



WASURERU-NAI "Never Forget"



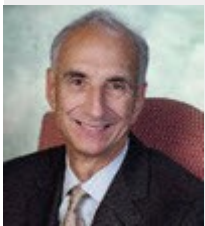
National Newsletter of the Hong Kong Veterans
Commemorative Association

Spring 2018 Edition

In This Issue:

President's Message.....1	Remembering George Watts, Winnipeg Grenadiers.....3	BC Region Report.....5
In Remembrance.....2	The Rest of the Story?.....4	Prairie Region Report.....6
HKVA Report.....2	A Hong Kong Visit "Beyond Imagination".....4	Ontario Offerings.....7
From the Editor.....2		Quebec Region Report.....7
Online.....3		Announcements.....8

President's Message



Mike Babin

Your Board of Directors is very pleased to announce the date and location of our next national convention. It will be in Ottawa on the weekend of August 14, 15 and 16, 2020. We've chosen this date to coincide with the 75th anniversary of the end of WW II in the Pacific, and the release of our POWs from their long and arduous captivity.

Many of you provided valuable input in our year-end survey of convention preferences, and we will be incorporating as much of your feedback as possible in the planning of convention activities.

We are now seeking volunteers to help with organizing the convention. If you would like to help, please contact the Convention Committee Chair, Mitzi Ross at mitziross@rogers.com (copy this link into your email application). Note that although the convention will take place in Ottawa, you need not live in or near Ottawa to volunteer!

In response to a request from some of our members, we've begun providing a summary of our Board meetings on our web site, www.hkvca.ca. We hope that this will give you some insight into the kinds of topics your Board is working on.

Mark Sakamoto, the grandson of Hong Kong Veteran Ralph MacLean, has written a book about his grandparents: on one side of the family, a Canadian soldier of the Battle of Hong Kong, and on the other side, Japanese-Canadians who were interned in Alberta for the duration of the war. His book describes how his grandparents chose a path of forgiveness as a way of protecting their children. You can read more about Mark and his fascinating book "Forgiveness: A Gift from my Grandparents" by visiting this link on the web: <http://www.cbc.ca/books> and searching. His book has been selected as a finalist in the CBC's Canada Reads program. I encourage you to read it, and to follow Canada Reads on the web or on CBC radio.

Several years ago, the Manège Militaire de la Ville de Québec (Quebec City Armoury) burned down. Fortunately, the artifacts from the museum housed at the Manège were saved, including those related to the Battle of Hong Kong. The building (and its museum) has been restored, and will be rededicated with a ceremony and dinner on May 12. Lucette Mailloux-Muir provides further details in her Québec Region report elsewhere in this newsletter.

Finally, I must report on two resignations from our Board of Directors. Ted Terry has resigned for health issues, on the advice of his doctor, and Ruth Murgatroyd has resigned due to the demands of work and family. I thank them both for their contributions to the HKVCA's mission. Bernard Leblanc has been appointed by the Board to replace Ruth. Welcome, Bernard!

Spring is not far away! It has been a challenging winter, and I'm sure we are all looking forward to it.

I look forward to hearing from you on any of these topics,

and especially with your ideas on how we can better execute our mission. Please email me at president@hkvca.ca.

"We will remember them"

In Remembrance



Last Post

Thankfully, for this edition, we have no entries here.

HKVA Report



Phil Doddridge

Hello from New Richmond. We will soon be digging out from piles of snow, the worst in a long time. We'll survive.

FACEBOOK

I'm sure that nowadays most of us tune in to Facebook to keep in touch with friends far and near.

I tune in every day to catch up in the news and to contact friends and relatives.

The benefits for us HK Vets are the postings by Lori Atkinson-Smith and Lillian Roesch. Every day there is mention of at least one of us with a short bio. of each one. This is a much appreciated service and my sincere thanks goes to these wonderful ladies. Merci, Merci.

BOOKS

I am thankful that my eyes are still good enough to permit me to read.

I am presently reading "The Barbedwire University" a book by Midge Gillies, whose father was a POW in Germany during World War II. It describes the prison camp atmosphere that persuaded prisoners to choose a profession after their liberation.

There is some mention of POWs in the Far East as well, but mostly about the POWs that were taken at Singapore.

As for myself, it was the contact with friends made in the camps that led me to go back to school and get something of an education leading to a satisfying career until my retirement thirty-five years ago. So from that point of view, the book is of special interest to me.

A mention on Facebook today is the title "The Lone Flag", by John Pownall Reeves. It examines whether Hong Kong was defensible against the Japanese. I have ordered it through Amazon and look forward to reading it.

"Voices From The Past", by Simon Hamon, a book I have recently bought and have yet to read, is an account of the occupation of The Channel Islands, Jersey and Guernsey, by the Germans during World War II.

It is of particular interest to me because I have many friends who are either natives of the Islands or descendants of Channel Islanders. There is an active group of "Islanders" here on the Gaspé who meet regularly and plan pilgrimages to the Islands.

That will be all for this time. Be good to each other and may God Bless.

Philip

(Read Phil's memoirs on our website)

From the Editor



Jim Trick (editor@hkvca.ca)

Since we've just changed to Daylight Savings Time, can Spring be far away? We hope that our offerings on these pages will elevate your spirits, as the stories published in this edition should inspire and motivate us as HKVCA

members.

We have included all of our regular updates, of course, but I want to point out some specific articles and features.

Lori Smith and Lillian Randall (see next column) have been working overtime researching and documenting individual

details about the members of 'C' Force. Using the tools of the online world, they have dug up a ton of information and in the next few months we'll be adding it to our 'C' Force web site as part of the Individual Reports feature. Make sure you read the article "The Rest of the Story", and help out if you can.

In another article, Kim Banks tells of a memorable visit to Hong Kong she made with her father last year. They visited the last resting place of Kim's great uncle, who died as a POW.

Also highly recommended is an article by Dave MacLeod, who has compiled a memorial of the time he shared with Hong Kong veteran George Watts.

Many thanks to our crew of eagle-eyed proofreaders:
Kathie, Mitzi, and Anne.

Happy reading!

Online

Jim Trick (webmaster@[hkvc.ca](mailto:webmaster@hkvc.ca))

Our mission of education is being met thanks in part to technology. We have over 1000 followers on Facebook, many of whom actively engage others in the community, and share information on 'C' Force members and the Battle of Hong Kong

Facebook has also driven up numbers of visitors to our web sites. In January we were visited 1400 times, and repeat visits totalled 2600 sessions. Our stats for February were a little lower but still impressive.

Have you thought about joining Facebook, but were worried about exposing your personal information, or being inundated with spam? I hear you, and I too was reluctant to get involved. I've since found that you can set your preferences to customize what you want to share, and what you want to view. It's a great tool - I'm amazed at the amount of information we're receiving for our reports. Thanks to our Facebook Admin, Dan James, whose daily monitoring and support keep it active and positive.

Don't forget that our online version of this newsletter has additional content and "live links", allowing you more flexibility in your reading experience. Oh, and, the photos are bigger, as well!

Remembering George Watts, Winnipeg Grenadiers



Dave MacLeod

I had the honour of meeting George Watts, who was a member of Centennial Lodge #684 (Freemasonry) in London, ON shortly before he passed away in 1984. Centennial is a "dinner lodge" (calling off and having a meal at every meeting), and George always went first, in deference to his service in Hong Kong and his subsequent ordeal as a POW in Japan. George always liked to check the ballot box after a ballot, and for many years after he died the box was checked in his memory.

The following information is mainly from what various people told me about him. In 1995 I was the master of the lodge, and we specifically honoured our veterans for the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II, and George was one member who was frequently mentioned.

During the Great Depression George found work in the lumber camps in northwestern Ontario, cutting trees. He was a healthy, muscular young man, and this was probably the peak of his fitness. Given the extremely cold weather in the winter (which is the prime time for harvesting softwood trees) the men ate massive amounts of food. One story I specifically remember hearing was that they would cook a pound of bacon, eat it, and then drink the fat in order to have the calories needed to help keep them warm and do the work of the day.

Shortly after the war broke out George went into Kenora to enlist. This is how he wound up in the Winnipeg Grenadiers, as they were the nearest army unit and were actively recruiting in Kenora at the time. George was sent to Jamaica for garrison duty, and then they were recalled to Canada.

They did not have much actual training.

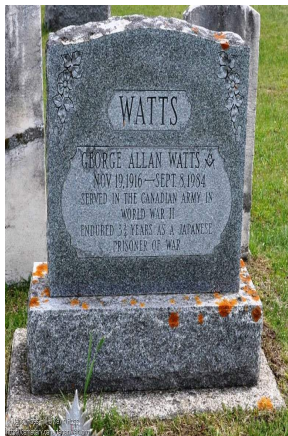
George was sent to Hong Kong and was captured there by the Japanese when the Canadians surrendered on Christmas Day - as a result Christmas was always a bittersweet holiday for him. He was in Hong Kong for almost two years, and then was sent to Japan on a very crowded ship to be a slave labourer in the factories.

Conditions in Japan were awful as there was very little food, and they were worked very hard. George said that by the end of the war he probably weighed about 100 pounds, was mainly skin and bones, and his bones had gotten soft - as a result he was hunched over and much shorter than when he first entered the service. He also said that if the war had lasted much longer he probably would not have survived - probably no more than a month or two. This came up in a discussion about the Americans dropping the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki - the prisoners knew something had happened but not the specifics, and they could tell that the guards were agitated. As far as George was concerned, dropping the bomb was the best thing that could have happened, and he said he was thankful that President Truman had ordered it used.

When the camp was liberated he was taken to an American Red Cross Hospital ship, and they had to feed the prisoners very carefully so as not to overwhelm their systems with food. He was transported to San Francisco, and then sent from there to Vancouver.

George's mother was living in London, but the Canadian Army would only pay to transport you back to where you enlisted, so he was sent to Kenora by train. He got off in the middle of a bitterly cold night, and walked over to the hotel. He then took a train next day to London, Ontario. When he arrived at his mother's doorstep she did not recognize him as he had lost so much weight and stature - he had to tell her

who he was.



George never completely recovered his health following his mistreatment as a Prisoner of War. He was very stooped over when I met him, a few months prior to his death. He worked for the Department of Veterans Affairs at Westminster Hospital in London until he retired, and remained a bachelor for the rest of his life.

George loved to collect tools, and he gave his collection of tools to

the Lambton Heritage Museum. He carved a nice gavel which he gave to my father.

George died on September 8, 1984, and is buried at the Pinehill United Cemetery in Thedford. As you can see by the inscription on his headstone, he was deeply impacted by his years as a POW.

Note from Dave MacLeod: I taught Canadian and World Studies at South Huron District High School in Exeter, and when we studied World War II I often told my students about George and his experiences, so that they would have a greater appreciation for what their ancestors went through, and what they accomplished. He was an ordinary man, who lived through extraordinary times with courage and endurance.



The Rest of the Story?

Lori Smith and Lillian Randall

We don't have quite the whole story. Yet. This past year we are making giant leaps in preserving the 'C'Force individuals stories. Will we ever have the whole story- keep your information coming!



Lillian, Dan, Jim and I thank you all for your comments and additions of information and pictures to the Facebook posts.

Some posts come as far away as Hong Kong! We are your behind the 'C' Force scene team!

It takes a load of volunteers to make this HKVCA team work. I want to thank both Ron Steffan and Susan Burrows for their research help in the past. Their help is greatly appreciated. I want to thank Lucette Mailloux-Muir for taking on the translating from French to English we currently need. Some old documents are hand written in French and my high school French doesn't cut it any longer. Thanks to Luc Boucher for doing the tedious job of scanning and posting the Awatea Manifest. This proved a wealth of information starting points. To Philip Cracknell

for tying in the exacting battle and pill box details for us. And our very own youngin' Phil Doddridge (RRC) reminiscing, adding antidotes and making these men's stories fuller and more personable to the reader - you and me! THANK YOU ALL!

We are currently looking for a volunteer with some pull at the Department of National Defence. If you have some experience with this Department and would like to help in the HKVCA's mission quest, let us know and we can explain the project.

Have you been on the HKVCA Facebook page lately? Have you been overwhelmed by the amount of information Lillian is researching and finding for us? I know I have been totally overwhelmed. I take her research, save it and get it ready for our CForce website, adding to the CForce stats and reports. Slow but sure. We will Remember them!

There are even people helping us with no direct ties to the HKVCA other than wanting to place the Battle of Hong Kong in "Joe Public's" mind - our mission statement. If YOU want to get on this team - well.....

Searching...*(Read Lori's hints regarding web searching in our online version)*

A Hong Kong Visit "Beyond Imagination"

Kim (Legacy) Banks

On November 6, 2017 my father and I embarked on a journey of a lifetime. We boarded a plane with our final destination being Hong Kong.

Why Hong Kong was a question that was asked by many of our friends and family. Well our reason was for a man either of us has met but it is his forever resting place. This gentleman's name is John Fidele Legacy, the same name that was given to my father at birth so his name would live on.

Our first day in Hong Kong would take us to Sai Wan Cemetery, the resting place of Fidele and so many other Canadian Soldiers that gave their lives defending Hong Kong.

As I walked alongside the graves my heart hurt to see all of the names of the men and imagining what suffering they must have gone through. There were many marked graves but as you continue on there were so many that read "An Unknown Soldier".

We also had a scheduled visit to the World War II Veterans Association where we met Mr. Peter Choi and he was able to

share some history with us. There was a wall dedicated to the Canadians who fought in the Battle of Hong Kong.



On November 12th we attended the Remembrance Day celebration in Central (Victoria, Hong Kong Island). This was a beautiful service where emotions were present as we gathered with strangers all remembering the same event.



Our visit to Hong Kong lasted 10 days. We walked past so many places that our soldiers would have marched by. We sat on the Star Ferry and rode across the harbour just as the troops would have when they left the mainland and were pushed to the island. We visited bunkers where heroes gave their lives to save others; we touched statues and structures where bullet holes still remain to this day; and we

hiked trails in the mountains where the troops fought battles. We stood where the last battle was fought before surrender at Stanley Cemetery, where the casualty rate was 75%. We also visited the area where the POW camps would have been, there are two plaques and two Canadian maple trees and a beautiful park now as a tribute to the men.

We will cherish these memories forever. The experience was beyond our imagination.

Kim (Legacy) Banks
Fidele Legacy

(Read about John Legacy on our 'C' Force web site)

BC Region Report

Murray Doull

Greetings to our HKVCA Family from beautiful British Columbia.

Mr. Fred Kwok is the Chairman of the Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Vancouver. In the latter part of 2018, the Chinese Cultural Centre is planning to host a WWII Historical Exhibition honoring our Chinese Canadian veterans and the Canadian Hong Kong veterans of 'C' Force. If any of our Hong Kong vets are able to attend they will be introduced and honoured.

During this event, the story of Canadian Dr. Henry Norman Bethune will be featured in a newly finished film. Dr. Bethune effectively brought modern medicine to rural China, treating sick villagers and wounded Chinese soldiers in the Second Sino Japanese War. Statues in his honour can be found in cities throughout China.

We will provide the venue and dates for this historical exhibition in the summer edition of the Wasureru-Nai. Hopefully many of our HKVCA members will attend and support this event.

In closing, I would like to share a poem with you that was written by my good friend Dr. Ken Cambon (RRC deceased) on May 15, 1942 at North Point POW Camp.

*No matter what I live through yet
There's one good man I'll ne'er forget
For even though I'm a useless bum
I had a man for my best chum.*

*He never used to boast or brag,
You'd never hear him kick and nag.
And when I'd feel like a worn out sop,
He'd say "come on kid, keep it up".*

*He never took the time to think
Before he'd give you smoke or drink.
For even though it stripped him bare,*

He was always willing to help and share.

*He'd sometimes speak of his far-away home,
How after this he'd never roam.
But alas! He'll never, never more
See his fond Canadian shore.*

*For, while attempting one fatal day,
To drive the Nipponese away,
He was hit all over by enemy fire
While we were making the Nip retire.*

He knew very well his end was near,

*Yet he didn't have a bit of fear.
He had guts for all he did
Was say with a smile "so long ol' kid".*

*So, no matter what I pass through yet,
There's one good man I'll ne'er forget.
For even though I'm a useless bum
I had a man for my best chum.*

Dedicated to Ken's best pal "Joe Delaney", killed in action on December 22, 1941.

"WE WILL REMEMBER THEM"

Prairie Region Report



Carol Hadley

Greetings from the Prairies!

I hope that everyone had a happy Christmas season and wish you all a wonderful 2018 with many blessings.

Prairie Region has 193 regular members, 30 widows and 3 veterans for a total 226 members. We hold regular monthly meetings in Winnipeg and special lunch gatherings in Alberta under the direction of Kathie Carlson and the Area Reps, with regular quarterly communication with our members, and random e-notes of special timely information.

In Manitoba we continue to hold monthly meetings at Noon on the second Thursday of the month at Viscount Gort Hotel on Portage Ave, near Polo Park, and welcome anyone who wishes to attend.



On December 13, 2017 I had the honour of being asked to be the reviewing officer for the Winnipeg Grenadier Cadets who meet on Wednesdays at

Minto Armouries in Winnipeg. There were about 30 cadets and officers and Vince Lopata was the guest speaker.

February 8, 2018, we celebrated **George Peterson's 97th birthday** (see top photo, next column) by singing and emailing a singing birthday message by all those who attended the monthly meeting.

The picture (to the right) is of the visit with Ralph MacLean in Calgary on January 25th. The lunch was provided by Marilyn, Ralph's daughter, with Norma Fuchs, John and Kathie Carlson. Terry Kwok and a friend briefly dropped by to visit Ralph, which he really enjoyed as well.



We continue to work on the National Commemorative Plaque project with one going to Selkirk Manitoba in the Legion there. We will be in touch with other areas to see if the Legions there will take a plaque.

Red River Heritage Fair is May 3, 2018. This is the 15th Anniversary of this event in which students

from all over Manitoba attend with a table top display of a concept of Manitoba History. We participate with Alex Taylor and Stan Lopata talking to students with our large Hong Kong display and taking part in the scavenger hunt whereby students seek information from the various displays. We judge presentations on the military history dioramas and give an award to the winners. We are trying to encourage the students and teachers to have an interest in the Battle of Hong Kong.



The Area reps for Alberta and Saskatchewan, have been providing input on our joint efforts to look for appropriate facilities for the "Commemorative Plaques" to be presented over the next few months. What a Team!

Notice: Winnipeg Grenadiers HK Trust Fund

On August 1st, 2018, this Trust Fund will be wound up and will close to donations and to applications for education funding.

We advise that applications for Fall 2018 post-secondary programs will be accepted on a first come, first served basis

and processed based on available funds. The final date for accepting applications is July 31, 2018.

Sincerely,
The Trustees for The Winnipeg Grenadiers Hong Kong Trust Fund

Hope everyone enjoys the nice warm weather.

Ontario Offerings

Commemorative Plaques

If you would like to obtain a Commemorative Plaque to place in your local Legion branch or other location, please contact your Regional Director to request one. You can learn more about these plaques by visiting our web site (<https://www.hkvca.ca/plaque/index.php>). Note that printing the plaque demands a very high resolution original digital file. Use the contact link on the page to gain access to the original.



Central and Southeast Area Report

Shelagh Purcell

As announced on the HKVCA website, Mark Sakamoto's book, "Forgiveness" has been selected as one of five books selected for "Canada Reads 2018". Growing up, Mark had his grandfather Ralph MacLean (RRC) who had been a prisoner of war in Hong Kong while his other grandparents were Japanese who had been moved from BC to Alberta during the war, even though they were citizens of Canada. It is hoped that attention to this story will provide readers with a part of Canadian history that is not well known.

Debates about the chosen books will take place March 26th to 29th broadcasts on CBC and CBC Radio One and live-streamed at [CBC books.ca](http://CBCbooks.ca). It should be very interesting to our second and third generations of HKVCA families.

Interest in the book "Forgiveness" was expressed by Steve Chapman, (Frederick Orland Chapman, RRC), Kathleen Mills Sevigny, (Alfred Mills, RRC) and John Russell, (Albert James Russell, RRC).

John and Bernadine Russell will travel to Europe in the spring to attend the 100th Anniversary of John's Regiment, the Lord Strathcona Horse (Royal Canadians) and the Battle

at Moreuil Wood. John has recently donated much of his and his families' military history to the War Museum in Ottawa. Rather than having the mementos shared among various family members, it was decided that the museum would be the logical place for it to be preserved. This represents three generations of military involvement.

Irene Firlotte, (widow of Lawrence Firlotte, RRC) is now living in a nursing home and is doing fine, according to her daughter Susan.

Connie Darling, (daughter of Edward Phillips, RRC) is in better health lately. We discussed the project of the Hong Kong Commemorative Plaque and whether it could be placed in the Trenton Legion.

Robert Ryan's quest to find his cousin's grave was detailed in the last newsletter. As a follow-up to this wonderful story, Robert says that family members of Jack Arthur, (RRC), have now been able to visit The Memorial Wall in Ottawa and found Jack's name with the other soldiers involved in the Battle of Hong Kong.

Looking forward to Spring.....



West Central Area Report

Pam Newhouse

As I write this it is snowing very heavily here in Niagara with predictions of 15-20 centimetres of snow overnight. After an unusually harsh winter here we are all looking forward to spring more than usual this year.

On Saturday June 16th at 11:30, I will be hosting my annual HKVCA luncheon at Bettys restaurant here in Niagara Falls so be sure to mark that date on your calendar! Invitations will be sent out in May with the necessary details. I hope to see many members there. Why not make a day of it and throw in a few winery tours? It'll be June before we know it along with the accompanying warm weather. See you then!

Quebec Region Report



Lucette Mailloux Muir

Greetings everyone from a sunny Quebec.

For those of you familiar with "The Sugar Season", well it is in full action in our region. With the spring time days and cool nights our maple trees are at their best for the making of maple syrup. What a delight for the sweet tooth!

A warm welcome extended to Bernard Leblanc from the Atlantic Region as the new Region Director.

Earlier this year we held an executive meeting with the reading of the year end statement for 2017, and to date statements for 2018. All is well, and we thank all our members for their membership renewals, donations and contributions.

For the last few years, we have been sending personal birthday wishes to our members and for 2017, we also mailed Seasons Greeting Cards to all our Veterans and Widows. From comments received, this project is well appreciated by all for remembering them on these special days.

We are working on the Commemorative Plaque Project and have been in contact with local Royal Canadian Legion Branches. Work is still in progress.

When the nice weather returns, we will continue walking through our local cemeteries to locate as much info as possible for our deceased Hong Kong Vets.

On May 12, 2018, Les Voltigeurs de Quebec will be hosting a special ceremony for the official re-opening of the Manège Militaire "Drill Hall", destroyed by fire years ago. They will also be re-dedicating the RRC Plaque which was restored by them a few years ago. All Hong Kong Vets will be receiving a personal letter of invitation to participate and an RSVP as soon as possible would be appreciated.

The day will begin at 9 am at the Basilica, parade through Old Quebec City to the Manège Militaire for the

inauguration at 2 pm of a new historical site re German cannons captured by the Canadians at Vimy, 1917-18. The ceremony of the RRC Plaque is for all guests. Following, there will be a Gala-Dinner (on pre-reservation \$\$) with the VIP, Special Guests and Military.

It will be a long but very emotional day for our Veterans and guests. If interested contact Lucette at 1-450-375-7439 and I will give you more info as it becomes available.



Like many of you, our eyes were focused on the 2018 Winter Olympic Games in Pyeongchang, Korea. The Irving families of Quebec City and Ontario regions were very proud to have Lewis Irving, grandson of the late Morton Irving (RRC) and the nephew of the late Desmond Irving competing in Freestyle Skiing. Since the age of 11 Lewis has trained and

already has to his credit many great wins. He was first overall in the Nor-Am Cup for aerials, Rookie of the Year in Deer Valley at the World Cup. Another great breakthrough at the 2017-18 World Cup as he finished third at the opener in Secret Garden, China World Cup. At Pyeongchang Lewis did not make it to the podium but is already training for the Beijing 2022 Olympics. Good luck in Beijing!

That is it for this time. To all a very Happy St. Patrick's Day and to all mothers have a very nice and enjoyable Mother's Day.

Announcements

Turn Volunteer Work into \$\$\$

Many of our members spend time volunteering for the HKVCA (and other organizations). Did you know that employers often offer grants to charitable organizations which are based on the hours of volunteer work done by their employees and retirees? One such example is **CN Rail** but there are many others.

Please take a moment and check with your employer. You may be surprised!

Sharing

Did you enjoy this newsletter? Why not share it with someone else who may have an interest in our association.

Change of Address?

Moving? Just moved? Don't forget to let us know - it costs the Association money each time a newsletter is returned by the post office, but more importantly, we don't want to lose contact with you!