation Tideway Green

Communications Specialist

Ernie Louie was part of the all Canadian Tideway Green operation that was dropped in north Johore. The jungle conditions were so harsh (disintegrating boots because of the rain and mud) that instead of a three-day trip through the jungle it took them seven and they had to contend with increasing hostilities between the Malay and Chinese guerillas. By August 24, 1945 Ernie and John Hanna were left to find drop zones for the British and Australians without the aid of the local fighters. They repatriated more than 900 POWs just from one camp in Batu Phat. Ernie remained in Kuala Lumpur until the end of 1945 helping to repatriate POWs, keeping the peace between Chinese and Malay guerillas and supervising the surrender of the Japanese troops.

Brother to Ernie Louie and Quan Louie, Willis Louie describes both of his brothers' training and WWII exploits. Quan is the first person of Chinese Heritage to join the RCAF Bomber Command. Willis describes Quan's love for Canada despite the experiences of racism growing up in Vancouver. Willis describes Quan's tragic fate and Ernie's refusal to back out of Commando training. Willis describes Ernie's bravery and his repatriation of hundreds of POW's from jungle work camps even after the official Japanese surrender.

The Louie brothers return post war and also involved in the campaign to gain citizenship rights. Once the Immigration Act is repealed and they become citizens the Louie family establishes themselves in a variety of professions including founding London Drugs and IGA grocery store chain.



Courtesy of Willis Louie

LIEUTENANT Frank Ho Lem

Frank Ho Lem was born in Canton China in 1900, but came to Canada in 1905 with his mother. His father was the first person of Chinese heritage to have set up a business in Calgary. Frank joined the Canadian Reserve Army as a cadet then the 13th Canadian Machine Gun Corps. In the 1920's and '30's Frank's skills as a sharp shooter won him many awards culminating with his fourth place standing among hundreds of competitors in the British Empire shoot off near Bisley, England. In 1939 Frank was one of the first to join the army and became a small arms instructor at the Currie Barracks in Calgary. He also trained at the S-20 Japanese School in Vancouver and conducted some Intelligence training crossing paths with future Operation Oblivion operative Doug Jung. Post war Frank immediately set out to lobby the Federal Government and reverse the Immigration Act to obtain citizenship rights for Chinese Canadians. He became a full citizen in 1947. He is also the first president of Chinese Canadian Veterans' Army, Navy, Air Force Pacific Unit 280 initiated in 1947 to help Chinese Canadian WWII Veterans from Vancouver to stay affiliated. Two national Veterans groups exist in Canada: the Royal Canadian Legion and the Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans of Canada. 70 men applied to the Royal Canadian Legion for a branch, but were rejected. The men were given the charter to form a unit, known today as Pacific Unit 280.

His niece Loretta Lee describes her Uncle's sharp shooting skills, his love of serving in the Canadian military and his disappointment at the treatment of Chinese Canadian War Vets post WWII. She describes his efforts to form Pacific Unit 280.

Other Interviews:

Henry Yu

University of British Columbia Professor Henry Yu, Associate Professor, Department of History, joint appointment - Department of Asian American Studies, UCLA and author of "Thinking Orientals: Migration, Contact, and Exoticism in Modern America", vividly recalls for viewers what it meant to be Chinese Canadian in Canada and especially B.C. in the late 1930's early 1940's. He contextualizes the importance of Chinese Canadians volunteering for some of Canada's most dangerous missions and reveals to us the forces of change and relationships that helped repeal the Immigration Act in Canada.

Larry Wong

Larry Wong is the founding director of the Chinese Canadian Historical Society of B.C. and curator of the Chinese Canadian Military Museum. In the absence of Chinese Canadian military archives, Larry has painstakingly archived thousands of letters, images and collectibles for Chinese Canadian War Veterans and their families. Like Henry Yu, he grew up in Vancouver and describes pre-war experiences from a 1st hand perspective and appears periodically in the film to provide additional details.

Vivian Jung

Vivian Jung is a retired teacher and the first person to break the ban on Chinese Canadians swimming in public pools in B.C. She is also the widow of Arthur Jung (one of three Jung brothers that volunteered for service during WWII. Arthur is a pilot and flies 35 missions over Germany, survives the war and fights to get voting rights postwar; Ross is a medic and becomes President Kennedy's doctor and chief medic for the CIA in post war; and Douglas is an Operation Oblivion operative and becomes first Chinese Canadian M.P. and the first Canadian representative at the U.N. to be of Chinese heritage. Vivian presents never-before-seen images of the brothers during the war, recounts their stories and shares very private letters. She also speaks of her own battles as a schoolteacher and breaking racial stereotypes.

Senator Vivienne Poy

Vivienne Poy was the first Canadian of Asian heritage to be appointed to the Senate of Canada in 1998 and retired on Sept.17, 2012. She served as Chancellor of the University of Toronto from 2003 until 2006. While a Senator she was instrumental in having the month of May officially recognized as 'Asian Heritage Month', following the passage of a motion she introduced and is a strong supporter of initiatives that recognize Chinese Canadian Veterans contributions. She is the author of a number of books about her father Richard Charles Lee who smuggled medical supplies into Hong Kong and helped hundreds of POW's during WWII. She discusses her families' own experiences during WWII (her husband Neville Poy also barely escaped Hong Kong when the Japanese invaded) and provides insight on the role of the Chinese Canadian community and its Veterans in helping to repeal the Immigration Act.

THE CREW

Peter Starr - Executive Producer

Peter Starr's career at the National Film Board of Canada (NFB) spanned more than 20 years and 50 films including Grammy Award nominee Jane Bunnett's *Spirits of Havana*, Jennifer Baichwal's internationally acclaimed documentary feature, *Manufactured Landscapes*, and *Speakers of the Dead* and Canada's official video for the National Anthem. Among the numerous special awards he has garnered in 2005, Starr added an Academy-Award nomination for Hubert Davies' short documentary *Hardwood*. In 2007, the dramatic feature film *Amal*, which he Executive produced, garnered numerous international awards including five Canadian Genie Awards. He is currently working on the feature documentary films *Marmato* and *When I Walk*.

Micol Marotti - Producer/Writer

Micol Marotti is the co-Founder and Vice-President of Media Monkey Productions Inc. She has held producing roles at CTV, Global TV, OMNI and CityTV and has worked in managerial positions at Alliance Communications, ACTRA, The Academy of Canadian Cinema & TV, The National Film Board of Canada, the Banff World Television Festival and Temple Street Productions. She co-produced a short film, *Crust* that was officially selected for the Palm Springs Film Festival and screened at the American Cinematheque in Los Angeles. For Media Monkey Productions she wrote and produced a number of award-winning documentary films and series including; *Open Doors* narrated by Isabella Rossellini (RTI- Mediaset, LI channel), the short documentary film *Billy Bishop: Canadian Maverick* and the documentary feature and online project *Operation Oblivion*.

Bradley Lee - Co- Producer

Bradley Lee is a former journalist and historian for the Chinese Canadian community. He is a co-producer of the documentary film *Operation Oblivion* and a researcher and curator for websites on building inclusive history in Canada. He is a founding director of the Pacific Canada Heritage Centre - Museum of Migration. Lee has worked internationally, covering stories and managing news content in Asia and North America. He currently resides in Toronto.

Jeff Halligan - Director

President and co-founder of Media Monkey Productions Inc., Jeff Halligan has more than 28 years of broadcast experience. He has been involved with a wide variety of productions for which he has garnered numerous awards. As Director of Photography he worked on the multiple award-winning documentary film, *A Courage to Stand*, the factual series *Jump Cut*, *Canadian Living Cooks*, *Sugar with Anna Olsen*, *House and Home*, the Gemini award-winning series *Health on Line* and the 35mm short film drama *Crust* selected for the Palm Springs Film Festival. He produced and directed the doc films *Window on the World*, the short doc series *Postcards from TIFF* (Movieola, Rogers Television) and the award-winning *Billy Bishop: Canadian Maverick*. Halligan also produces on air promo spots for Teletoon, Teletoon Retro, and Teletoon at Night.

Kevin Micallef - Director of Animation

Kevin Micallef is a 17-year veteran of the animation industry. After graduating with honors Kevin was hired by Lucas Arts in California, followed by Disney Canada. He has worked on a slate of animated TV series that include: *The Simpsons*, *The Critic*, and *Jacob Two-Two*. He was Animation Director for Nelvana's *Ruby Gloom*, which garnered the prestigious Pucinella Award for Best Animated Series. He directed the animated television series *Grossology*, which was nominated for 6 Gemini Awards. Kevin has since directed *OH NO! Detentionaire*, and is credited with several 3D shows including *Handy Manny* and *Miss Spider*. He was part of the animation teams for the feature films; *Lilo and Stitch*, *Curious George*, *Osmosis Jones*, and *Eight Crazy Nights* starring Adam Sandler. Kevin was the first recipient of Corus Entertainment's Creative Spark Award and has garnered the 2013 American Pixie Award for Best Animation in a documentary feature for Media Monkey's *Operation Oblivion*. Kevin is an Instructor for the Worldwide Online School – "Animation Mentor".

About OMNI Television

OMNI™ is a free, over-the-air multilingual/multicultural television system committed to positive portrayal and broadcast reflection of Canada's diversity through the airing of inclusive and accessible programming. With five television stations -- in BC; Alberta (Calgary and Edmonton) and Ontario (OMNI.1 and OMNI.2) - OMNI has a combined reach to 16.5 million households in major market areas. As well as specializing in Canadian multilingual/multicultural programming, **OMNI** carries well-known International series and films - including East Asian Super Cinema and South Asian Bollywood Freetime Movies. **OMNI Television** is a part of Rogers Broadcasting Limited, a division of Rogers Communications Inc. (TSX: RCI and NYSE: RCI) which is a diversified Canadian communications and media company. For more information visit www.OMNItv.ca

About Si Entertainment

Si Entertainment is a leading full service production and global content distribution company with a diverse catalogue of over 500 hours of award-winning lifestyle, scripted, factual, documentary and reality programs, series and formats. Based in Toronto, the company's diverse catalogue includes *Live Here Buy This*, *Reno vs. Relocate*, *ER Vets*, *Pick a Puppy*, *Buy Herself*, *Pure Intentions* and *Out of Country*. Founded in 1995, Si Entertainment's high quality, engaging content is now seen in over 160 countries. www.sientertainment.ca

About Media Monkey Productions

Media Monkey Productions Inc. (MMP) is an award-winning entertainment company that develops and produces documentaries, films, and television series for theatrical, broadcast and digital formats. Since its' founding in 2004, the company has been committed to the development and production of Canadian programming for the national and international marketplace. Prime-time credits include; the critically acclaimed doc series **Open Doors** narrated by Isabella Rossellini (RTI-Mediaset), **Postcards from TIFF**, and the feature documentaries *Operation Oblivion* (narrated by Colm Feore) and **Window on the World** (OMNI TV). The company has also produced for The National Film Board of Canada's 65th anniversary, The Banff World Television Festival, the Canadian Film Centre, Planet in Focus Environmental Film Festival and TIFF Bell Lightbox. Recent awards include the Telly Award for the short documentary film *Billy Bishop: Canadian Maverick* and the American Pixie Award for both *Operation Oblivion* and *Open Doors*. www.mediamonkey.ca

FAQ's

During WWII Chinese Canadians were among the largest ethnic group to volunteer to fight for Canada in the early stages of the war, despite a ban that excluded Chinese Canadians from joining active service the Canadian Military.

There is speculation that the film *Bridge on the River Kwai* was based on Operation Oblivion.

After the original 13 of Operation Oblivion, Major Legg returned to Canada and recruited more than 100 additional Chinese Canadians personnel to become Force 136, Special Operation Executive (SOE), a group of secret agents that were trained for military intelligence working out of India and Kuala Lumpur.

Sergeant Roy S.T. Chan a Chinese Canadian from Victoria, was sent to Borneo where he lived with native headhunters (Iban tribe) and learned how to use deadly blowpipes to fight off the attacking Japanese. He became one of Operation Oblivion's most decorated commandos.

The Chinese community is estimated to have raised \$5 million – or about \$125 per person – for the war effort. [*From China to Canada, p. 189*].

OPERATION
OBLIVION



Credits for Operation Oblivion

Narrated by
Colm Feore

Director
Jeff Halligan
Producer
Micol Marotti
Producer
Bradley Lee
Writer
Micol Marotti
Cinematographer
Andy Chow
Editor
Jeff Halligan
Sound Recordist/Mixer
Chris Miller
Music Composer
Arthur Yeung
Executive Producer
Peter Starr

ANIMATION
Director of Animation
Kevin Micallef

Art Director/Bg painter
Don Gauthier
Supervising Animator
Shawn Seles

Character Design/Key Posing
Brad Coombs

Layout
Terry Lenko

Technical Director
Kevin Colbourne

Animation
Andre Beaulne
Kelly Brennan
Kirk Jorgensen

John Mahovlich
Kevin Micallef
Halya Mychaskiw
Shawn Seles

Additional Animation

Adam Arsenault
Campbell Bryer
Daniel Clermont
Travis Couch
Melanie Daigle
Ben Hu
Tom Jolliffe
James O'Connor
Dean Outschoorn
Shawn Pascuttini

Additional Bg painter

Eric Gauthier

Title sequence

Travis Couch

For Community Historical Recognition Program (CHRP)

Joan Morrison

Special Thanks:

Arthur Calderwood
George Chow
Vivian Jung
The Lee Family
Willis Louie and Family
Ramona Mar
Vivienne Poy
Henry 'Hank' Wong and Family
Larry Wong Chinese Canadian Military Museum
Tommy Wong
Professor Henry Yu

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Canadian War Museum
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Avvy Go

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Pacific Unit 280
Moy Wong-Tam
Toronto Port Authority
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The National Film Board of Canada
Additional news footage provided by
Critical Past
Bill Chong video excerpts courtesy of
The Chinese Canadian Military Museum Society "Heroes Remembered"
"Bridge On The River Kwai" trailer provided by
The Producer's Library

For OMNI/Rogers:
Paritosh Mehta
Lisa Warner
Madeline Ziniak

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