

# Rotarians served as Commandants of Hong Kong Auxiliary Police Force

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The Hong Kong Auxiliary Police Force (HKAPF) (香港輔助警察隊) is a volunteer reserve unit of the Hong Kong Police Force, originally formed in 1914 to serve as a supplementary force during natural disasters and civil emergencies. Comprising approximately 3,416 part-time officers as of June 2025 drawn from diverse civilian backgrounds, it functions as a trained manpower pool to reinforce regular policing operations.

The HKAPF's roles encompass internal security tasks such as protecting key infrastructure, staffing command centers, defending police stations, and safeguarding consular premises, alongside crowd management at major public events and routine beat patrols to maintain law and order. In alignment with the operational priorities of the Hong Kong Police Force Commissioner, its deployments extend to supporting national security efforts, protecting life and property, and aiding in crime prevention and detection, including emerging areas like technology-related offenses. Over more than a century, the Force has adapted from its emergency-response origins---rooted in pre-amalgamation reserves and special constabularies---to a professional auxiliary capable of integrating seamlessly with full-time officers during both planned operations and unforeseen crises, thereby enhancing overall public safety without reliance on conscription.

The modern Hong Kong Auxiliary Police Force was established in 1959 through the amalgamation of the existing Hong Kong Police Reserve (香港後備警察隊) and the Special Constabulary (香港特務警察隊), as enacted under the 《Hong Kong Auxiliary Police Force Ordinance》. This unification created a structured volunteer reserve to supplement the regular Hong Kong Police Force, building on colonial precedents of auxiliary units formed as early as 1914 for emergency support.

The formation responded to post-World War II security challenges, including the need for expanded policing capacity amid the British Crown Colony Hong Kong's rapid urbanization and population pressures from refugee inflows following the 1949 communist takeover in the Chinese mainland. The 1956 Riots, which highlighted vulnerabilities in public order maintenance, directly prompted the merger to streamline auxiliary operations and enhance readiness. These developments privileged empirical needs for scalable, part-time personnel over full-time hires, reflecting British colonial strategies for resource-efficient law enforcement in overseas territories.

In its early years, the Auxiliary Force focused on foundational duties such as beat patrols to deter petty crime, traffic management to handle growing vehicular congestion, and civil defense roles during potential unrest or disasters. Volunteers underwent basic training aligned with regular force standards, enabling rapid deployment to relieve overstretched officers in routine and contingency scenarios. This volunteer model proved effective in stabilizing community policing during the late 1950s economic boom, though exact initial enlistment figures remain undocumented in primary records.

In the Rotary China History, there had been 3 eminent Rotarians served as chiefs to the above-mentioned police forces:

- (1) Ts'o Seen-Wan (曹善允) – Charter Member and Vice President 1930-1932, President 1932-1933 of the Rotary Club of Hong Kong (香港扶輪社); Honorary Commissioner of the Hong Kong Police Reserve (香港後備警察隊榮譽總監) from 1920 to 1939.
- (2) Archibald John Chan Tai-Wing (陳棣榮) – Active Member of the Rotary Club of Hong Kong (香港扶輪社); Commandant of the Royal Hong Kong Auxiliary Police Force (皇家香港輔助警察隊總監) from 1987 to 1996.
- (3) Peter Chau Cham-Chiu (周湛樵) – President 1994-1995 of the Rotary Club of Hong Kong Island West (香港西區扶輪社); Commandant of the Royal Hong Kong Auxiliary Police Force (皇家香港輔助警察隊總監) from 19 September 1996 to 30 June 1997 and then Hong Kong Auxiliary Police Force (香港輔助警察隊總監) from 1 July 1997 until 18 January 2001.



## Brief History of the Forces

The history of the Hong Kong Police Reserve, now the Hong Kong Auxiliary Police Force, spans over a century, beginning as a wartime emergency unit and evolving into a permanent volunteer force.

### I. Formation and Early Years (1914-1917)

The Special Constable system was introduced in 1886, when the 《Peace Preservation Ordinance》 was passed to allow the Governor of Hong Kong to appoint an unlimited number of members of society as provisional “Special Constables” in times of emergency and shortage of manpower in the Police Force.

World War I broke out in 1914. Great Britain declared war on Germany on 4 August of the same year. The British in Hong Kong returned to Britain one after another to prepare for the war in Europe. Many of them were members of the Police Force, which resulted in a huge reduction in manpower. Sir Francis Henry May (梅含理爵士), the then Governor of

Hong Kong, appealed for volunteers to support the Force. On 23 October 1914, legislation was passed to establish the Hong Kong Special Police Reserve, one of the first auxiliary police forces in the world. These early auxiliaries operated on an ad-hoc basis, drawing from local volunteers to augment regular policing without the need for full-time expansion, reflecting colonial governance's reliance on cost-effective, community-based security measures during periods of economic strain and regional instability from the Chinese mainland. The Hong Kong Special Police Reserve was renamed the "Hong Kong Police Reserve" on 14 September 1917 and was disbanded at the end of the War in November 1918.

## II. Permanent Re-establishment (1925-1941)

- **Reactivation (1925):** In 1925, or six years later, the disbanded Police Reserve regained the Government's attention. It was called upon to support the regular Force to cope with the Canton-Hong Kong strike (粵港大罷工).
- **Formalization (1927):** It was officially and permanently established under the Hong Kong Police Reserve Ordinance of 1927. By the 1930s, amid rising labor disputes, political unrest influenced by events in China, and threats from Japanese expansionism, these units formalized into distinct formations---the Police Reserve and Special Constabulary---to handle riot control, guard key infrastructure, and counter subversive activities, thereby addressing gaps in the overstretched regular force.
- **World War II (1941):** Before World War II broke out in Europe, Japan had already invaded China. In 1938, the Japanese troops moved southward, plunging Hong Kong into an instant crisis. In July 1941, John Pennefather-Evans (俞允時), the then Commissioner of Police, set up the Hong Kong Special Constabulary, recruiting 3,000 Chinese men into the Force. The initial task of the constabulary was mainly to provide security against air raids. In September of the same year, the Government promulgated the 《Police (Militia Status) Ordinance》, which ordered all regular police officers, reserve police officers and special constables to "execute missions like militias" in the event of war. They were stationed at rice stores and food storage areas to prevent riots such as rice robberies.

During the Japanese invasion in December 1941, the auxiliary units were disbanded as the colonial administration collapsed, with regular policing duties assumed by Japanese military police (Kempeitai 日本帝國陸軍憲兵隊) who re-organized local collaborators into divided forces for enforcement. However, some special constables evaded capture and joined underground resistance efforts, conducting guerrilla operations, gathering intelligence on Japanese movements, and aiding Allied forces, which underscored the volunteers' role in sustaining covert colonial loyalty despite the occupation's brutality from 1941 to 1945. Following Hong Kong's liberation by British and Chinese forces in August 1945, the auxiliary formations were reactivated in early 1946 to assist in restoring public order, curbing widespread looting, and repatriating

displaced persons amid postwar chaos, effectively bridging the immediate shortfall in regular police manpower depleted by wartime losses and detentions. This reactivation highlighted the auxiliaries' utility in rapid-response stabilization, allowing the colonial government to prioritize rebuilding without sole dependence on military garrisons.

### III. Post-War Era and Amalgamation (1950s–1969)

- **Civil Unrest:** Following the Japanese occupation during World War II, the Hong Kong Police Force underwent significant re-organization in the post-war period to rebuild its capacity amid a depleted strength of under 2,000 officers. In the 1950s, the Reserve played a vital role in maintaining order during the Kowloon Tsai squatter fire (1954) and the Double Tenth riots (1956).
- **The 1959 Merger:** Several major events revealed that the duties of the Police Reserve and the Special Constabulary (a separate part-time force) were becoming analogous. Therefore, these two forces were amalgamated into the Hong Kong Auxiliary Police Force in 1959. The first cohort of female auxiliary police members was recruited in 1965. The Auxiliary Police Force members no longer wear an armband, but an “A” (abbreviation of “Auxiliary”) is placed before the identification number on each member’s shoulder for identification purposes.
- **Royal Title (1969):** Following their service during the 1967 riots, Queen Elizabeth II, United Kingdom, bestowed the “Royal” title on the Force in 1969, making it the Royal Hong Kong Auxiliary Police Force (皇家香港輔助警察隊).

By the 1970s and 1980s, the Auxiliary Police experienced operational expansions, shifting toward greater integration with regular units through part-time deployments for crowd management and public events, such as annual Chinese New Year celebrations, which supported Hong Kong’s rapid economic growth and urbanization. With a trained reserve of approximately 4,000 officers by the pre-handover era, the Force contributed to border security and disaster response operations, including typhoon preparedness, helping sustain low overall crime rates---Hong Kong’s reported serious crime index fell from 1,200 per 100,000 population in the 1960s to under 800 by the 1980s---through augmented street presence and rapid mobilization. This period also saw auxiliaries assisting in anti-corruption initiatives following the 1974 establishment of the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) (總督特派廉政專員公署), by providing supplementary manpower for investigations and integrity checks within the police, though primary enforcement remained with regular officers.

The Auxiliary Police’s role proved effective in fostering stability amid preparations for the 《1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration》, with low internal misconduct rates reflecting rigorous vetting and training standards that mirrored the main Force’s post-ICAC reforms, contributing to public confidence and orderly transitions without major disruptions.

#### IV. Modern Status (1997-Present)

- **Handover (1997):** With the transfer of sovereignty to China on 1 July 1997, the “Royal” prefix was dropped, and the unit returned to its current name, the “Hong Kong Auxiliary Police Force”.

The police badge had meaningful changes too. The crown at the top of the badge has been replaced by a bauhinia. The old fishing village on the badge has become Victoria Harbour in modern times and the Chinese characters “香港警察” (meaning “Hong Kong Police” ) have been added to the badge. (see figures on the first page top)

- **Current Role:** The current Auxiliary Police Force was established under the Hong Kong Auxiliary Police Force Ordinance. Today, the Force consists of approximately 3,400 to 4,500 volunteer citizens who provide a trained manpower reserve for internal security, crowd management at major events, and daily beat patrols.

When violent demonstrations against the Fugitive Offenders and Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Legislation (Amendment) Bill broke out repeatedly in 2019, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government invoked section 40 of the Public Order Ordinance empowering the Chief Executive to authorize the Commissioner of Police to appoint suitable members of various disciplinary forces to become Special Constables on a voluntary basis to help maintain law and order. The term “Special Constables” resurfaced.

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*Hong Kong Police Reserve in 1941*

*Ts'o Tsun-On, OBE, JP, Honourary Commissioner (front central sitting non-uniformed)*

*Ts'o Tsun-On (曹峻安) was the second son of T'so Seen-Wan (曹善允)*



*16 September 1977 -- George Hindhaugh (centre right), Chief Staff Officer, Recruitment and Development of the Royal Hong Kong Police Force, inspects the auxiliary police at the headquarters of the Royal Hong Kong Auxiliary Police in Wan Chai.*



*Hong Kong Auxiliary Police today*

## Dr. The Honourable Ts'o Seen-Wan, CBE, LLD, JP



Dr. The Honourable Ts'o Seen-Wan (曹善允博士), CBE, *HonLLD (HKU)*, JP (1868 - 1953) Macanese, was lawyer, politician, businessman, and educationalist in the British Crown Colony Hong Kong. He was charter member and Vice President of the Rotary Club of Hong Kong in 1930-1932, and then served the Club as President in 1932-1933.

Ts'o was honoured by the police historian as “Promoter of Hong Kong Police Reserve”. The Hong Kong Police Reserve was the lineal descendant of the temporary Police Reserve authorized by Ordinance 27 of 1914. Ts'o was appointed by Hong Kong Governor Sir Francis Henry May to serve the Hong Kong Police Reserve Unit in 1914 as a commandant. This Ordinance envisioned the creating of a special police force in an emergency and in the course of its operation when three such emergencies occurred: (1) in the 1914-1918 World War I; (2) in the Seamen's Strike of 1922; and (3) the Canton-Hong Kong General Strike of 1925-1926. On each occasion a temporary Police Reserve was created and did valuable and disciplined service until the emergency's end. Volunteer part-time constables were recruited from local Chinese citizens. Altogether temporary Police Reservists served for nearly seven years in these three emergencies.

After the Canton-Hong Kong General Strike, the Head of the Regular Police, Captain Superintendent Edward Dudley Corscaden Wolfe (香港警察司胡樂甫), and Ts'o, the Chinese Labour Controller, recommended that a permanent voluntary Police Reserve should be created. Their recommendation was accepted and put into effect by Ordinance 24 of 1927 repealing Ordinance 27 of 1914. The new Ordinance authorized the immediate creation of a permanent Police Reserve, to be mobilized wholly or partly whenever the authorities saw fit. Recruiting began the same year and the Police Reserve governed by the 1927 Ordinance has been in existence ever since.

From 1927 until 1939 World War II the Police Reserve consisted of four units---a Chinese Company, an Indian Company, a Flying Squad, and an Emergency Unit. Ts'o and Mr. Bishen Singh were the first Honorary Commissioners appointed by Hong Kong Governor Sir Reginald Edward Stubbs (香港總督司徒拔爵士). Although nothing of special note occurred

during these years the work of the Police Reserve was satisfactory throughout. As the Annual Reports of the Police Reserve Commissioners and the chiefs of the Regular Police show, they fulfilled their tasks of relieving the Regular Police from various duties, as occasion required, and of maintaining their own efficiency in the various branches of police work, by so doing.

Ts'o retired from the Police Reserve in 1939, and his second son Ts'o Tsun-On (曹峻安), OBE, JP, was appointed by Hong Kong Governor Sir Geoffrey Alexander Stafford Northcote (香港總督羅富國爵士) to succeed the Honorary Commissioner position from 1939 until 1957.

### Early Life and Professional Career

- **Birth and Education:** Born in Macao (澳門) on 10 November 1868, Ts'o was educated in Shanghai (上海) before moving to England in 1886 to attend Cheltenham College. He was qualified as a solicitor of the Supreme Court of Judicature in England and returned to Hong Kong in 1897 to establish his own legal firm Messrs. Stephens & Tso.
- **Political and Public Offices:** Ts'o became an influential figure in Hong Kong's public affairs, serving as an Unofficial Justice of the Peace for Hong Kong (非官守太平紳士) from 1918 and as a member of the Sanitary Board (香港潔淨局) (1918-1929). He was later appointed as an Unofficial Member of the Legislative Council (香港立法局) on 24 January 1929, representing the Kowloon community, and became the Senior Chinese Member on the Council in 1936 until 6 January 1937.

### Community Contributions

- **Education:** Ts'o was a significant educationalist co-founding St. Stephen's College (聖士提反書院), St. Stephen's Girls' College (聖士提反女子中學), and Munsang College (民生書院). He was instrumental in the founding and funding of the University of Hong Kong, serving as the Honorary Secretary of the Chinese sub-committee for its Endowment Fund, and serving on the Council of the University of Hong Kong (香港大學校務委員會), which later conferred an honorary doctorate of Laws upon him in 1924.
- **Medical Care:** Ts'o also helped establish the Alice Memorial Maternity Hospital (雅麗氏紀念產科醫院) and Ho Miu Ling Hospital (何妙齡醫院), improving Western medical access for the Chinese community.

### Core Business Operations

- **Merchant & Trade:** Early in his career, Ts'o worked as a merchant in Yokohama, Japan. After returning to Hong Kong, he established:
  - Tsang Foo Coal Company (曾富洋煤公司):** A firm specializing in the sale of imported coal.
  - Shing Cheong Grocery (成昌雜貨鋪):** A business providing essential ship supplies to the maritime industry.
- **Property & Land Development:** Ts'o was a key figure in the development of the Kai Tak (啟德) area in Kowloon during the 1920s. He also owned the Nam Fung Terrace Villa (南豐臺), also known as Tsang Foo Villa (曾富別墅), near Kowloon City (九龍城).

## Archibald John Chan Tai-Wing, MBE, QPM, CPM, BSc



Archibald John Chan Tai-Wing (陳棣榮), MBE, QPM, CPM, BSc (HKU) (1934 - 2010) was an Active Member who had served as Director and Club Secretary of the Rotary Club of Hong Kong for several years.

Chan first served the Hong Kong Police Force by joining the Hong Kong Police Reserve in 1953 as a volunteer police constable. He rose through the ranks to become the Commandant of the Royal Hong Kong Auxiliary Police Force in 1987---a position he held until his retirement in 1996 for over more than 40 years of service. He was the third Chinese individual to head the Auxiliaries with the official rank as “Senior Assistant Commissioner of Police (Auxiliary)” in the Regular Force.

Recognizing his service, Chen was conferred by Queen Elizabeth II, United Kingdom:

- 1978 -- Colonial Police Medal for Meritorious Service ( CPM) (殖民地警察獎章)
- 1991 -- Queen’s Police Medal for Distinguished Service (QPM) (女王警察獎章)
- January 1993 -- Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE) (大英帝國最優秀員佐勳章) for service in Royal Hong Kong Auxiliary Police Force.

### Education and Profession

- **Education:** Chan attended St. Joseph’s College (聖若瑟書院) and later graduated from the University of Hong Kong (HKU) in 1959 with a Bachelor of Science degree. During his time at HKU, he served as the President of the St. John’s College (聖約翰學院) Student Association.
- **Business & Teaching:** Before and during his auxiliary police service, Chan worked as a science teacher and head of the physics and chemistry at St. Joseph’s College. He later transitioned into the private sector, serving from plant manager and finally as Executive Director of Caltex Oil Hong Kong (香港加德士) for more than 30 years.

Rotarian Chan was the husband of Dr. The Honourable Dame Anson Chan Fang On-Sang (陳方安生女爵士), GCMG, GBM, CBE, *HonLLD (AUW)*, *HonLLD (Sheffield)*, *HonLLD (CUHK)*, *HonDLitt (HKOU)*, *HonLLD (Liverpool)*, *HonLLD (HKU)*, *HonLHD (Tufts)*, BA (HKU), JP – the first woman Chief Secretary of the Hong Kong Government in history.

## Peter Chau Cham-Chiu, BBS, MBE, QPM, CPM, FIMgt



Peter Chau Cham-Chiu (周湛樵), BBS, MBE, QPM, CPM, FIMgt (1941 - 2023), Hong Kong businessman, was the third son of Rotarian Dr. The Honourable Sir Tsun-Nin Chau (周竣年爵士), Kt, CBE, OStJ, *HonLLD (HKU)*, MA (*Oxon*), LLB (*Oxon*), JP (formerly Active Member and Director 1932-1933 of Hong Kong Rotary Club). Following father's footsteps, Chau joined Rotary and served the Rotary Club of Hong Kong Island West (香港西區扶輪社) as President in 1994-1995. Both of his elder and younger brothers were also Rotary Club Presidents:

- (1) Dr. Chau Cham-Son (周湛燊博士), OBE, CStJ, *HonLLD (Liverpool)*, BA(AS) (*HKU*), JP, President 1991-1992 of The Rotary Club of Hong Kong (香港扶輪社); Chief Commissioner of the Hong Kong Scouts from 1985 to 1996;
- (2) Patrick Chau Cham-Wong (周湛煌), President 1988-1989 of The Rotary Club of Hong Kong Northwest (香港西北扶輪社).

### Police Career

- **Regular Force (1962–1974):** Chau joined the Hong Kong Police Force as an inspector in 1962. During the 1967 riots, he served in the Traffic Department and was injured while performing bomb disposal duties (*see photo on Page 9*). He eventually rose to become the head of the Tsim Sha Tsui Criminal Investigation Department (CID).
- **Auxiliary Force (1974–2001):** Chau left the Regular Force in 1974 to manage family businesses following his eldest brother's death, but joined the Auxiliaries two months later.
- **Commandant Rank:** Chau was promoted through the ranks, becoming Deputy Commandant in 1987 (deputy to Archibald John Chan Tai-Wing), and Commandant on 19 September 1996 with the official rank as "Senior Assistant Commissioner of Police (Auxiliary)" in the Regular Force. He retired on 19 January 2001.
- **Historical Record:** Chau has made the unique record in the Hong Kong Police History that (a) he was the *LAST* Commandant of the Royal Hong Kong Auxiliary Police Force of the British Crown Colony Hong Kong (19 September 1996 – 30 June 1997); and (b) the *FIRST* Commandant of the Hong Kong Auxiliary Police Force of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China (1 July 1997 – 19 January 2001).



*1967 Riots – Police Inspector Peter Chau Cham-Chiu was injured while performing bomb disposal duties.*



*Commandant Peter Chau Cham-Chiu reviewing his Hong Kong Auxiliary Police Force*



FOR POLICE USE ONLY

ROYAL HONG KONG AUXILIARY POLICE

HEADQUARTERS ORDER NO. 21 OF 1996 PART ONE

BY

MR. HUI KI ON, QPM, CPM, COMMISSIONER OF POLICE

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CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM COMMANDANT,  
ROYAL HONG KONG AUXILIARY POLICE FORCE

My wife and I wish all members of the Auxiliary Force and their families a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Thank you for all your hard work during the past year.

輔警總監聖誕賀詞

輔警總監及夫人謹祝輔助警察隊全體人員及其家人聖誕及新年快樂。感謝各位過去一年之辛勤工作。

(CHAU Cham-chiu)

Commandant

Royal Hong Kong Auxiliary Police Force

15th December, 1996  
Hong Kong

## Education

Chau attended St. Paul's Co-educational College Primary School (聖保羅男女中學附屬小學) and St. Stephen's College (聖士提反書院), completing his secondary education at New Method College (新法書院) in 1960.

## Business

Chau served as the chairman and general manager of several family investment and mortgage firms. He founded security and property management companies in 1985.

## Community Service

Other than Rotary Club, Chau was a dedicated supporter of youth development in Scouting. He served also as Chairman of the Executive Board, Hong Kong Air Cadet Corps (香港航空青年團) from 2001 to 2016. After stepping down as Chairman, he continued as a member of the Executive Board until his resignation on 26 October 2018.



## Honours and Awards

For his nearly four decades of public service, Chau received several prestigious awards:

- (1) 1983 – Conferred Colonial Police Medal for Meritorious Service (CPM) by Queen Elizabeth II, United Kingdom
- (2) 1990 – Conferred Queen's Police Medal for Distinguished Service (QPM) by Queen Elizabeth II, United Kingdom
- (3) January 1997 – Appointed Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE) by Queen Elizabeth II, United Kingdom
- (4) 2006 – Conferred Bronze Bauhinia Star (BBS), for services to aviation education, by Government of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of People's Republic of China