



WASURERU-NAI

"Never Forget"

National Newsletter of the Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association

Spring 2022 Edition



Editor: *Jim Trick*

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President's Message



Mike Babin

A major part of the HKVCA's mandate is to educate Canadians about the Battle of Hong Kong. The 80th anniversary of the attack on Hong Kong was an excellent opportunity to tell Canadians about the Battle, and I was gratified to see that across the country there were many local and national news stories and events to mark this significant anniversary. You can see a list of some of them [here](#). We also released an excellent [video](#) in collaboration with the Canadian War Museum, which has been viewed hundreds of times so far.

Thanks to everyone who participated in commemoration events! Your efforts will help ensure that the story of the Battle of Hong Kong is never forgotten.

Board of Directors Nominations

The call for nominations was sent out in our December newsletter and followed up with an email and letter reminding members to submit their nominations by February 15. As of the close of nominations, we have received 7 valid nominations for the 10 available directorships. Therefore, an election will not be necessary. The slate of Directors will be confirmed at our Annual General Meeting. The nominated Directors are:

- Mike Babin (Ontario Region),
- Carol Hadley (Prairie Region),
- Bernard LeBlanc (Atlantic Region),
- Lucette Mailloux Muir (Quebec Region),
- Barry Mitchell (Prairie Region),

- Stephanie Mitchell (Prairie Region),
- Gerry Tuppert (BC Region).

Congratulations to all, and a special welcome to Stephanie Mitchell who will serve on our Board for the first time!

Former Director Mark Purcell was nominated but has decided not to serve this term. We thank Mark for his dedication and contributions to our Board over the past 4 years.

Thanks too, to volunteers Kathie Carlson, Norma Fuchs, Cynthia Melanson and Jim Trick for their hard work as our Nominations Committee.

Annual General Meeting

Our AGM will be held on Tuesday, April 26 at 2 pm Eastern Time. The meeting will be held virtually, and all members are encouraged to participate. Details below.

New Dues Payment Process

We are pleased to announce that we now accept Interac e-transfers for payment of dues, donations and purchases from our HKVCA Store. As of May 1, we will no longer accept PayPal payments. Please see Barry Mitchell's article elsewhere in this newsletter for details.

Royal Canadian Legion "Honour Our Veterans" Banners

Legion branches across Canada are conducting a program in conjunction with their municipalities' councils to hang banners commemorating local veterans on street lamp posts. Please

consider approaching your local Legion branch to honour your Hong Kong Veteran with a banner.

Virtual Events

Our first virtual event of 2022, with noted Hong Kong historian Tony Banham speaking on the shipping of POWs from Hong Kong to Japan, was a big success. If you missed it, you can watch the recording [here](#).

Upcoming events are:

March 21 - The WW2 Civilian Internment in Hong Kong (register [here](#)) by Martin Heyes and Julien Lehoux.

April 18 - The Story of Gander, the Newfoundland Dog by Sue Beard and George MacDonell.

September 19 - Life in the POW Camps by Nathan Greenfield.

In Remembrance

Roderick Coughlan, Cornwall, Ontario, son of RRC Peter Gordon Coughlan E30230 on November 10, 2021

Madeline Smith, Port Stanley, Ontario, widow of RRC John H. Smith E30121 on November 30th, 2021 Laurence née Samson Dallain, widow of Charles C. Dallain RRC E30434, on Jan 21, 2022

Cameron Tradewell, member of HKVCA, son of Lauren & Chuck Tradewell and grandson of John Cameron WG L13165, passed away on February 11, 2021.

Online Update



Jim Trick, Webmaster

Search...The material contained in our various websites has expanded dramatically over the past several years, making it more challenging for our visitors to find information of interest amongst thousands of pages. Seasoned web users know that the best tool to zero in on this valuable information is the Search utility. We have expanded our search options to include multiple search resources, rather than just Google. Different search engines index the web at different rates, therefore you'll get different results from each. I hope that all of our visitors will take advantage of this [valuable tool](#). Great for minimizing frustration!

November 21 - Lives Lived: Capt E. Lionel Hurd by Fred Hurd.

These events are free and open to everyone, whether HKVCA members or not. Please invite your friends and family to watch!

The November presentation by Fred Hurd about his father is another of what I hope will be many virtual events where family members of Hong Kong veterans speak about their veteran's story before, during, and after the war. If you would like to speak at one of these events, please email me at president@hkvca.ca.

I know I've said this before, but it does look as if the COVID crisis is easing, and life is beginning to return to normal. Let's hope that's true! Enjoy your spring!

We Will Remember Them

Beverley A. Laidlaw, wife of William (Bill) Laidlaw, WG H6681, passed away on December 7, 2021 at the age of 96

Yolande Foley Ross, widow of Raymond Ross, RRC E29243 on November 29, 2021

Goodbye to PayPal: Over the past few years we've offered PayPal as our online dues payment option. Times are changing, and now that Interac e-Transfer is widely accepted, we are switching to this service for online payments. Barry has more details in his article below. So, our PayPal option will pack its bags as of the beginning of May. This event will have no effect on those members who have previously paid their 2022 dues using this service.

Little-Known Casualties in Jamaica

Received by email from: S.E. (Steven) Dieter CD MA FRHistS, Captain (Retired)

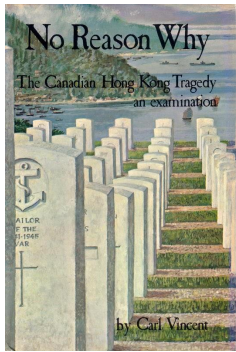
I deployed to Jamaica in 2011, and "discovered" the Canadians buried there - including the Grenadiers who died there. I would like to read *From Jamaica to Japan* to see what the author says about his time in Jamaica, since it ties in to what I hope will be my dissertation on the Canadians in the Caribbean during the Second World War.

I know it doesn't exactly tie in with HKVCA, but some of those men did serve in an area before they left for Hong Kong,

No Reason Why - Digital!

Jim Trick

Our loyal readers will recall that in our Autumn 2021 Edition, we indicated that the book *No Reason Why* by Carl Vincent was being converted to a digital format by our team of industrious editors. I'm pleased to announce that this complex project has been completed and is [ready for your viewing](#).



The result, available to everyone, will add significantly to the story of 'C' Force and assist researchers far into the future. Of course, the content will be indexed by online search engines.

The digital edition is designed to be viewed on a wide variety of devices: desktops, tablets, and smartphones. Chapters can easily be printed using your browser's print service. For those who

wish to hold a copy of the book in their hands, the option to purchase the hardcover version remains, and details are available on our [Suggested Reading](#) web page.

Chinese-Canadians Tell the Story

Mike Babin

I recently heard a startling fact: from the beginning of the attack on Hong Kong by the Japanese Imperial Army on December 8, 1941 to the end of the war, over 300,000 Hong Kong residents were killed or went missing. Considering that the population of Hong Kong at the time was about 1.6 million, this was a huge proportion of the city's residents. Nearly all of these people would, of course, have been Chinese.

Since the War, and especially during the period of the takeover of Hong Kong by China in 1997, Canada has welcomed tens of thousands of immigrants from Hong Kong. Undoubtedly many of these had family or friends who were among the lost. But interestingly in my chats with these immigrants, many say that the story of the Battle of Hong Kong is not well-known among

and that's been forgotten by most Canadians. Not sure if you saw David Common's story from our deployment in 2011, but a couple of the Grenadiers' grave markers appear in it, as do I briefly. [▶ Canadian War Graves in Jamaica](#)

*(If you have a copy of *From Jamaica to Japan* you can part with to help Steve, please contact us using our [Contact form](#))*

Our crew learned a lot as we tackled this conversion. Our approach was to take a digital photo of each page, then use an Optical Character Recognition (OCR) application to produce a digital copy. Of course, this process is prone to error, so proofreading became a critical step in producing an accurate copy. By chance, we came across "Google Lens" which made our work easier and produced accurate results.

I was concerned about the photos as the hardcover edition contains many which add significantly to the quality of the contents. Thanks to Carl's scanner, we were able to produce high-quality copies for inclusion in the digital version.

We owe Carl a debt of thanks for allowing this project to go forward, and for his active support. Many thanks to the editing and proofreading team: Anne, Pat, Carole, Kathie and Barbara.

their families and friends, and in particular, they are not aware that Canadians fought and died there. But once they learn this story, they are keen to learn more, and to join their fellow Canadians in recognizing the role of 'C' Force in the Battle of Hong Kong.

So it is heartening to see that there is a very active group of former Hong Kongers across Canada who make a point of commemorating the Battle of Hong Kong and highlighting the role of Canada's soldiers in defending the city.

Here are just a few examples:

- Members of the Royal Hong Kong Regiment (The Volunteers) Association, under the leadership of Lt

Larry Lau (Ret'd) have for years made a point of travelling from Toronto to Ottawa to attend the commemoration ceremonies at our Memorial Wall. They also hold an annual ceremony at the cenotaph in Markham, north of Toronto. Their annual Foundation Day Regimental Dinner always honours the veterans of 'C' Force. Their colleagues in the Hong Kong Ex-servicemen's Association are partners in these commemorations.

- In Calgary, Brian Wong and his colleagues at Tic Tac Toe Creative Studio have produced a [documentary](#) about Ralph MacLean which they have shown to students at Chinese schools in the area and have published on YouTube.
- In Toronto, the Vision Youth group headed by Eric Li has held a number of commemorative ceremonies and expositions on the Battle, whose objective is to ensure that the story is heard and understood by younger Chinese-Canadians.
- Senator Vivienne Poy, the driving force behind the proclamation of Asian Heritage Month in Canada, and her husband Neville, have long championed the story of the Battle and were very actively involved in fundraising for our Memorial Wall in Ottawa.
- Jack Leong, the Director of the Richard Charles Lee Canada Hong Kong Library at the University of Toronto has organised expositions, panel discussions and speakers on the topic of the Battle.
- Postal historian Sam Chiu has researched and published articles on the postal history of 'C' Force. He was recently awarded "Best Article" in the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada's journal for this work.
- Photographer Alfred Sung has created a [Facebook page](#) dedicated to honouring the members of 'C' Force, and has produced several commemorative videos.

- Ivis Tsang in Edmonton writes for a newspaper aimed at helping Chinese immigrants integrate into Canadian life. She has recently written and published a story about the role of Canadians in the Battle.
- Nancy Siew has been a long-time supporter of the Hong Kong Veterans, beginning with her career at Veterans Affairs Canada. She has been an enthusiastic and vocal participant in many commemoration ceremonies over the years.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention that in addition to the Canadian Chinese community embracing the story of the Battle, there is a very active and involved group of Hong Kong Chinese residents with the same goal. A couple of examples:

- Evan Chan has established a group called Live.Thing History. He and his group search for and acquire artifacts, and have run re-enactments of the Battle. At the request of the Consulate of Canada some of Evan's collection was displayed at December's commemorative ceremony at Sai Wan War Cemetery.
- David Lee has been extremely helpful in keeping an eye on renovations at Sham Shui Po Park, the site of the former Sham Shui Po POW camp and two plaques commemorating the Canadians who were interned there, with a view to ensuring that the local government continues to respect the history of this significant location.

We salute these folks and thank them for their dedication to telling the story of the Battle of Hong Kong!

Poetry Contest - Winning Entries

Gerry Tuppert

Hello again and congratulations to all the membership poets out there. The 80th Anniversary national poetry contest was a memorable way for all of us to reflect on the battle and what the aftermath felt like for so many. I suspect that as sons and daughters of our HK veterans there were many sentiments and words expressed we could commiserate with. It really is another powerful method of saying, **We Will Remember Them**. I would like to reintroduce our contest judge Gary Geddes himself, an acclaimed poet and author. His recently reissued book "The Ventriloquist" contains an intimate section called Hong Kong Poems. As you will see his insights were both thoughtful and thorough in his reading of the compositions sent in.

Prize-winning entries are included on a separate sheet. Make sure to visit our [Poetry Submission page](#) and read all the fantastic and moving entries.

We thank him for taking the time to do this for us and to those who participated.

Gary Geddes

I'm so grateful for all of the poems submitted, each of which comes from the heart. At its best, poetry is an expression of deep feeling and a love of language. It flies beneath the radar, nests in the ear, alters our chemistry and can change the way we see the world and ourselves. It's not

a contest, but a call to action and a source of healing that speaks to the wounds in each of us, the part that's so often in ruins. So, my recognition here is not a judgement of talent, but a very subjective response to those images and rhythms that most caught my attention and spoke to me musically. Here's the order in which three poems etched themselves most powerfully in my memory.

First Prize- Fiarra Ember Nixon: One of the images that touched me deeply in Fiarra's "Poem for my Father the POW," was the memory of her and her father sitting on a mat at home, post-war, imagining they "rode magic carpets over elephants, tigers, and lions, and farms." This image of escape, or transcendence, is indeed the stuff of poetry, a reminder of what must have been required to survive the horrors of war and POW camps. Poetry makes its appeal through the senses, so Fiarra's reference to the smell of pipe smoke and clutching her father's trousers as they soared above and beyond memories of lice and insufficient rice grabs my attention.

Second Prize- Trevor Toews: I'm also impressed with the rhythmic intensity and confident use of traditional rhyme and metrics in Trevor's poem "Many," about his grandfather Edward Toews. You can feel the conductor's baton come

down firmly on the three strong stresses in the second and fourth lines. They're called anapestic feet: two short or unstressed syllables followed by one long or stressed syllable.

Many are gone and few remain, of the bold and the brave
and the strong,

But we will remember the price they paid, in defence of the
isle of Hong Kong.

Third Prize- Sandra MacLeod: I was quite taken by Sandra's poem "An Unfinished Life," about her uncle, Sergeant John Oliver Payne, who escaped from the POW camp, but was recaptured and killed. How interesting that she focuses on the chess set he had carved and completed at age 17, six years before his death in Hong Kong. The details she provides are so strong that I imagine him calculating the 'moves' of his escape with equal care; and I wonder what role kings, queens and emperors played in his demise in that terrible, deadly game of chess called war.

Thank you all for sharing your poems with me. I am deeply honoured.

Hong Kong Volunteer Defence Corps – Portuguese Co.



Kathie Carlson

The history of the Hong Kong Volunteers Defence Corps goes back to May 1854, where a militia was established by the British Colonial Government of Hong Kong. Home defence units were raised in various British Colonies

with the intention of allowing regular units tied up on garrison duty to be deployed elsewhere.

In 1862, the Hong Kong Volunteers was re-established, and again disbanded. It was re-established in 1917, and renamed as the Hong Kong Volunteers Defence Corps (HKVDC). They were actively engaged in guard and patrol duties during World War I, the only military unit left in Hong Kong.

The HKVDC met their severest test in fighting that took place in the crucial weeks before the fall of Hong Kong on Christmas Day, 1941. On December 8, 1941, the HKVDC deployed a total fighting strength of 2200 men, - all ranks in 7 infantry companies, 5 artillery batteries, 5 machine guns companies, and the armoured cars platoon. While they experienced only light action in the New Territories at the beginning of the Japanese attack, the Volunteers were heavily

engaged on Hong Kong Island, especially during the battle of Wang Nai Chung Gap, and Stanley. Casualties were heavy. After the Battle of Hong Kong, 289 were listed as missing or killed, and others became prisoners of war.

In the book *My Wartime Experience, December 1941 - December 1945*, written by Philippe Yvanovich, a Corporal in the Hong Kong Volunteers Defence Corps, Philippe writes- "It may seem strange that there is no record of the Portuguese involvement in the Volunteers between its founding and 1939, that the Volunteers were formed against external threats, where the Portuguese Community being permanent residents were more useful in the Auxiliary Constabulary." These men were Portuguese Civilians who were bankers and clerks, who had field training one day a fortnight, doing light infantry training where the army instructors would demonstrate field tactics. In the Battle of Hong Kong, they would show how well they learned. Units such as the Corps No 5 (Port) Company (Machine guns), trained for one year on the pillboxes at Wong Nei Chung Gap. Philippe indicates that in 1941, their group was to protect installations against dive bombings. The Volunteers would be scattered in small sections like Aberdeen

Dockyard, Hong Kong Electric Power Station, Hong Kong Star Ferry Terminal and many more. Philippe wrote – “The absurdity of the setup was that we had never been at any of the locations or anywhere remotely like it!”

Phillipe, at 20 years of age, oversaw a seven-man squad of Portuguese Company No 5, along with family and friends Edo Silva, who worked at the China Light Power Station, Aboti Silva, Tony Alves, Roberto Marques, and Meme Gonsalves. They received the call up for mobilization of the Volunteers on December 7, 1941. Their post was Kowloon Godown, overlooking the Star Ferry Terminal. Philippe writes that on December 11, 1941, the evacuation of Kowloon started. The small squad of the HKVDC were on the roof of the Godown, and they looked on as troops and civilians were evacuated to Hong Kong Island. On December 25, 1941, news came back to the squad that Hong Kong had surrendered. They were told to go to Murray Barracks where they stayed for five days, were then shipped to Kowloon, then marched to Sham Shui Po POW camp for the next 3.5 years of captivity.

In the Winter 2020 newsletter, my sister Pat wrote a story called “**Angela Remembers**”, which was a story about Angela’s father, Eduardo (Edo) DaSilva, who was in camp Sham Shi Po with our father, Leonard Corrigan (WG). Edo is referenced in this article as a member of the HKVDC and referred to as Edo Silva. Apparently, on coming to Canada, the Department of Immigration recommended that the family change their name to “DaSilva”. Philippe Yvanovich, who was the author of *My Wartime Experience*, was the brother of Elzira DaSilva, Edo’s wife. Our father and Edo became good

friends in camp. Leonard offered to sponsor Edo and his pregnant wife and two sons to come to Canada, specifically Swift Current, Saskatchewan, - arriving in 1957. A close relationship between both families flourished for many years. Edo and his family were contributing members of the community until their retirement and move to Calgary in 1977, to join their children. Today, our two families still stay in touch with each other, never forgetting how lucky we are to share this history.



Members of the Hong Kong Volunteer Defence Corps 1941, Edo DaSilva centre row right

Ex Allied Prisoners of War Medal



Gerry Tuppert

This may be of some interest to those of you who are assembling your father's medals for a framed wall display or placing them into a shadow box. My dad Cpl William Tuppert, RRC, purchased and received this medal in 1994 from the British company Award Productions Ltd. The following is an abbreviated text taken from the cover letter and brochure:



Dear Sir/Madam

We have much pleasure in enclosing the commemorative medal struck as a tribute to all Ex Prisoners of War whose countries were allies of Britain at the time of their capture. The hope is that the medal will

forge a common bond with the many who sacrificed so much for the price of freedom. Proposed by the National Ex Prisoners of War Association in the U.K., the medal has been carefully designed by the international medallist Ian H Stewart CM. Struck in bright cupro-nickel to the highest minting standards, each 36mm medal is ribboned ready to wear.

Commemorative medals such as this one may be correctly worn below official decorations. Such medals usually denote a particular campaign or theatre of war but in the case of the **Ex P.O.W. Medal**, it indicates that the veteran was deprived of freedom and if worn with the service medals should give the observer an indication of the particular hardships endured by the wearer.

OBVERSE: The prominent feature of the front and obverse side of the medal is the strand of barbed wire which has

entrapped a young bird, symbolic of freedom itself. These elements surmount a globe of the world indicative of the international parameters of the medal. The wording 'International Prisoners of War' encircles the entire design.

REVERSE: The haunting and vicious barb of the ever-present wire is used symbolically to divide the reverse side of the medal into four elements, each bearing one of the words in the phrase: 'Intrepid against all adversity.'

RIBBON



The ribbon has a symbolized strand of barbed wire bounded on either side by black bands representing the despair of the

Indigenous Veterans of 'C' Force Project

Pamela Poitras Heinrichs



Things are moving along on the Indigenous Veterans of 'C' Force project!

Following social media posts, I have been contacted by a number of people with connections to Indigenous vets of 'C' Force.

Some were family members and others just with knowledge of the family. In the last instances, by following up with messages, emails, and in some cases telephone calls, I was able to connect with family. As a result, we currently have 22 Indigenous Veterans listed on the website at the time of writing this report.

Our proposal for funding for a researcher to determine Indigenous identity for those veterans that we do not have family contact with has been finalized and submitted to the Métis Veterans Legacy Program. The project officer with MVLP was very optimistic that we will receive funding and we understand that our proposal should be reviewed sometime in March. Keep your fingers crossed for us!

Currently, Lori Atkinson Smith has compiled a list of approximately 150 names of HK vets from the Metis Veterans Memorial at Batoche. Thank you Lori! In the absence of information from family, it is important that we verify information before posting it to our website. We are therefore pleased to announce that thanks to funds available from the Prairie Region, we will be retaining the research services of the Centre du patrimoine/St. Boniface Historical Society to research and determine indigenous ancestry of these 'C' Force members. For those who are not familiar with the Centre, it is

compound. These in turn are edged by white bands representative of the second and third fences of the compound. The bands of green are reminiscent of the fields of home and finally, both red edges are symbolic of the burning faith of those who were interned. This medal is supplied on a concealed single pin, ready to wear.

Any family member of a Hong Kong veteran wishing to acquire this medal can do so by [going directly to the website to complete an application](#). On this the **80th anniversary** of the Battle of Hong Kong it seems only fitting to re-familiarize ourselves with this medal and all that it represents about our 'C' Force defenders and their sacrifices.

We Will Remember Them

an archives and research centre devoted mainly to preserving and making accessible archives documenting the Francophone and Metis experience in Western Canada and particularly in Manitoba. It houses archival collections, a reference library containing close to 13,000 titles and genealogical resources. Thank you to the Prairie Region for funding this "jump start" to our Project. We are very excited about it.

Chats on messenger, emails, and telephone calls with family members of our HK vets have resulted in heartwarming moments. Listening to their stories and being able to provide information to them on their relative has made me feel very honoured to take part in this Project. Some are just discovering their family connections, some are re-connecting with families, and some have age-old stories to tell. I have heard the stories of one who is learning of a grandfather who died in the battle that he knew nothing of until a few years ago; another is learning of why talking with his great uncle about the war was off limits; another has attended at the Wall and smudged the name of her great uncle and other indigenous vets. Many didn't know about the HKVCA, nor about our Wall. Some have told me that they have joined the HKVCA, or that they are going to. A few that I have spoken to are elderly and unable to use the internet to access information on our website. We have mailed them packages containing information about their veteran and the Association. I expect there will be more such moments and stories as our project continues.

It is so important that we connect with the families. Please let us know of any information you have regarding an Indigenous veteran of 'C' Force. All information is welcome and helpful. Thank you to all who have assisted so far.

Veterans' Role in the Creation of the Ten Lessons



Pat Turcotte

In 2002, David Murray, the Ontario Regional Director, decided to have me represent the Ontario Executive when we were invited to attend a session of the Memory Project, which involved a number of veterans who had agreed to learn the ins and outs of speaking to large groups of students about their experiences in WW2. A teacher from Oakville had brought his students to act as the target group to interact with the veterans in simulating a teaching session. That teacher turned out to be the ideal person to connect with HKVCA regarding a new project that was being discussed by the Ontario Executive. We were anxious to create a document in some form that could be used by High School students in the province of Ontario to tell the Hong Kong story.

After the Memory Project session was over for the day, we spoke to the teacher, Nick Brune, about the possibility of working on a document that would tell the Hong Kong story in a way that could be useful in a High School situation. Nick Brune was surprised and pleased to be approached that day, and within a few weeks an agreement was reached whereby he would sketch his thoughts re-creating a series of lessons that would explain the details of the Battle of Hong Kong in an informative but interesting way for students at the Secondary School level. David and the members of the Executive agreed

that we should invite Nick to make a proposal to the members of the Hong Kong Veterans Association (HKVA). We did meet with a committee of the veterans several times, and they provided a number of excellent suggestions to Nick as he continued his research. Having decided with the veterans' approval that there should be Ten Lessons, Nick followed through with his work on the Ten Lessons until they were complete.

At various stages, Nick paused to give the veterans a chance to see how things were going, but in six weeks he had the Ten Lessons ready. The result was that with the assistance of Veterans Affairs (VAC) the booklet was finalized and printed. The finished document was presented to a joint meeting of the HKVA and the HKVCA groups on April 30, 2003. At that time, as promised, the HKVA agreed to contribute \$10,000 to the total cost, and, from that point on, many schools in Ontario and across the country became quite interested in having copies. Without the support and good counsel of John Stroud, the President of the HKVA in Ontario, and the members of his advisory group, we would not have been able to complete the Lessons. We do thank all of the veterans in Ontario, as well as those in other Regions who assisted, for being involved in the decisions that made the Ten Lessons possible.

(The 10 Lessons are online as a resource in our [Teachers' Zone](#) ed.

Annual General Meeting of the HKVCA

The Annual General Meeting of the Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association will be held on **Tuesday, April 26 at 2pm (Eastern Time)**.

Agenda:

- Approval of Minutes of last AGM, held June 29, 2021
- Presentation of 2021 Financial Statement
- Election of Directors

- Appointment of Officers
- Brief presentations by Regional Directors
- President's Remarks
- Questions from Members
- Close

To join the meeting:

- Information redacted. Email will be sent.

Highlights from Veterans Books

Researched by Shelagh Purcell and Kathie Carlson

Many books have been written by Hong Kong Veterans, and many family members have also written books and articles, and this is our chance to highlight these additional stories in recognition of the 80th Anniversary of the Battle of Hong Kong.

“What you didn't know”

Attempts were made at great peril to sabotage the shipyards, coal mines in Japan, and Airport runways (Kai Tak). Here are some samples of efforts made by courageous men.

Clifford E McDavid described the work at Kai Tak Airport “We moved a mountain for the airport in wheelbarrows”.

William J. Overton said, “We worked with baskets on bamboo poles and shovels extending the runways.

*(Rumour has it that enemy planes sank into the runways perhaps because the cement was not mixed well!)

Excerpts from *The Endless Battle* by Andy Flanagan

Throughout our stay at the shipyard, we figured out how to keep fighting for home. We did what we could to slow or stop production such as drilling the steel plates in the wrong place or cutting the steel too short. Other times we messed with the finished product. After drilling and riveting steel plates to the ship, a Japanese inspector usually came around and tapped each rivet to see if it was solid. After the inspection, some of the boys from down home would grind the back of the rivets, just leaving enough to hold the steel in place. It was rumoured that when these ships went out to sea, they sank as the waves worked the rivets loose. We became very good at exacting that bit of revenge....so good

that by the time the fourth ship was launched, it sank shortly thereafter in the middle of Tokyo Bay. Unfortunately. The Japanese suspected sabotage and tried to beat a confession out of us. No one talked. If we admitted anything we'd all be killed. I figured it was better to put up with the beating than to die. For our joint punishment, they shipped us off to the coal mines where we really suffered.”

Excerpts from *One Soldier's Story* by George McDonell

George confirmed that Canadians actively practiced sabotage in the shipyards. He wrote that he was too sick to perform hard labour, so the Japanese had him packing grease in bearings. “From time to time, my unsuspecting foreman assigned me the easy job of filling the grease reservoirs over the ship's engine bearings. Despite the misery and growing despair of our situation, I never missed an opportunity when undetected, to fit the grease caps with iron filings before filling the rest of the cap with thick grease. Once at sea, the iron fillings would burn out the bearings.

Prairie Prose



Carol Hadley

Greetings from the Prairie Region. When will the snow stop?? Yes, the Prairie Region has had more snow this year than several years altogether. However, as I begin this report, Manitoba has had some relaxed regulations, with the thought that all regulations will be off by March 15. We hope that this means the worst is over and we adapt to a new way of living.

We applaud the efforts of Mike Babin, President and the Board to have virtual events recognizing the 80th Anniversary of the Battle of Hong Kong as restrictions have prevented in-person events from happening.

We are grateful to the Manitoba Legislature which allows us to have the Hong Kong Veterans flag fly in August and December at the Cenotaph on Memorial Blvd in Winnipeg. It is a great tribute to 'C' Force and their service.

Prairie Region has continued with the monthly lunch meetings at the Viscount Gort Hotel on Portage Ave in Winnipeg. Everyone is welcome to attend but please let me know to arrange seating.

Indigenous Project Update – Pam Heinrichs coordinator – Work on the Indigenous Veterans of 'C' Force Project

continues. Many thanks to Pam for all her dedication and research on this project. Please look for her article for more information.

Last Post project – gravestones for veterans unmarked graves or damaged gravestones can be replaced. Also, the addition of traditional names for indigenous veterans can be included with the wives' names also added. Please contact me if you know of any gravestones that need attention.

Lawn Signs – Prairie Region has a few lawn signs available with Judy Preston in Russell coordinating the project. We have orders on delay for delivery due to finding packaging to ship them. The packaging has been received and Judy will be dealing with that soon. She can be reached by email - prestons@mymts.net and the cost can be sent to her by e transfer or cheque as the postage and handling charge will need to be added. She will deliver the Winnipeg orders when time and travel make it possible. Thank you all for your patience.

Plaques – With the lifting of the health restrictions we will try to have the remaining plaques dedicated. The first is for Unit 283 ANAVETS in Winnipeg on March 11, 2022 at 2 p.m. at the Unit. There will be some dignitaries present and members

of other veteran associations. Attendees must be vaccinated and masked as that is the Unit's rules.

I'm checking on the other requests to see if they still want a plaque then will be placing another order. Shortly.

Prairie Region Annual General Meeting will be on April 26 virtually

Ontario Offerings



Sandy Strom, daughter of Augustin Cyr RRC POW

Lives Lived

Fred Hurd, son of E. Lionel Hurd

Join me on November 19 for a "Lives Lived" virtual event, featuring the story of Capt. E. Lionel Hurd, who survived to come home after becoming a POW following the capture of Hong Kong on December 25, 1941. They were to experience a different kind of battle; the battle for simple survival against a foreign culture that was completely void of compassion. The determination to live was what got many of them through. Lionel could never forget his experience; the insurmountable losses of his



CAPTAIN E. L. HURD, C.M.
Quartermaster Royal Horse Artillery

comrades, his own suffering and that of his wounded compatriots. He did come to realize over time that he in fact could and would hang on to his dignity. There has been much written about their lives lived as POWs in the camps throughout the Pacific Rim. Those who survived the battle, then the POW camps, wounded, and battle scarred, who were fortunate enough to return home alive also have a story to tell. Some will have told us about how their lives had changed when they were set free and likewise after they returned home to a new life. Their loved ones had been kept mostly in the dark, frantically trying to find some snippet of information as to the whereabouts of their sons or for some word as to whether they were even alive.

Included in this story which is equally important is how their families were to change and how they coped during those same time frames.

Details on how to register for this compelling "Lives Lived" virtual event will be available in the September national newsletter.

Happy Easter to everyone. It's such a hopeful time of year, and I wish you every good thing at Easter and always.

I hope that you, your family and friends stay safe and healthy. God Bless!!

Proud Nephew Honors his Uncle - HKVCA Goes iRacing

Bill Calder

My name is Bill Calder and my Uncle, Vincent Calder, RRC (see photo) was a POW in Hong Kong. I am a retired computer guy and I race cars in a computer simulation called iRacing. It is worldwide and has about 200,000 members, some of them being actual drivers in real life.



I race a small part of it in a League called Coast2Coast Racing league. We drive about 16 different cars, both dirt track and asphalt. I decided to get a new paint job on my Chevrolet Camaro ZL1. I wanted to display the HKVCA Logo prominently on the hood and try to make the body look like the Uniform Colour that my uncle is wearing in one of the pictures I have of him.



(Photo: Hood of my racecar showing the HKVCA Logo)

I got the permission I needed from HKVCA to display the Logo and here is the result. I think it turned out well and I will be proud to race it as often as I can. Here is a link to my League Website: c2crl.com. I am also planning to put the Logo on some of my other cars as well.

God Bless you all and I am proud to contribute to the association in a small way.

Shelagh Purcell, Eastern Ontario Rep



Many of my phone calls have been reminding members that it's been 80 years since the battle of Hong Kong took place. It brought back memories for some:

Frank Miller was ten years old when his father went to Hong Kong (David Miller, RRC) now 92. Frank is still interested in any information about those years. He gets the newsletter and hopes that we can meet again one day.

Barbara Cunningham Drew liked the presentations organized by the HKVCA. She also finds it hard that people are not able to get together. Her father was Winston Cunningham, CDC

Barry Fair - found it hard not to be able to connect with Hong Kong veterans' families on Remembrance Day in London (John Grey Fair, RRC). These occasions keep the memories going. The COVID-19 virus has much to answer for.

Donna Drimmie said her father, Victor Oliver Fehr, RRC, didn't speak much about Hong Kong, but when she was in grade 13, she wrote an essay with her father's comments which she has kept ever since.

Gloria Fortune (Herbert R. Fortune, WG) is now in a long-term care facility in Burlington. Her daughter, Val Fortune-Niddery, shares the newsletter with Gloria. Val mentioned that receiving a card or note would be nice.

Jim Hurd - enjoyed items in the newsletter about the 80th anniversary (Edmund Lionel Hurd, RRC) He said it brought

Quebec Region Report



Lucette Mailloux Muir

Greetings everyone,

Our executive recently held our virtual Annual Meeting with the presentation and reading of all reports. Hopefully we will soon be able to get back to our bi-monthly meetings planning and scheduling some activities.

Membership renewals are coming in for 2022 and many for multiple years. Thank you all.

After some banking updates, Quebec Region will be accepting electronic transactions for membership renewals, donations or material at hkvca.qc@gmail.com. We will gladly continue to

back memories of many of the Hong Kong veterans from his area.

Yvonne Southworth - is still recovering from a stroke (Donald Southworth, RRC) She still lives in Lindsay, Ontario.

Oda Barlow (Edwin Barlow, RCASC) was leaving to visit her daughter and family in Picton. We'll have a longer chat when she returns home.

Jean Killoran - husband (John Killoran, RRC) didn't talk a lot about Hong Kong, although close friends knew some of the stories of the camp. He was a quiet man.

Agnes Fehr (Victor O. Fehr, RRC) - her husband didn't talk about Hong Kong. Mrs. Fehr is doing okay.

Margaret MacDonald (Allison MacDonald, RRC) met her husband after the war was over. She was a teacher in his village. He didn't want to talk about his experiences at all. When a granddaughter asked if he would answer questions about Hong Kong, he said no.

Irene Firlotte (Lawrence Firlotte, RRC) is now 96 and has had several strokes. Her daughter Susan keeps the exchange of information going.

Grace Thornton (Howard Thornton, WG) said her husband didn't like to talk about Hong Kong. The memories were too horrible. Sometimes even going to HKVCA meetings brought back memories of POW Days that the men tried to forget. Grace looks forward to everyone getting through all the issues people face today dealing with covid 19 and protests~ just being as positive as you can.

accept cheques, if this is a preferred method for you, cheques are mailed to the Membership Chairperson.

Unfortunately, since our last newsletter, we lost a widow, Lawrence Dallain née Samson from Quebec City, widow of Charles Dallain, RRC E30434. Our condolences go out to the families.

Many small family gatherings took place in the region for the 80th Anniversary of the Battle of Hong Kong. Thank you all and WE WILL REMEMBER THEM!

Take care everyone, continue to stay safe and hopefully we will be able to meet soon.

Online Membership Payment Update



Barry Mitchell, Treasurer

We have updated our membership payment system across Canada so that members in all regions can now pay their dues using the Interac e-transfer method. This capability already exists for those members who choose Ontario as their region (hkvc.a.on@gmail.com) but now the good folks in BC can make an Interac e-transfer to hkvc.a.bc@gmail.com and in the prairie region they can transfer to hkvc.a.pr@gmail.com. Those in Quebec can make payment to hkvc.a.qc@gmail.com while those in Atlantic Canada can transfer to hkvc.a.atl@gmail.com

When making an e-transfer, please include in the “message” section the following:

- The year/years covered by the dues & contributor’s name(s)
- Donation amount if included
- Merchandise payment if included

Members can continue to write cheques if that is their preference and, for the short term, PayPal will remain available as a method of payment until the end of April. More information can be found on our [Contacts and Membership](#) page and on our [Online Services](#) page.

Questions can be forwarded to your regional treasurer or contact Barry Mitchell, National Treasurer.

Announcements

Kay Christie’s Publications

Peter Middleton, nephew of Kay Christie, has a collection of publications of Kay’s which are in need of a good home. For details, please contact Peter by filling in our “Contact Us” form found at the top of our web pages.

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.

Want to contact us by mail? Here is our postal address:

HKVCA
Suite 164, 1826 Robertson Road
Ottawa, ON K2H 1B9

Spring Sale!

Hong Kong Veterans Merchandise

Lapel Pin.....\$5.00	Books
License Plate Holder (front plate).....\$5.00	No Reason Why..... \$20.00
Gravestone Marker.....\$75.00	‘C’ Force—Decorations, Medals, Awards..... \$20.00
Winnipeg Grenadier Tie.....\$20.00	One Soldier’s Story.....\$20.00
Flag.....\$100.00	DVD—Slaves of the Rising Sun..... \$10.00
Postage Stamps—sheet of 50.....\$65.00	Golf Shirt—Large or XL..... \$20.00

To order, send cheque to HKVCA, P.O. Box 381, Winnipeg MB R3C 2H6
OR
Interac e-transfer to hkvc.a.pr@gmail.com