



WASURERU-NAI "Never Forget"



National Newsletter of the Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association Autumn 2021 Edition

Editor: *Jim Trick*

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President's Message



Mike Babin

This has been a very difficult summer for many Canadians, as the pandemic and its variants continue to bedevil us, and forest fires have affected the homes and health of many, especially in western Canada. Two members of your Board of Directors have experienced very recent

personal tragedies, with the death of Connie Mitchell, wife of our Treasurer, Barry Mitchell, and Michel Bockus, son of our Secretary, Lucette Mailloux. We offer them the heartfelt condolences of all HKVCA members.

I was delighted to see that many of you participated in commemoration ceremonies on V-J Day. You'll find photos and brief write ups on several of these in this newsletter. A big "thank you" to the organizers of these ceremonies!

A big "Happy Birthday" to George MacDonell, who celebrated his 99th birthday on August 5!

Virtual Events

On June 21, we held our last virtual event of the season, one of four very successful sessions. There were between 80 and 130 people in attendance at each of these, which I consider to be a very good turnout. The June event was held in concert with the Royal Canadian Military Institute, and quite a few of their members attended. I hope this was the first of many such collaborations. My sincere thanks to the speakers who worked very hard to prepare and deliver such captivating and informative presentations!

If you have missed any of these events, I encourage you to watch them via our [YouTube channel](#).

We have three very interesting virtual events planned for our fall season (all at 7:30 pm ET):

Sept. 27 - [Indigenous Soldiers in 'C' Force](#), presented by Pam Heinrichs.

October 20 - [A Hong Kong Time Capsule](#), presented by Nancy Hamer Strahl.

November 22 - ["The Fence"](#) (a documentary), presented by its director, Viveka Melki.

And in December you'll be able to watch the live streaming of the annual commemorative Ceremony at Sai Wan War Cemetery in Hong Kong, presented by the Consulate of Canada in Hong Kong and Macao.

Please watch your email, our website and our Facebook pages for more information on these events and how to register for them.

I'd like to especially thank Jon Stebbe, grandson of Hong Kong Veteran Larry Stebbe, who has very generously donated the time and skills of one of his advertising agency's employees to prepare the ads for these events.

Indigenous Veterans

In our last newsletter Pam Heinrichs introduced our program to identify and honour Hong Kong Veterans of Indigenous heritage. Several families have responded and we encourage more of you to step forward so that we can properly recognize these men.

Virtual Mapping Project

Professor Kwong Chi Man of the Hong Kong Baptist University, has just announced that he and his team have launched their virtual

mapping project of the Battle of Hong Kong. Read more about this exciting project elsewhere in this newsletter!

Although I know that quite a few of you still cherish your paper copies of the newsletter, you can see that we are moving towards delivering more and more of our materials by electronic means. There is a richness to this material that just can't be provided on paper. Dr Kwong's project and our virtual events are but two examples of this. I encourage you to dive into our digital offerings!

In Remembrance

Constance Mitchell, wife of Barry Mitchell, on July 27, 2021 ([obituary](#))

June Smith, widow of B40918 [Harold Smith](#), RRC, on April 1, 2021 ([obituary](#))

From the Editor



Jim Trick

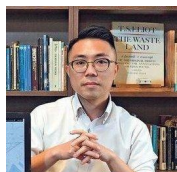
No Reason Why - Digital!

One of the most comprehensive books documenting the participation of 'C' Force in the Battle of Hong Kong is *No Reason Why* by author Carl Vincent. We have [hard copies available](#), but a project is underway to convert this document to digital format. When it was written back in 1981, the only method of sharing the information was the physical book itself, but today's technology allows us to share it digitally online. It will be readable no matter what device you're using, and all content will be searchable as well.

A dedicated team of HKVCA volunteers is currently hard at work converting paper to bits, and, once Carl gives approval to our efforts, we'll be sharing his work with the world. Thanks to Anne, Kathie, Carole, Pat and Barbara for your dedication and skills.

No Reason Why will be joining other books and accounts that we've converted to digital, such as [Leonard Corrigan's Story - A Hong Kong Diary Revisited](#) and many other [personal accounts](#).

Virtual Mapping Project



Dr Kwong Chi Man

The Battle of Hong Kong was one of the first battles of the Pacific War and was the most significant military engagement between two regular armed forces that took place in Hong Kong in its modern history. The invading Japanese forces of around 35,000 strong, faced a garrison of 13,500 consisting of Canadian, British, Indian and local troops. In eighteen days, the two forces fought in the New Territories, Kowloon, and Hong Kong Island. Hong Kong then entered a period of Japanese rule that lasted for three years and eight months.

Please protect yourselves and your loved ones by getting vaccinated, and stay safe!

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

My Thanks

Publishing this newsletter is a team effort from those who craft the articles to those who do their part to make sure everything works and looks as it should. Special thanks to our proofreaders: Kathie and Anne.

Errata

In our Summer edition, there were a couple of errors regarding the Hurd family. Fred Hurd sent us the correction:

Jim was indeed 2 yrs old when our father Edmund (spelled with a "u" and not an "o") Lionel Hurd, RRC, was sent to Hong Kong. Jim had one brother (that would be me, Fred Hurd), who was 1 year old at the time. That meant there were two children (not three) in his family, when their father went to HK.

The spatial history project "Hong Kong 1941" uses geographic information systems (GIS) to build a web map about the Battle of Hong Kong and a database of British military installations in Hong Kong during the Second World War. It offers an easy-to-use historical database for educators, tourists, and conservation professionals. Explore this exciting project [on the web](#), or [on Facebook](#).

Click on the timeline to watch how troops and support units of both the defenders and the enemy moved across the mainland and the island of Hong Kong during the 17-day battle. You will also discover biographical information about some of the defenders and the enemy.

High school history and social studies teachers should be especially interested in this terrific teaching aid.

Sgt Gander Project - Update



J P Bear

I want to take a moment to not only update you on my Gander Film Project, but also to express my sincerest admiration for all the Battle of Hong Kong Veterans, their family members and for all Canadians for their commitment to helping keep Freedom in the world. I am displaying my HKVCA Yard Sign, which I display at my home here in Phoenix, Arizona. I want to personally thank Lori Smith for sending me the Yard Sign...

Ironically, just after I put it on our deck, a neighbor stopped by and asked, "What is the sign for?" I explained what it was for and he stopped me with, "Oh, is this the organization you told us about that you are doing the film on?"

Things are developing, I have been receiving a lot of positive assistance from many of the Film Professionals in Winnipeg and Calgary. As I write, I am happy to report that a Miniseries is being pitched about various animals that have served in the military and Gander's story is the initial one being told to the CBC.

Online Update



Lori Smith

To our Board and all the volunteers behind the scenes- you know who you are- accolades from some people on Facebook "who put all this work together" "who keep their memories alive in so many different ways". Compliments and many thanks!

If you are on Facebook or notice on the 'C' Force reports something missing or something that should be added or updated- PLEASE, oh PLEASE connect, so we can enhance the HKVCA 'C' Force reports and remember these men forever!

Have you invited all your friends to 'Like' or 'Join' our two Facebook identities?? It is easy to do:

- Here's the link for the [Hong Kong Veterans Tribute](#) group. Find the +Invite up near the top. Click on it and you can invite all your FB friends.

- And for the [Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association](#) page. Find the 3 dots ... near the top and choose your action 'Liked' or 'Follow' or 'Share'. If you 'Follow' you will start receiving all the daily posts as well as find out about interesting HKVCA Virtual Events pertaining to the Battle of Hong Kong. And if you 'Share' to your FB identity (make it Public) then you are helping spread the word about the 'C' Force men who fought in the Battle of Hong Kong.

Are you a YouTube watcher?? Subscribe to '[HKVCA Docs](#)' and you will be updated as we expand the items on this online avenue.

Last Post Fund

Glen Miller (volunteer with Alberta branch of the Last Post Fund)

Created 112 years ago, the [Last Post Fund](#) has arranged funerals and, where necessary, burials and grave markers for more than 156,000 Veterans from Canada, Britain, Scotland, Ireland, Australia, Belgium, France, Poland, South Africa and other allied countries.

The mission of the Last Post Fund is to ensure that no Veteran is denied a dignified funeral and burial, as well as a military gravestone, due to insufficient funds at time of death.

The Last Post Fund is an organization that should be known to members of the HKVCA. It can potentially provide many services to those who have a link to the military. The main service is the delivery of the Funeral and Burial Program on behalf of Veterans Affairs Canada. The Last Post Fund supports other initiatives aimed at commemorating Canadian Veterans.

Other Last Post Fund activities include the Unmarked Grave Program (UMG) through which the Last Post Fund provides military markers for eligible Veterans who have been deceased for over five years and lie in unmarked graves. Since the inception of this Program in 1996, the graves of 6,946 Veterans have been properly marked across the country. In the fiscal year 2020-2021, 605 markers were paid for and installed under the Unmarked Grave Program

This program will be a good opportunity for all members of the HKVCA association to become engaged to verify and ensure those who were in 'C' force are properly marked. An initial review led to finding a veteran buried in Winnipeg whose grave is unmarked and an application has been submitted by Carol Hadley.

The Indigenous Veterans Initiative (IVI) launched in March of 2019, focuses specifically on Indigenous communities while the newly launched Lost Veterans Initiative aims to support volunteer researchers for unmarked Veterans graves.

Launched as an initiative of the Last Post Fund National Office, with the approval of VAC, the Initiative is consistent with the Canadian government's efforts towards advancing reconciliation and renewing the relationship with Indigenous peoples based on the recognition of rights, respect, co-operation, and partnership.

This program has two main components:

1. Indigenous Unmarked Graves: To provide grave markers to Indigenous Veterans deceased for over 5 years and lying in unmarked graves.
2. Indigenous Traditional Name Marking: To add the traditional names of Indigenous Veterans, where requested, to new and existing military grave markers.

Since the program's inception in March 2019, the IVI program coordinator has established relationships with 23 Indigenous

BC Report



Gerry Tuppert

It has been a particularly trying time for many of our members in the interior of British Columbia. The dangerously hot summer days combined with a persistent drought and a resurgent fourth wave have had a significant impact on all outdoor activities.



HKVCA BC wreath laid in Duncan, BC

I'm sure that despite this, many members had their moments of remembrance on August 15th in whatever method they chose to honour the memory of their relative. Whatever our personal situations or circumstances are,

We Will Remember Them

As the years march on and another important milestone approaches, it is ever so important to keep the Hong Kong story alive and relevant so that their huge sacrifice will always be recognized and appreciated for generations to come.

Prairie Prose



Carol Hadley

Greetings from Prairie Region. As I begin this report, Manitoba is in the Yellow Zone with some restrictions lifted, however we are not having any monthly meetings yet, and our plaque presentations are on hold until it is safe

community researchers across Canada. 175 UMG cases have been submitted, of which 74 have been approved to date.

If you know of a veteran who is unmarked, you can ensure they have a permanent marker to recognize their service, sacrifice and commitment by calling the **Last Post Fund at- 1 800 465 7113**. Using the Hong Kong Roll of Honour as a starting point.

The HK medallion symbol is an option to be placed on markers and we can help ensure the HKVCA database is more complete. I pause to remember those who were in Hong Kong and give thanks to your organization for educating and preserving their story. The very last honour we can bestow upon these heroes is to provide a permanent record of their service with a military marker.

Lest We Forget

This is why we have to employ whatever medium is available to maintain that exposure.

I would like to once again extend a thank you to Sam Chiu for his fine well-researched [work on the 'C' Force Postal History](#)". Sam, who is the current VP of the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada, has been working with the editor of their Nov/Dec publication to feature an article on the upcoming historic 80th anniversary of the battle.

This is a wonderful example of how one person's passion can help relate our veteran's account to a whole new audience and in doing so, inspire others to follow suit in whatever fashion.

There is a remembrance project based in Montreal called "Je Me Souviens", (I remember). They are pulling together interviews and videos of HKVCA members and relatives of our veterans. The goal is to accumulate stories and accounts of 'C Force' and present an edited version on their website and in schools. The object is to educate students about the Battle of Hong Kong and to understand the long-term impacts of war upon all facets of our peaceful society.

Inevitably there will come a time in the near future when we have no living veterans from that part of our military history.

So it will always remain vital for us as membership turned storytellers, to find innovative ways to keep that narrative alive.

Our [Facebook page](#) and [website](#), do us proud every day and help fulfill our mandate in a substantive way.

to do so. So we have 4 plaques on hold at this time.

We were saddened by the sudden passing of **Constance (Connie) Mitchell**, wife of Barry Mitchell on July 27, 2021. Our deepest condolences were extended to the family.

With some relaxed health regulations, we were pleased to have 60 plus people attend our 76th Anniversary of VJ Day service

and remember the 80th Anniversary of the Battle of Hong Kong on Sunday, August 15, 2021. With temperatures in the 30s, we took advantage of what shade was there and we had water on hand to keep hydrated. We were pleased to have the following dignitaries present: **VAC Director Lina Matos; MLA Scott Johnston, Military Envoy; City Councillor Kevin Klein for Charleswood - Tuxedo-Westwood.** Our member **Rev. Murray Still**, grandson of Joseph Oige, WG led us in prayer. We had a tribute to **George Peterson** who was unable to be with us, but is doing well in Deer Lodge and watched on TV the ceremony in Ottawa with his daughter Pat. **Donna Remillard**, daughter of Ray Sellers WG, HK read the FEPOW prayer.

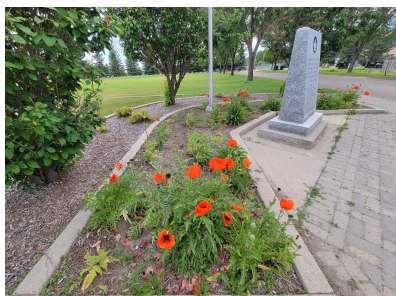


The Honour Guard of some of the veterans' associations in attendance at the Winnipeg Grenadier monument stone in Brookside Cemetery, Field of Honour for VJ Day, August 15, 2021

We were grateful for the attendance and support from Bugler – Ray Vance; Piper – Maureen McFarlane and from the Veterans Associations - Armand Lavallee, President of Joint Veterans Association; ANAF Unit 283 – Donna Hartie, Ray Roberts, President Len Cook; Portuguese Branch, President Pietro Correia; UN Peacekeepers – Charles Cameron, Glen Symes (RCMP), Len Barnsley; Charleswood Legion 100, Glen and Roswitha Napedy; Aboriginal veterans, Director Devin Beaudry; Korean Veterans - Harry Lee; IODE – Judy Bradley, Gladys Wirth and many of our members and friends.

Special thank you to Eirik Bardal and Paddy Douglas for assistance with chairs, PA system and podium from Neil Bardal Funeral Centre; Colour Party (Stan Lopata & Alex Taylor), Colleen and Wayne Stebbe, Donna Remillard, Rev. Murray Still and Dan James, FaceBook webmaster.

Lethbridge, Alberta



This new gravestone for a World War II veteran was provided by the Last Post Fund. Also, a lovely planting of poppies in recognition of the 100th Anniversary.

Kathie Carlson sent a couple of pictures of the Poppy event at

Mountainview cemetery on July 6, 2021, acknowledging the 100th

Anniversary of the Poppy. The event was covered by three crews from the media.



From left to right are the newly appointed Legion Poppy Chairman, Tom McElhinney; Kathie Carlson, Area Rep; Director of the Last Post Fund for the South, Yvonne Sugimoto, and Glenn Miller, also Last Post Fund. Glenn, a veteran, was honored and inducted into the Kainai (meaning Many Chiefs/Leaders) Headdress Society in November, 2018, to acknowledge his work over twenty years with indigenous communities. He wears the headdress at ceremonial events.

On August 13th, 2021, a small group of people assembled at 11:00 a.m., to raise the Hong Kong Commemorative flag at Lethbridge City Hall to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of the Battle of Hong Kong. In addition, Lethbridge City Hall has been lit at night in the Red and Green Colours of the Hong Kong Veterans.



L to R: Cynthia Melanson HKVCA, Glenn Miller, Lethbridge Legion/Last Post Project, Alice Bissonnette, Metis Nation of Alberta, Aleshia Melanson and Kathie Carlson, Area Rep. HKVCA, display the Hong Kong Veteran's Flag at the Lethbridge City Hall Flag raising to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of the Battle of Hong Kong.

We were fortunate to have local media attend, so we had coverage on Global TV, The Miracle Channel, CJOC Radio, and an extensive article in the Lethbridge Herald newspaper.

HKVCA'S Commemorative Flag Flying at Lethbridge City Hall August 14, 2021, to Commemorate the 80th Anniversary of the Battle of Hong Kong.

Thank you to all our members that remembered VJ Day in their own way and to those who sent in information on their event.



Ontario Offerings



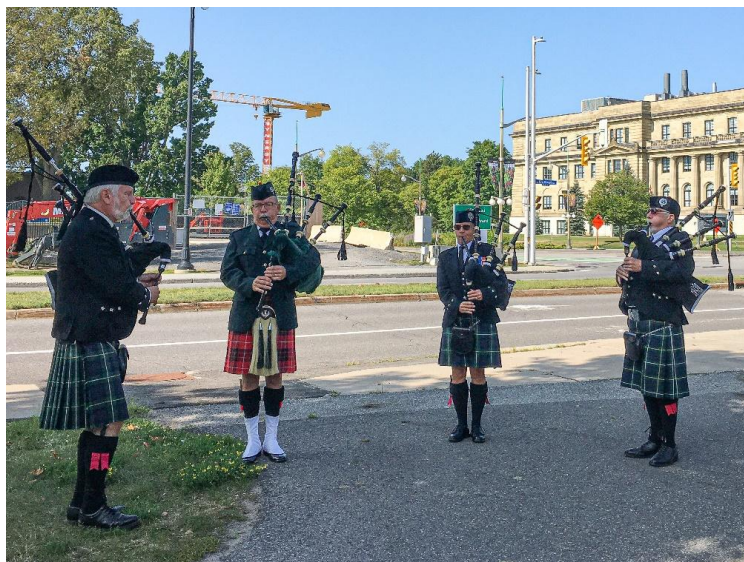
Sandy Strom

Ottawa V-J Day Commemorations

On a beautiful summer morning, August 15th, 2021, people gathered at the Memorial Wall to remember the veterans who served in Hong Kong, organized by the Ottawa Hong Kong members of HKVCA. It marked the 76th Anniversary of VJ Day or for 'C' Force, their arrival in Hong Kong for garrison duty 80 years ago.

Lt. Colonel Brian Tang, Master of Ceremonies, introduced the official guests and led the programme through The Last Post and the laying of wreaths. His eleven-year-old son recited The Act of Remembrance in English and French.

It was important to see family attendees looking for their relatives, finding his name and taking photographs at the Memorial Wall to remember.



Members of Sons of Scotland Pipe Band



Ceremony at the Hong Kong Veterans Memorial Wall in Ottawa. Pictured is the Honourable Mona Fortier, MP for Ottawa-Vanier and Minister of Middle Class Prosperity



Family members laying wreaths at Memorial Wall



Shelagh Purcell Eastern Ontario Rep.

HKVCA Ontario continues to contact surviving widows, sons and daughters of Hong Kong veterans thanks to Shelagh Purcell. Considering our hot summer, it was good to hear that Barbara Cunningham-Drew (Winston Cunningham CDC), Agnes Fehr (Victor Fehr WG), Esther Jane Geraghty (Donald Geraghty RRC), Grace Thornton (Howard Thornton WG) and Irene Firlotte (Lawrence Firlotte RRC) are all doing fine. We wish Yvonne Southworth (Donald Southworth RRC) a speedy recovery following her stroke. Messages were left for Donna Drimmie (Victor Oliver Fehr RRC), Oda Barlow (Edwin Barlow RCASC), Margaret MacDonald RRC, Mrs. F. Nugent (William Nugent WG) and Madeline Smith (John H. Smith RRC). Jim Hurd (Edmund Lionel Hurd RRC) was heading to the Eastern Townships

for a family visit. Barry Fair (John Gray Fair RRC) suggested that the Memorial Wall in Ottawa needs more advertising so people know where it is and why.



Ontario V-J Day Commemorations

BARRIE, GRAVENHURST and BRACEBRIDGE

Ceremonies at Barrie, Gravenhurst and Bracebridge ON, organized by Sue Beard.

MARKHAM
(photo below)



Members of the Royal Hong Kong Regiment (The Volunteers) assembled for a ceremony at Veterans Square in Markham, ON.

DELHI

Remember back in November 2020? Cold. Snowy.



Well, friends of mine- Josh, Ben and Noah traipsed through the cold, snowy Delhi Ontario cemetery for 2 days looking for a particular gravestone. The two young ones got kind of bored looking for the gravestone. So they started playing hide and seek the 2nd day.

Noah, Josh and Ben Wilson

All of a sudden Josh hears his boys yelling for him quite loudly. Josh thought something had happened to one of his sons and went running. There are his two boys pointing at the gravestone they had set out to find!

Our very own Derrill Henderson knew Frank Ebdon, RRC E29977, quite well. Frank spent summers in Quebec, with Lawrence Henderson, Uncle to Derrill. Derrill wanted to honour Frank. So when he saw a newly found gravestone on Facebook, he purchased the HKVCA gravestone marker.

And this is how a few of us in the area honoured the 76th anniversary of the end of WW2 on August 15th, 2021. Meeting at Frank's grave. We followed up with a picnic lunch at a local park and tried to catch up. It was so good to see you Rob, Anne, Deb, Lana, Doug, Marianne, Josh, Noah and Ben.

All Hong Kong veterans buried in Canada can be honoured by your purchase of one of these gravestone markers. Use the Contact Us form found on the top-right of most of our web pages to get in touch.



Suncatcher submitted for Patricia, Deb, Lana. Daughters of Lawrence Ross, RRC E29339

This is the suncatcher that my sister-in-law made for us 3 girls at Christmas. Isn't it beautiful!

The window is right in front of my comfy chair so I look at it all the time.



Quebec Region Report

Lucette Mailloux Muir

Greetings everyone,

Hope you all enjoyed a wonderful summer and continued to stay safe.

As you all know, we are continuing with many health restrictions and gathering limitations.

Vacation time is always quieter but our members, families and friends of our Hong Kong Veterans took the time to remember on August 15, V-J Day by depositing wreaths, flowers at their local cemetery. Many remembered privately with prayers as others gathered at the HKVCA Memorial Wall in Ottawa for a Commemorative Ceremony in memory of all Veterans. WE WILL REMEMBER THEM!

We continue with our virtual meetings.

Our membership renewal campaign for 2022 is on the way.

We continue to be in contact with all our members and the mailing of our local news letter to keep everyone informed, and hopefully we will all resume our regular activities, or at least some of them, very soon.

Thank you all. Enjoy a beautiful and safe autumn.

Take care and keep well.



Announcements

Information being collected for 2 Future newsletters

Your Stories are Important

Most of us have come to know well the stories of the battles fought, the imprisonment, and life inside the prison camp.

Now we want to hear the stories of *those left behind* during the war. What was life like for families across Canada and how did relatives cope during their loved ones' period of incarceration.

If you have a story to share - no anecdote is too small - please use the Contact Us form linked from our web pages. We will connect you to where you can send your story.

The stories received will be compiled and shared with you in an upcoming newsletter. Your stories are important and we thank you for your consideration. Megan Coles (granddaughter of WG Leonard Corrigan, X40)

Christmas without Dad

“Hong Kong Resistance Ends” (Headline in the newspaper December 25, 1941)

But for children of the soldiers, it meant daddy would not be home for Christmas. Having said goodbye a few months earlier, no one imagined this outcome nor realized how long it would last. The ‘DADS’ would not return until the fall of 1945.

There must be stories from families who experienced what it was like not to have their father home for Christmas.

Share your stories with other HKVCA families by filling in the Contact Us form found on our web pages. We will put you in contact with Shelagh Purcell. Shelagh is a daughter of WG Leonard Corrigan, X40.

Deadline is November 1st, 2021 to put submissions in the Christmas newsletter.

Searching

Can any of our readers assist Guy Chenel? If you can help, fill in the Contact Us form found on our web pages and we'll put you in contact. His request is below.

I am looking for a book where there seems to be a section about “The Canadians in the Pacific Hong Kong Brigade. There is a picture of 5 Chenell brothers. Are you able to let me know the title of this book so that I may order a copy? As best as I can read, the page number seems to end in 22. I am doing the Chenel genealogy, and would be interested in any literature on these 5 Chenell brothers. Many thanks.

Dues are Due

A gentle reminder that you can pay your dues by mail, online, or, if you're an Ontario Region member, by Interac e-Transfer. [Details.](#)

Use of Email Addresses

Due to an ongoing battle with spam emails, we ask that you use our Contact Us form linked from most of our web pages if you wish to communicate with us online. This protects our members' email addresses from being compromised. Thanks for your understanding.

Due to space limitations in this printed copy, some detail that appears in the online version has been omitted, and some photos cropped and resized.

Please note: underlined words in articles refer to links that are active in our online version or are active if you view our PDF copy on screen.

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