



WASURERU-NAI "Never Forget"



National Newsletter of the Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association

Summer 2024 Edition

Editor: [Jim Trick](#)

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President's Message



Mike Babin

Every so often I like to look back at past HKVCA newsletters. I recently dove into our [newsletter archives](#) and found the HKVCA national newsletter from April 2004, 20 years ago. Reading through it I found lots of

familiar names ... members who are still working today on behalf of our wonderful association. And I was saddened to note the names of many Veterans and members who have passed away during those 20 years.

That newsletter announces the upcoming national convention which was to be held in Ottawa in 2005. More on that later.

It also contains an article written by the HKVCA's then recently appointed national Treasurer, Barry Mitchell. That makes 20 years that Barry has been our Treasurer! Having recently decided that 20 years is enough, Barry has announced his retirement from the Treasurer role.



I can't imagine how we could have had a better Treasurer than Barry.

Being Treasurer requires a dedication to detail, accuracy and timeliness. It involves not only the obvious task of handling and accounting for our finances, but dealing with various government authorities to ensure that we are compliant with the relevant legislation and regulations. For example, Barry adroitly handled the transition of our governing By-laws to the federal government's new Not-for-Profit Corporations Act several years ago.

Thank you, Barry, for your commitment to the Hong Kong Veterans and to the HKVCA. We truly appreciate everything you have done for us over your 20 years as National Treasurer. Barry will continue to serve as one of our Directors.

Barry's Treasurer boots are big ones! After a search we were fortunate to find a capable successor in Mark Purcell. Mark has been the HKVCA's Ontario Region Treasurer for many years and has all the skills to carry on Barry's work. Mark was elected to our Board of Directors at our AGM in early May and confirmed as National Treasurer at our subsequent Board meeting. He will continue to act as Treasurer for Ontario. Congratulations, Mark!

Annual General Meeting

Our AGM was held on May 7. Approximately 20 members were in attendance, which gave us the required quorum. The main item of business was the election of Directors, and I

thank Derrill Henderson for his diligent work in arranging the nomination and election process.

The Directors elected at the AGM are:

- Mike Babin of Toronto, ON
- Carol Hadley of Winnipeg, MB
- Bernard LeBlanc of Arichat, NS
- Lucette Mailloux Muir of Granby, QC
- Barry Mitchell of Winnipeg, MB
- Stephanie Mitchell of Winnipeg, MB
- Mark Purcell of Bradford, ON
- Gerry Tuppert of Duncan, BC

Congratulations!

In a separate meeting, and in accordance with our By-laws, the Board elected the following as Officers of the HKVCA:

- Mike Babin – President
- Bernard Leblanc – Vice President
- Lucette Mailloux Muir – Secretary
- Mark Purcell – Treasurer

The Directors and Officers will serve until the next AGM in 2025.

I encourage you to [read the reports](#) submitted at the AGM by our Treasurer, Regional Directors and myself.

80th Anniversary of V-J Day

As I mentioned earlier, the [Spring 2004 newsletter](#) featured an article about the convention planned for Ottawa in 2005. I remember being at that convention, and probably many of you do, too. I had just retired, and it was still quite early in my own involvement in the HKVCA. It was so valuable for me - and a fantastic learning experience - to spend time with Veterans and

In Remembrance

Thankfully, there are no names listed in this article.

Memorial Service Invitation



Ian Englehart

There will be a “Memorial Service” in Ottawa to commemorate the 79th anniversary of the end of the war in the Far East which was declared on August 15th, 1945.

their family members, immersed in all things Battle of Hong Kong-related.

That excitement continues as your 80th Anniversary Committee works hard to round out the agenda and all the details for our reunion in Ottawa in August 2025. See Committee Chair Kathie Carlson’s article elsewhere in this newsletter for details!

Plan to attend!

Pension Settlement

Veterans Affairs Canada recently settled a lawsuit concerning miscalculations in disability pensions and benefits. I’m passing on the notice to you in case it may apply.

If you are related to a Veteran who received disability pension payments, you might be eligible for compensation. Visit <https://veteranspensionsettlement.kpmg.ca/> to learn more about eligibility and how to file a claim. If you prefer, you can phone 1 (833) 839-0648 for information. Act soon to ensure you receive the compensation you may be entitled to and make sure others that could be entitled are aware.

Gravestone Markers

The 2004 newsletter mentions our program to put a disc on the gravestones of as many Hong Kong Veterans as possible. It’s amazing that this program has been going on for at least 20 years now! It was the hope of Phil Doddridge that every Hong Kong Veteran’s grave marker displays a disc, but we haven’t yet reached that goal. Please read Derrill Henderson’s article elsewhere in this newsletter for information on how you can help to honour our Veterans, and also visit our [Gravestone Marker](#) web page for more information.

In closing, I wish you all a happy and safe summer!

building). Please let me know if you will be attending and if you will need a chair for the service.

If you would like to lay a wreath on behalf of your organization, please let me know as soon as possible so that I can add you to the program which will be handed out at the service. I will need the name of your organization and the name(s) of the presenter(s).

Following the service, we would like to invite you to Forty-One "Grill 41" restaurant for a luncheon from 12:00 to 2:00. This restaurant is located inside the Lord Elgin Hotel (100 Elgin Street).

Online Update



Jim Trick

Poetry!

We've started a [Poetry and Art Page](#). It's no secret that many POWs possessed a hidden talent - it turned out some were natural poets and artists. So, we've begun collecting these items and spotlighting them. Please feel free to forward any items you have in your collections.

On a related note, Hong Kong veteran Sid Varcoe produced a book of poems, currently available through [The Edmonton Book Store](#). We're hoping that someone in the family could contact us as we'd like permission to feature them online within the HKVCA website, much like we've done with several books. This effort is part of our educational focus, and will allow these works to be more publicly available.

Different Thoughts on 'C' Force



Lori Atkinson Smith

Family Connections

I have come to realize part of the 'C' Force journey is family connections.

I have compiled a list of more than 120 family connections within the two regiments, Royal Rifles of Canada, and the Winnipeg Grenadiers. Mainly brothers. Some brothers-in-law. Cousins. And one father and son. There are a few sets of three brothers and even two sets of four brothers.

Note: There is reasonable underground parking at Ottawa City Hall off of Laurier Ave.

Please R.S.V.P. so that I will know how many seats to reserve at the restaurant.

Looking forward to seeing you on Saturday, August 10th, 2024.

'C' Force Individual Reports

The Individual Report service on our 'C Force website continues to be our most popular service. We are always looking for ways to improve both the layout and the content details.

One example of this is discussed in Lori's column below. Thanks to her and Gene Labiuk's detailed research we hope to create a new content block that will provide more details on how each individual made it back to Canada from Hong Kong or Japan.

We're also looking into removing some columns that contain extraneous information or details from old spreadsheets that no longer are understood, and which generate confusion.

As a mother and a grandmother, I cannot imagine having sons go to battle let alone into the same battle and not hearing from them for months and even years.

So, this Father's Day, June 16th, 2024, let's shout out to all 'C' Force members. To the family connections and the friends we have formed within HKVCA. But especially to all our fathers, brothers, and uncles of 'C' Force.

Transportation Home

How did your dad come home from Hong Kong or Japan? A lot of us thought all of 'C' Force came home by ship.

Our HKVCA grapevine works so well. Elaine, who lives in Ireland, was looking for more information about her father, a Winnipeg Grenadier. She reached out to HKVCA Director Carol Hadley. And Carol forwarded the request to me.

Elaine is looking for more information on how her father, Frederick Peter Wright (H17495), returned to Canada after being in a prison of war camp in Japan with other 'C' Force members. Who else was on the plane with her father? The particular plane that her father came home on seems to have a very interesting 'life' of its own. Elaine promises to give us an update once her research is complete.

Elaine's query set me on yet another branch of interest of how many men came home to North America by ship and how many men came home by plane. It has been fascinating looking into this information and trying to compile it for us to use.

Eugene Labiuk has shared his [4 article series](#) on our website that gives a lot of information with some of it pointing directly to how and why some came home by plane or by ship. If you haven't yet read Eugene's series, please take some time - it is most interesting.

We want 'C' Force members to be remembered forever. Our goal. And this tracking of family members as well as 'C' Force members transportation home is all part of their 'C' Force journey.

You are invited to join us - ANYTIME!

80th Anniversary of V-J Day Reunion 2025

80th Anniversary Reunion Committee

SAVE THE DATE!

Like the song "Sunny Side of the Street" says:

"Grab your coat and hat, and leave your worries on your doorstep" ... It's time to dig out your suitcase and have your family start planning for our HKVCA 80th Anniversary Reunion August 14th to August 17th 2025 in sunny Ottawa.

The HKVCA 80th Anniversary Reunion Committee has now been meeting for eight months, with our prime focus to organize an enjoyable, informative, and memorable four days in Ottawa, all with the intent of honouring our veterans and their families. That's only 438 days away. Time is moving fast!

We are very excited to have booked the Westin Hotel in downtown Ottawa for our Reunion. We invite you to check out its website to see all that the hotel offers. It affords lots of rooms for social get togethers, break out sessions, and opportunities to visit and exchange stories. The hotel will

From a Dusty Attic Somewhere in Eastern Canada

Honestly, I'm not a packrat. But I am my father's daughter. I do keep the paper backup of transactions much longer than the government tells us we need to.

Add to this, items I have inherited over the years to do with our veterans and our projects, well, I have a few boxes stored away in my attic.

The first box I decided to go through early last month has items dated in the early 1980s and 2000s. I quickly realized that items I received 25 years ago might mean more to HKVCA now with our forever expanding website.

One such item is a disk I received from Len Cotton (son of RRC [Joseph Cotton](#)) quite a few years ago. Thank goodness my husband keeps old electronic items and I was able to view the contents of the disk.

At one time Len was the HKVCA National newsletter editor. The disk is a treasure trove of newsletters, items, some correspondence from Len's time as editor.

In time, some of these treasures will be added to our HKVCA website. I came to a full stop with the disk from Len. I really do need to go through the rest of the boxes. Volunteers anyone?

also host a gala dinner Saturday, August 16th featuring entertainment and a Canadian author as our guest speaker. Can you guess who it might be?

The flagship event is of course to honour our veterans at the Memorial Wall on Friday, August 15th, V-J Day, where we will provide comfort against any weather conditions (tents, chairs, umbrellas, water and facilities). You will have a chance to visit the Memorial Wall, as well as participate in the commemorative service.

On Saturday, August 16th, you'll be visiting the Canadian War Museum with lunch and guided tours. There will be a fascinating presentation by a well-known historian and author in the Museum's theatre to top off the afternoon.

We are building some free time in the itinerary, so you can enjoy the City of Ottawa. And don't forget the Parliament Buildings are just around the corner from the Westin. We

will provide you with tourist destination information before you arrive.

Ottawa has a multitude of fun water tours with strange vehicles that float on water and drive on land. The wonderful “ByWard Market” with artists and culinary delights, is close to the Westin. Bring your kids and grandkids, as there are many Museums including the Canada Science and Technology Museum. Or, go on River Run Rafting, an Ottawa River Cruise, the Rideau Canal boating adventure, and if you are brave, take the Haunted Walks of Ottawa tour.

This 80th Reunion will be a wonderful opportunity to experience a nice summer getaway for you and your family. Make Ottawa your go-to place in 2025.

Here’s what we need from you. We’d love to know if you and your family are interested in attending. Please email us at 2025reunion@hkvca.ca or write a note to HKVCA Suite 164, 1826 Robertson Road, Nepean, Ontario K2H 1B9. We would love to hear from you.

Stay tuned for more exciting news and updates about the Reunion. What a great chance to meet after so many years apart!

As Vera Lynn’s World War II song says “We’ll meet Again” but THIS TIME we know where, and we know when, - so let’s get all our families together in Ottawa for this momentous reunion.

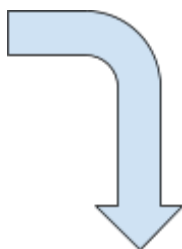
We Will Remember Them.

What’s Wrong With This Photo?



Derrill Henderson

All our HK vets deserve the public recognition the Hong Kong disc gives to their gravestone, but unfortunately some don’t have family members to purchase them. If not us, then who?



to this fund will see another veteran’s stone proudly display their sacrifice of service. Any donation of \$20.00 or more will receive a receipt for income tax.

Once a grave has been determined to be that of a Hong Kong veteran, a volunteer will (1) try to contact a family member to ensure their participation; (2) give the stone a gentle cleaning if necessary, and (3) attach the HK disc. Photos will be taken and displayed on our website.



To date, approximately 214 grave markers have been purchased. We still have hundreds of vets waiting for this recognition. May these vets count on you for a donation?

Donations can be e-transferred to hkvca.national@gmail.com with the notation HK Gravestone Marker, or mail a cheque to HKVCA Box 164 1826 Robertson Road Ottawa K2H1B9.

Please indicate HK Gravestone Marker on your cheque.

Our association has set up a fund to remedy this situation. The gravestone marker currently costs \$75.00. Any donation

Indigenous Project Update



Pam Heinrichs

Our work to identify and recognize the Indigenous members of 'C' Force continues – much of it behind the scenes so to speak.

The work of the St. Boniface Historical Society to identify Grenadiers of Indigenous ancestry and of Sage Research to find information about those identified is ongoing. In the very near future you will begin to see research added to the website "Vault" for those members that research has been completed on. Stay tuned!

In other news, we have connected with an educator and curriculum writer here in Manitoba regarding the development of educational materials and resources related to this project. I have also spoken with a few teachers in Winnipeg who were unaware of The Battle of Hong Kong and ensuing years. They are now eager to learn more and be able to include this in their classroom lessons.

We will be receiving proposals from two researchers with regard to identifying and researching the Indigenous members of the Royal Rifles. Both of the people I had

discussions with are very eager to work on this and we look forward to receiving their proposals and beginning this research.

On May 16, 2024, I had the pleasure of attending the ceremony at the Manitoba Métis Federation where Julie Carver donated the medals of her great uncle, Robert Blanchard, to the MMF. Julie, President David Chartrand, and others honoured Private Blanchard and the other HK vets with their speeches. The event was well attended and in addition to honouring Private Blanchard, has greatly increased the awareness of and interest in the HK story among many who were not aware of it. Representatives of the MMF and the Métis Veterans Legacy Program have expressed a sincere interest in having guest speakers to learn about the battle and the ensuing years.

We will continue to work on the project over the summer months – stay tuned for more developments.

Wishing everyone a wonderful summer!

A VJ Day Suggestion

Jim Trick

I just finished reading a very moving article in our local Victoria paper, the Times Colonist. It was focused on some of the veterans currently living at Broadmead Memorial Lodge who participated in the D Day landings. As always, the stories were moving and served as a reminder of the trauma caused by these indescribable events.

I was moved enough that I sent an email to the editor of the paper, reminding him that VJ day is also approaching, and urging the paper to publish a similar story regarding those with links to Vancouver Island who served in the Pacific

theatre. I provided links to various pages in our HKVCA website to assist the staff in their understanding and research.

I think that this approach would be something that our members and readers could take on. Why not write a note to your local paper, asking that the events leading up to VJ Day be the focus of a special account. I think that in many cases the end of the war in Japan is overshadowed by European events, so let's do what we can to keep the memory of those who fought in the Far East alive.

Prairie Prose



Carol Hadley

Greetings to all our members – We hope you are finally seeing some warm, sunny weather and can be mobile to enjoy it.

The Prairie monthly meetings are held in person at Smitty's Restaurant on Pembina and Grant at 11:30 a.m. If the weather turns bad, the meeting will be on Zoom and a notification will be sent out.

Plans are progressing on the 80th Anniversary with some committees being formed to work on specific work. Kathie Carlson will have more to report on in another part of the newsletter, and also a page on the website.

We have received a design for a commemorative pin from the artist who created the picture that was given to the veterans at the 2013 Convention here in Winnipeg. We need to work on this before getting quotes for production.

Please consider attending this momentous reunion as we remember and commemorate these Canadian heroes.

Pam Heinrichs will also be reporting on the Indigenous project in another column and please reference the website for information. Pam and I attended the dedication of a member, Julie Carver's Great Uncle Robert Blanchard on May 16 at the Manitoba Métis Centre. Pam will have pictures and more information on this elsewhere in the newsletter.



Norwood St Boniface Plaque Dedication - Colour Party, Alex Taylor, Prairie Regional Director Carol Hadley, Colour Party Stan Lopata. (Photo used by permission)



Norwood St Boniface Plaque Dedication - Chris Everhardus, Sgt. at Arms, with Branch Executive. (Photo used by permission)

The Colour Party (Alex Taylor and Stan Lopata), Stephanie Mitchell, Marilyn Gelinias, Allan Hadley and I, participated in a plaque dedication that was placed in the Norwood St. Boniface Legion. The dedication was held on May 24, 2024. Thank you to the Sgt. at Arms Chris Everhardus for assisting us with this and to the Executive of the Branch for having the plaque in their Clubrooms. They will be having some family members of the HK veterans from this area attending their Memorial Services on Saturday, May 26. Due to previous commitments, we were unable to attend the Memorial services.



Red River Heritage Fair display (Photo by Stan Lopata and used by permission?)

Stan Lopata and Alex Taylor attended the Red River Heritage Fair which was held at the beginning of May where we supplied 2 \$50 gift certificates for the winners of the Veterans Award. We also supplied journals for the scavenger hunt. There were 195 students registered.

Rev. Paul Lampman, our Padre, has been given a pro tem position as the Dean of the Cathedral in Winnipeg. We thank him for his service and wish him well. Padre Murray Still, grandson of Joseph Oige, WG. has consented to help us for our ceremonies. Thank you.

We have been granted the annual permission to have the HK flag at the Cenotaph for August and December. We appreciate this tribute to our members of 'C' Force. Thank you to Stan Lopata for ensuring the flag is delivered to the Legislature and retrieved afterwards.

Plans are in the works for **VJ Day – Date is August 11, 2024, at 1:30 in Brookside Cemetery at the Field of Honour with a reception at Neil Bardal Centre.** Please hold the date and plan to attend with your family and friends.

Now that we have some lawn showing, our lawn signs would encourage awareness of 'C' Force and the Battle of Hong Kong. We have a few remaining from our original order. Anyone wanting one can contact Barry Mitchell. We have

copies of **“NO REASON WHY “– by Carl Vincent** in Barry's store. This book is available digitally on our website, but it can be a challenge to spend time staring at the computer screen. This book, of which we have an ample supply, has been called the best book written about Canada's involvement in the defence of Hong Kong. It covers the background of the regiments; the politics involved; the battle; years of imprisonment; and the return to Canada. No library on the subject in Hong Kong is complete without this book!

Our crazy weather continues with a cool, wet spell so stay warm, safe and look forward to warmer weather.

Take care everyone, God Bless.

Ontario Offerings



Shelagh Purcell

It's a special gift to receive a card from Donna Drimmie. She has a talent for creating new cards from old ones. For various occasions, Donna (daughter of Victor Oliver Fehr, RRC) has been dealing with eye problems lately. But she is

doing well.

Oda Barlow, 101, is enjoying the warmer weather at the family farm near Picton, ON. The barn has been renovated and opened to the public. Picnics used to be held here, for the Hong Kong Veterans and families by Oda's husband Edwin Barlow, RCASC and his family.

Susan Ewing (Kenneth Ewing, RRC) is enjoying the boats she's watching on the Rideau Canal where she lives. The long weekend meant the locks had been opened and sailing began again.

Barry Fair (John Gray Fair, RRC) has decided he liked it better when the holiday was held on Queen Victoria's actual birthday, May 24th.

Irene Firlotte (Lawrence Firlotte, RRC) appreciates her daughter Susans care. They were planning an outside walk now that the weather is warm.

Gloria Fortune (Herbert Fortune, WG) at 95, still likes to know what's going on. She follows daughter Vicky's interest in the preparations for the 80th anniversary of H.K. Veterans liberation in 2025 in Ottawa, and particularly the Museum's presentation of the event.

Jim Hurd (Edmund Lionel Hurd, RRC) was interested in receiving a picture of the plaques located in the Armory of the regiment "Les Voltigeurs De Québec" honouring the Royal Rifles. He also mentioned a proposal to change their badge to include the Rifles cap badge around their current cap badge symbol.

Grace Thornton (Howard Thornton, WG) still has some memory problems in the morning probably related to Covid but otherwise good. She enjoys the company of her daughter for shopping and visiting.

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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