



# WASURERU-NAI "Never Forget"



**National Newsletter of the Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association**

## Winter 2016 - 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of Hong Kong

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### President's Message

*Gail Angel*



Wow, it's December already. I hope you will enjoy this special 75th anniversary issue. We've got some very special articles to mark the occasion.

In the last newsletter, the incoming board was introduced. A small change has occurred since then. Atlantic Region has a new director, Ruth Murgatroyd. Ruth is the granddaughter of RRC Rifleman William Joseph Hickie. Read more about Ruth in the Atlantic report. We are so fortunate to have Ruth on the team. Ruth steps into Emmie Flanagan's role, but Emmie isn't leaving. Emmie has decided to apply her enthusiasm to our Education Program, a decision for which I am immensely grateful.

You may have noticed that you are getting emails

about our newsletter differently than in the past. Due to Mike Babin's excellent suggestion about how to better announce the launch of annual Portraits of Valour writing competition, we investigated the use of MailChimp. This email service is free for organizations as small as ours, and has simplified the work dramatically. It also allows us to use the service for many other things, such as our newsletter. Nancy Doddridge has the job of working on a coherent communications plan and she is looking for volunteers.

Ever since the Memorial Wall was installed in Ottawa, we've held a commemorative service on the Saturday closest to December 8, followed by a luncheon. Mitzi Ross, Ottawa Area Rep organizes this every year. New in 2016 is the addition of an Annual General Meeting to stay compliant with CRA regulations. The reports presented at the AGM will be posted on our website. The normal AGM as part of our Bi-annual conventions will continue. It's a little unusual, but you can expect it

like this: in odd-numbered years, the AGM will occur in August, as part of the convention. In even-numbered years, the AGM will occur in December.

Wishing everyone a wonderful Christmas and a rewarding New Year.

## Remembering



### Last Post

George Nobiss, WG, on Nov 13, 2016

### In Memoriam

HKVCA member Len Freeman of Sherwood Park AB passed away on Oct 2, 2016

Alexandra Slovinsky, widow of Walter Slovinsky, WG on Oct 27, 2016

Evelyn St. John widow of Ralph St. John RRC, on Aug 30, 2016

Gail Michalkow, daughter of Joe Michalkow, WG, on Oct 10, 2016

Kathleen Galloway, widow of William Galloway, RRC, on July 18, 2016

We Will Remember Them



### 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Thoughts

*Phil Doddridge*

Greetings from “way down East”.

I hope that you will permit some rambling thoughts about the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Hong Kong debacle, the four years of incarceration that followed, and the return to sanity for those of us who were fortunate enough to make it.

A group of innocents arriving at Holt’s Wharf in Kowloon on November 16 after a Pacific crossing with stops at Honolulu and Manila, with only some three weeks to enjoy the delights of Hong Kong before the bombs fell.

I remember well the long march up Nathan Road from Holt’s Wharf in Kowloon to Sham Shui Po Barracks. The street was lined with civilian onlookers and also some British Army individuals.

To me. the atmosphere seemed to be one of welcome and perhaps one of hope for the welfare of the Colony.

Good times were short-lived. In early December we were moved to the defence positions on the Island and on December 8 Hong Kong was bombed. The Japanese forces made a landing at Lye Mun on the night of December 18 and quickly pushed westward on the Island. From our “D” Coy position at Obelisk Hill we were deployed to Bridge Hill and our first encounter with the Jap Army.

The rest of the story is well documented. Fierce fighting with limited armament, and outnumbered, the Colony capitulated on Christmas Day, 1941.

That particular day stands out in my memory. “D” Company of the RRC was overwhelmed at Stanley Village, with the loss of almost half of the Company.

Defeat, surrender to a superior force, not a pleasant experience. It was a low point in my life. I’ll not forget it and I’ll remember the comrades whose bodies remain forever in Hong Kong and the hell camps of Japan.

I’ll remember them. Je me souviendrai d’eux.

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

Philip

*(Read Phil's memoirs on our website - ed)*

### From the Editor

Jim Trick ([editor@hkvca.ca](mailto:editor@hkvca.ca))



This expanded edition of WASURERU-NAI is a special one, as we pause to reflect on the tragic events of 75 years ago when Hong Kong fell to the Japanese. We’ve included reflections by some of our veterans and stories of families as well. Those who are members of the HKVCA family need little reminding of the widespread effects of this event, but of course our mission is one of educating the Canadian public at large. We need to continue to advocate that this part of our history be taught to

the younger generation, and that it form a more prominent place in the history of our country. When you've finished reading this, please pass along your copy to others of influence who may find what we do of interest.

The online (digital) version of this newsletter contains significantly expanded content and live links, so if you're reading a paper copy just visit our web version at: <http://newsltr.hkvca.ca> to see what you've missed.

## Eric Maloney Way

*Gail Angel, Derrill Henderson, Ron McGuire*

In 2005 the City of Ottawa launched a street naming-initiative to honour local veterans. The initiative is a partnership between the City of Ottawa, Veterans Affairs Canada, the Royal Canadian Legion and local private developers.

Local developers participate in this initiative by voluntarily naming streets within new housing developments. The permanent street sign that is installed during the final stages of construction of the subdivision bears the Poppy – the ultimate sign of remembrance.



The presentation of the street sign takes place during the Candlelight Tribute for Veterans every year during the month of November. The event is co-hosted by the City of Ottawa, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Canadian War Museum. As part of the ceremony, the Mayor presents the family with a replica of the actual street sign.

This year, the City of Ottawa honoured RRC Eric

Maloney. His daughter Cynthia gave an excellent address.

In the photo you see a picture of Eric on leave in Douglastown QC, projected on the big screen. Eric moved to Ottawa in 1987 and volunteered regularly at the Nepean Museum. Also shown are Mayor Jim Watson, Cynthia Maloney (just peeking over the sign), and other members of Eric's family. The street will be built sometime next year, in the Kanata area of Ottawa.

Ottawa HKVCA members Ron McGuire and Derrill Henderson worked together on the application to nominate Eric for this honour. Here is an excerpt from their submission:

*“Eric..., as a young man of 18 years of age, he joined the Canadian army ... As a member of the Royal Rifles of Canada, he along with his comrades in “C” Force sailed to defend the colony of Hong Kong. Cut off from any reinforcements and supplies, they held off the ... Japanese invasion force for eighteen days. “C” Force was the first Canadian unit to see battle in WWII and earned many commendations, including the first Victoria Cross awarded to Canadians. Following their surrender on Christmas Day 1941, Eric and his comrades endured four years and eight months as Prisoners of War, which... was essentially four years and eight months of slavery. He, and his comrades, did everything in their power to disrupt the Japanese war effort including risking their lives in acts of sabotage.*

*Upon his return home Eric pursued his dream of becoming a chef. Probably reinforced by the starvation diet experienced as a POW, Eric gained basic knowledge of his chosen profession working in various locations as he saved to take formal training. He was successful and graduated from McGill University with certification as a professional chef. He then continued to serve his country by applying his talents on NORAD's Distant Early Warning sites (DEW Line) in Canada's arctic for several years. To remove the limitations this placed on his family, Eric moved them to Toronto where he became the managing chef of several establishments....*

*Read more detail in our online edition (ed)*

## A Sad Tale with a Happy Ending



On September 1<sup>st</sup> I took a WestJet flight to Calgary in order to visit with my three sisters as we attended a family wedding in Lethbridge. When I reached my hotel in Lethbridge and opened my suitcase, I discovered that my father's gold Regimental Ring was missing.

I reported the theft right away to WestJet and contacted the Peel Police to tell them about the theft. They immediately assigned an officer who works at Pearson Airport to follow any possible leads. Within a few days, it was determined that there was little hope of discovering who had taken it, and where it might be found.

The amazing part of this story was the genuine concern on the part of the WestJet Claims staff when I explained my story during several phone conversations. None of the three ladies, Jaysi, Avril and Elisabeth had ever heard about the Battle of Hong Kong, but when I told them various things that centred on the battle and what it meant for the Canadian soldiers that survived to be sent to horrible POW camps, it became obvious that the historical aspect was an important part of my trying to come to terms with the loss of the ring.

Elisabeth was my final contact, and we had more than one conversation. She explained, when we last spoke, that although she had worked at WestJet for five years, she had never been more moved than when she heard some of things I mentioned to her to give her some idea of what the soldiers had been through. She had discussed my information with the others on the Claims team, and they had decided not only to provide the best compensation they could, but they offered me a \$500. Travel voucher to be used by anyone in the family to let us know that what was a traumatic event for us was a sobering thought for them, and they wanted to provide a little extra for what we had endured with the loss of the ring. What really brought home to me the fact that they really did care about our situation, Elisabeth told me that the Claims team had decided that as an extra-special gesture they would, as a group, be making a donation to the HKVCA. We are now waiting for the cheque for compensation, we have the \$500. Travel voucher,

and the donation will arrive shortly.

I will be forever grateful for the care and concern shown by the three WestJet staff members who did their utmost to show that they cared about our loss, and that they were willing to go the extra mile to help compensate for what had happened.

Pat Turcotte

One of 4 daughters of Lieut. L.B.Corrigan, WG

## Profile - The Fitzpatrick Brothers

*Gerry Tuppert*

The more we learn about the stories of the soldiers who were involved in the Battle of Hong Kong, the more we realize that fate and circumstance are quite capable of dealing a cruel blow. Sometimes twice in a generation! Such was the case for the third and fourth born sons of Mr. and Mrs. Walter P. Fitzpatrick of St. Julia Street in Quebec city.



**John Joseph Fitzpatrick** was born on January 6th, 1921. By all accounts he was a popular lad with the ladies and very protective of his younger brother Charles. After high school he enlisted along with many of his St. Patrick's High

School classmates in October, 1939. He was shipped to Botwood, Nfld. for basic training and soon promoted to corporal. It is here through his poetry that we get a glimpse of his scrappy leadership style that was soon to be tested in battle.



**Charles Joseph Fitzpatrick** was born March 22nd, 1922. Charles was the prankster in the family but always looked up to his older sibling. No one was surprised when he enlisted after his March birthday in 1941. Although the brothers were assigned to different platoons they

were reunited in Nfld. In November of that year the Royal Rifles contingent was mobilized and sent across the Pacific to bolster the garrison in Hong Kong.

Hostilities broke out on Dec. 8th and soon the island's defences were overwhelmed. As the days wore on the fighting grew more ferocious and desperate. On Dec. 22nd John was retaking a hill

and after loading himself up with ammunition and grenades he disappeared over the rise never to be seen again. Later it was determined that he had been killed by artillery fire.

For his bravery on the battlefield John received an MID. (Mentioned in Dispatches). His name is located on a memorial panel at the Sai Wan cemetery in Hong Kong.

At some point during the 18 days of the battle Charles incurred a serious leg wound. Somehow during the long challenging weeks ahead, his injury managed to heal despite the fetid conditions of the internment camps. Thirteen months later he was one of hundreds of POWs crammed into the unventilated hold of a hell ship bound for Japan. There, at the notorious Omine camp, he toiled long hard hours mining coal in treacherous conditions. One and a half years after he arrived at this camp tragedy struck the younger brother when a rock ledge collapsed and crushed him. Charles died on July 14th of 1944 an agonizing 13 months shy of VJ Day!

He was buried at the Yokohama War cemetery.

These two fine young men were laid to rest in a foreign land thousands of miles away from each other and their native town. Even after 75 years the poignant memory of their bravery and immense sacrifice still serves to personify the words, "They gave their todays for our tomorrows."

PS: Many thanks to Kym Martin and Nathalie Martin for the character reminisces of their uncles and shared conversations with their mother, the last surviving sibling of the Fitzpatrick boys.

## Memories: Rifleman Vincent A. Calder



My name is Bill Calder and this is a tribute to my Uncle, Vince Calder. He was a POW in Hong Kong and shipped to the coal mines of Japan, specifically the Omine, Fukoka Camp.

He was a young man when he enlisted because he wanted desperately to enter the military and hoped he could be a part of the force that was sent to defend Hong Kong. His story is on the HKVCA web site and so I will not dwell on his

time as a POW. Instead, I would like to focus on his life after he came home.

He was born in Simcoe, Ontario, the youngest of 4 boys, one of whom was my father. He was a very big man, 6' 7" and built like a bull. He was very loud and liked his beer. Dad loved him very much and never turned him away as long as he was sober, which, I guess was not a lot. We all loved him dearly and he and I used to have long talks but unfortunately I was too young to really appreciate what he had gone through and since my Father would not talk about his war experiences, I assumed Uncle Vince was the same.

He loved his nieces and nephews (there were 6 of us) and he would sometimes call our Dad late at night when he had been drinking and want to come for a visit but was only allowed to be around us when he was sober. He had a steam cleaning business and I used to love the red and white pickup he drove with all the machinery in the back of it. He sometimes stayed overnight and when that happened, I saw a side of him that has stayed with me all my life. He had sores on his legs stemming from the time he had to work on his knees at the Japanese mines because he was too tall to stand up in the mine shafts. These sores would not heal and as a result, for the rest of his life, he had to bandage his legs and ankles up to his knees every day. In the mornings, he would cough for 2 or 3 hours, again as a result of his time spent as a POW.

He loved marching in the annual parade and proudly wore his medals. He loved those medals and was so afraid of losing them that he placed them in the care of my mother and would pick them up every year and return them to her after the parade. I am now the caretaker of the medals and look at them fondly every now and then.

He died of Cancer on December 15<sup>th</sup> 1974 at the age of 56 and the legion in Simcoe gave him a very stirring and touching funeral.

He was a great man with a big heart, a true Canadian Veteran who loved his country and I am sure that he would be very proud of the good work being done by the HKVCA. They are keeping his memory alive as well as the memories of all who served with him.

## Memories of Bruce Cadoret

*Anne and Richard Cadoret*

Our Dad, Bruce Cadoret, did not speak of his nearly 4 years of torture in a Japanese prison camp.



Though haunted by nightmares he preferred to spare us the heinous details of what he endured. We feel it is his optimistic outlook and sense of humour which kept him alive against all

odds.

As children, he told us the light side of imprisonment. Asking guards for permission to use the outhouse, “benjo” in Japanese had soldiers in agony as they searched their memory banks for the right musical instrument and yelled “bango” for relief. He had no grudge against the Japanese. He liked to tell a story about a guard taking some of the prisoners to his own home for dinner after the war was over and explained that the guard “was just doing his job”.

Government posts were offered to many soldiers after they returned to Canada. In the small town of Bougainville, Quebec the only government position was “postmaster” and though he was offered this he just couldn’t take his neighbour’s job. Instead he went to Toronto (without his new bride and son) to look for “work”. He did odd jobs for room and board and money to send “down home”. He finally moved the family to Toronto after he got steady (shift) work in maintenance for a seniors’ home where he stayed until he was 60.

Our Mom and Dad travelled extensively during their golden years and were known for their generous hospitality. Their door was always open to family and friends and there was a party almost every weekend.

Every day Dad thanked the “Bon Dieu” and his cheerful “attitude of gratitude” touched everybody (and animal) he met. His motto was from an old poem called Solitude:

*Laugh, and the world laughs with you; Cry, and you cry alone.*

## Battle of Hong Kong Coin Unveiled

*Carol Hadley*



Photo: Presentation of Battle of Hong Kong coin (Hong Kong veterans Ralph MacLean (L) and George Peterson) (Douglas Little photo)

Prairie Region members were very pleased to have the Battle of Hong Kong coin unveiling in Winnipeg. It was held at the Legislature in Winnipeg on September 29, 2016 with over 80 people in attendance. This coin is part of a series commemorating the WWII Battlefront and Canadian participation.

We were pleased to have *Tom Roche* - Senior Director, Winnipeg Manufacturing, Royal Canadian Mint as the Emcee; our **Padre Reverend Paul Lampman**, St. Luke's Anglican Church - to deliver Far East Prisoner of War prayer; speakers - *Jon Reyes* – Member of the Legislative Assembly, St. Norbert and *Bonnie Staples-Lyon* – Board member, Royal Canadian Mint.

**George Peterson** – Battle of Hong Kong veteran representing Winnipeg Grenadiers and former employee of the Royal Canadian Mint also addressed the audience. We were happy to have **Ralph MacLean and Melanie MacLean Rollins** come from Calgary to represent the Royal Rifles of Canada. We were also happy to have widows (**Ladana Hodgkinson Mabley, Ann Richardson and Myrtle Lytle**), and many HKVCA members attend along with other military and veteran representation. George Peterson, WG, HK vet was part of the ceremony as he is the only Hong

Kong veteran to work in the Mint in Winnipeg when he received the coins in the vault to make them currency.

As a result of the work that was done in the Prairie Region over three years, the representatives of the Royal Canadian Mint told us that they were going to send a coin to all surviving veterans then added that they would include the widows. We were thrilled with this announcement and are working to get correct addresses for our widows and phone numbers for the courier to deliver the coins.

Thank you to Dan James for the promotion through social media and several others who also shared photos of the event and who attended.

The coins can be ordered through the Mint website at <http://www.mint.ca>. Once on the site, search for "Hong Kong". You can also visit your local post office as they should be handling them also.

## Inspiring our Youth

*Emmie Flanagan*



The picture below was submitted to me by Nancy Doddridge, along with this inspiring and educational story:

I was a witness to a group of students who "gushed" over Dad at the November 11 cenotaph ceremony. They were so excited because they had never met such a famous person before... their teacher had been preparing them for Remembrance Day by viewing the Youtube interviews of Dad that have been done by Tom Eden.



They all wanted to shake his hand, they all wanted

to be sure that he felt respected, and they all wanted to know if he remembered the events of "that time". Clearly their teacher, Darlene Dimock, had bestowed on them the pillars of Remembrance Day – Respect and Remembrance. You have no idea how pleased Dad was to see these young people there at the service. He then became humbled by the gift of their time and respect... it was very touching!

Sincere thanks to their wonderful teacher Darlene Dimock, who bestowed upon her students the pillars of Remembrance Day. Her approach in the classroom through watching videos of Phil, and then meeting him on Remembrance Day was simply brilliant! Darlene is an elementary school teacher from New Richmond, Quebec, and a new contact for the HKVCA education department.

In this report, you will see more examples on how our youth can become inspired. This information comes from regional educational events that took place throughout Canada during October and November, 2016.

October 21 - Manitoba Social Science Teachers Conference: Carol Hadley registered to do a presentation for teachers on the Battle of Hong Kong. Stan Lopata and Alex Taylor (of the regions Colour Party), manned the display where several hundred teachers and student teachers stopped by for information. Wow, several hundred is a good number, and we hope Manitoba will participate in our writing competition.

October 28 - Nova Scotia Social Studies Conference – Halifax: I attended a workshop presented by Flora Fung. A high school teacher from Whitby, Ontario, Flora is a member of Durham History Teachers Association, and Department Head of Canadian and World Studies. Flora is also 'Winner of the 2011 Governor General's History Awards for Excellence in Teaching'.

Flora gave an inspiring power point presentation to a room full of SS teachers on "Finding the Local Perspective". Her belief is that the best way to get students interested in history, is to make the learning experience as real as possible. She does this by making connections between students, the school, the community, and the country. Flora

engages her students in local history by making it relevant in their lives.

*Due to space limitations, the report above represents only a portion of the complete report (and more photos) which can be found in our digital version (ed)*



## BC Region Report

*Gerry Tuppert*

Greetings To All from the Pacific Region.

Firstly, a huge thank you to Gwen Day for being our Director and representative here in BC for the past year. Gwen has always spoken with a deep and abiding respect for all our Veterans and we're grateful she represented us here on the coast.

At the beginning of November, Mr. Cameron Cathcart, Director of Ceremonies for Remembrance Day in Vancouver spoke at a UBC function. Being the 75th Anniversary, he elected to talk about the Canadian involvement in the battle of Hong Kong and our Veterans. Mr. Cathcart who originally hailed from the small town of Breakeyville, QC was familiar with the Royal Rifles contribution and knew some of the soldiers and their families. Good choice Cameron and thank you for the timely exposure. We hope to post the text or presentation from that speech on the website, stay tuned.

## November 11th Events

Perhaps it was my new vantage point a few close rows from the Victoria cenotaph, but the attendance seemed to have swelled and, if that is even possible, the ceremony was more solemn than ever. Gerry had been asked to place a wreath on behalf of The Royal Canadian Legion Branches #7, #127, #292. A huge honour for him and something he has always done with panache. A few moments later he returned with the Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association wreath, paused for Linda Quesnel and I to turn and handed it to me for the laying. A memorable experience indeed. Afterwards he mentioned that he missed the cenotaph ceremony only once in 55 years! Inspiration, loyalty and dedication came

immediately to mind.



Photo: Linda Quesnel, Gerry Gerrard and Gerry Tuppert at the cenotaph

## Prairie Region Report

*Carol Hadley*



Greetings from the snowy, wet Prairies! We have been busy with many projects some of which you will read in other parts of the newsletter.

Most recently, December 4, members of the HKVCA attended the "Wreaths across Canada" at Brookside Cemetery in Winnipeg and commemorated a plaque (delayed in customs) to the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of Hong Kong. Government and military dignitaries were part of the ceremony along with George Peterson (last Winnipeg Grenadier of the Battle of Hong Kong), our Colour Party, and our Padre Paul Lampman of St Luke's Church. More on this event and pictures further in the newsletter.

Barry Mitchell completed the flag project and has the various sizes of flags available to purchase – see the website for more details.

In October Alex Taylor and Stan Lopata took our display and information to the SAGE conference for teachers sponsored by Manitoba Social Science Teachers Association where they interacted with 300+ teachers.

The 71<sup>st</sup> Annual Dinner was held at Neil Bardal's Centre in Winnipeg with about 60 people in attendance. We were pleased to have HK vet



George Peterson, widows Anne Richardson, Ladena Hodgkinson Mabely, and Alexandra Slovinsky in attendance. (Alexandra passed away a few days after.) There were city councillors, Jason Scheyer and Scott Dillingham with several representatives of other veteran associations. Thank you to Juliet Lafortune for coordinating this event and our social events again. We are appreciative of the many years of service Juliet has given to the Association and wish her well as she steps down.

Kathie Carlson and Carol Hadley attended round table discussions with the Minister of VAC and his staff in our areas. The general discussion was the Budget for VAC and what it included and if they missed anything. Their motto is "Family is involved when soldiers serve." The HKVCA role was to ensure our VIP program was continuing for vets and widows and it will.

With the declaration of the elections, Carol Hadley was named as Prairie Regional Director with new Secretary, Marleen Bell, Barry Mitchell continues as Treasurer. John Matthews as public relations broadcasting our events, and Dan James, social media person with postings on Facebook. Kathie Carlson will stay in contact with the area reps, forwarding reports for our meeting keeping all members informed. We greatly appreciate Kathie's continued support.

Remembrance Day Sunday held at St. Luke's Anglican Church with Padre Paul Lampman, and HKVCA members and the Winnipeg Grenadier Cadets laying wreaths. Remembrance Day at the Winnipeg Convention Centre had Dennis Bell and Barry Mitchell laying the HKV wreath. Our colour party (Alex Taylor, Vince and Stan Lopata) were in attendance as they have been for many, many years. Our members in other communities throughout our Region also laid wreaths recognizing the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of Hong Kong. 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of Hong Kong – Brookside Cemetery.

On a wet, snowy December 4, 2016 at Brookside Cemetery, Field of Honour at the Stone of Remembrance, a brief ceremony was held to observe the "Wreaths across Canada" initiative

(thanks to Bison Transport for sponsoring the wreaths) and commemorate a plaque to the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of Hong Kong.

Several dignitaries, government and military, along with a company of cadets and our Colour Party were piped onto the Field. Jane Saxby, Administer of Winnipeg Cemeteries, was Master of Ceremonies. Minister Jon Reyes, Special Envoy for Military Affairs, and Councillor Matt Allard on behalf of the Mayor spoke on the special day. Cadets recited the Honour Poem in French and English. Lt. Col. Morantz, Royal Winnipeg Rifles, spoke about the Battle of Hong Kong, recognizing George Peterson. Rev. Paul Lampman, HKVCA Padre, gave the prayer of dedication to the plaque and wreaths. Last Post was played by Dan Whittaker Jr and piper was Corp. Shaun Brown.



At the Stone of Remembrance - Brookside Cemetery (Bob Holliday photo)

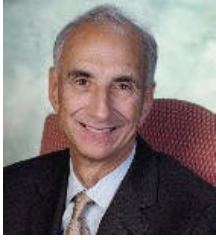
Wreaths were laid at the Stone of Remembrance by Minister Reyes, Councillor Allard, George Peterson with the final wreath laid by senior cadets at the Teardrop (original WWI monument).

Finally, we were piped to the existing memorial to the Winnipeg Grenadiers (Jardine's Lookout) to lay our poppies. This memorial will be redesigned to accommodate the new plaque in the Spring.

Thank you to all our members and family who attended.

## Ontario Region News

**Mike Babin**



On December 6 the Ontario Legislature rose to recognize the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Hong Kong, followed by a reception hosted by Ontario's Lieutenant Governor. Veteran Fred Cooper (RRC) accepted the honours on behalf of all the Canadians who served in Hong Kong.

Recently, I've had the honour of speaking several times to groups in the Toronto area, including the Hong Kong Cultural Studies group and at the Richard Charles Lee Canada Hong Kong Library at the University of Toronto. On a less formal note, I played in the annual Hong Kong-Canada Business Association golf tournament in September. No holes-in-one for me, unfortunately!

I have just returned this week from a personal visit to Hong Kong where I participated in the annual commemorative ceremony at Sai Wan War Cemetery. The Consulate of Canada did its usual stellar work in arranging a very moving ceremony that properly honoured those who fought and died in the Battle and in the POW camps.

### Central and Southeast Ontario

**Shelagh Purcell**

The main message to HKVCA members in this area was to let them know about the gathering in Ottawa on December 10<sup>th</sup> at The Wall. Arranged by Mitzi Ross, it's been a special time of remembrance - complete with laying of wreaths. John and Bernadine Russell (Albert James Russell, RRC) plan to attend along with Pat and Bernard Turcotte and Mark Purcell and I in memory of Lt. Leonard Corrigan (WG). We'll hope the weather is agreeable.

News of the coin from the Royal Canadian Mint featuring the Battle of Hong Kong was also announced. Yvonne Southworth and Irene Firlotte are two recipients of the coins in this area. Speaking to Yvonne (Donald Southworth RRC) says she is fine. Irene (Lawrence Firlotte, RRC) settled into a nursing home.

Major Brian Tang, who was so helpful with the planning of the August luncheon, is now headed to the far north. Twenty people began with a meal at a local restaurant and then went to the Air Force Museum after for a tour. Two guides took us around the facility and explained the displays. It was a very worthwhile afternoon, spent in Trenton, Ont. Robert Ryan planned to attend the lunch but had health problems that day. However his efforts to locate the grave of John Arthur (RRC) have given him new information of the family connection. Instead of a cousin, Arthur may have been an uncle. Robert hopes to put a Hong Kong grave marker on the stone he located.

*Wishing you a Joyous Christmas season and a reasonable winter!*

### Northern Ontario

**Jackie LeDrew**

Here it is another year almost gone. Only one snowfall so far in the north thus far. However, as traditional northerners we know there is a lot more on the way. Ho! Ho! Ho! Keep Your Chin Up.

Congratulations to Fred Cooper RRC who celebrated his 97th birthday this past October and attended the 75th anniversary ceremony of the "Beginning of the Battle of Hong Kong" December 6th at Queen's Park in Toronto. Way to go Fred!

When Remembrance Day rolls around every year it's great to see everyone wearing poppies to remember those who gave their lives for our freedom. It hardly seems enough though "just one day" or "two minutes" dedicated to those men and women who left their families, friends and loved ones to go overseas to countries most of them never even heard of to free them from tyranny. So it was with my father Augustin Cyr, his brothers Clem and Leo and my mother's brother Wilmer Cyr (my mom's maiden name was Cyr) who enlisted with the Royal Rifles of Canada in New Richmond, Quebec. They traveled west by train picking up the Winnipeg Grenadiers then sailed from Vancouver to Hong Kong to defend the Island against the Japanese. Little did they know they would end up for almost four years as prisoners of war in the camps working as slaves in the coal mines and shipyards.

My dad or uncles never shared the atrocities and diseases they suffered with their families. I guess they didn't want us to know what they went through. It's only in the last number of years that I have found out a lot of information about the events. I'm grateful to the Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association and the wonderful volunteers who put so much effort and work into bringing to light "The Battle of Hong Kong" as part of our Canadian History as well as driving the project to build the Commemorative Wall in Ottawa honoring all those who served with the Royal Rifles and the Winnipeg Grenadiers. We owe a debt of gratitude to all those who served sacrificing their lives, those who have passed away, those still with us and to those today who are serving our country. May we "never forget". We will "remember them".

*(View the photo of Jackie's storefront mall display in our online edition - ed)*



## Quebec Region Report

*Lucette Mailloux Muir*

Here we are again at the end of another year. 2016 was a busy year with many activities, commemorative ceremonies and the marking of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of Hong. We will remember them!

The administration of our region went well thanks to our membership and continued donations and support from our members. Thank you all. We are in the process of reviewing our membership lists to update certain missing information for our veterans, widows and then all members. We need to have a full mailing list, telephone numbers and email addresses if any, in order to stay in contact with everyone. Please contact your Quebec region membership chair if you are moving, changing your room number in a residence or any other change. Thank you.

We stay in contact with the Bay Chaleur Museum and help them when possible to continue their good work. We refer to the museum, family members who would like to find a good home for their artifacts.

We also stay in contact with Les Voltigeurs de Quebec and attend their functions. They are still fast at work on the reconstruction of the Drill Hall at le Manège Militaire de Québec, the reinstallation of the RRC Plaque and getting things ready for their "museum" or display cases for the RRC. Looking forward to the official opening to be announced some time in the coming year.

That will be it at this time and I would like to wish each and every one of you a Very Merry Christmas, Happy New Year in company of family and/or good friends and specially Health for the new year.

## Atlantic Region

*Ruth Murgatroyd*



I am thrilled to be the new Atlantic Representative on the Hong Kong Veteran Commemorative Association Board of Directors. I am the Executive Director of a history museum and therefore very active in the heritage community in Fredericton. I am also the President of the New Brunswick Heritage Association and am involved in promoting heritage throughout the province and history education in the school curriculum.



Atlantic Region Board of Directors. From left to right - Treasurer - Andy Flanagan, President - Ruth Murgatroyd, Secretary - Ellen O'Neill, V. President - Jim Flanagan. Missing from photo Membership Rep - Bernard LeBlanc

I partially owe my deep interest in history,

particularly military history, to my Grandfather, William Hickie. I recall spending many hours as a child listening to him tell stories about his childhood, the war and raising his family after his return from the Pacific.

I was familiar with the Hong Kong Veterans Association while I worked on my thesis but lost my connection over the years as I raised my family. I have never lost my interest in the Battle of Hong Kong and have always worked towards raising awareness of the importance of this part of Canada's military history.

This year, I was asked to sit on the Atlantic Region reunion planning committee. We hosted a remembrance ceremony and reception on October 15th incorporating members from the younger generation, government officials and the Milton F. Gregg Centre for the Study of War and Society.

Since being elected to my position, I have been working to orientate myself with the organization and its membership. I have created a private group on Facebook to communicate with Atlantic Region Branch Executive members and have started to review past activities and become acquainted with our members.

My goals in this position are to focus on increasing public awareness of the Battle of Hong Kong, to promote membership and to engage the youth, such as the great grandchildren of the veterans.

## Do You Know These Widows?

Over the years people move and forget to tell us. At the same time, it's reasonably common for different government or quasi-government organizations to ask us for contact information for veterans and widows for official business. In particular, we know that we have lost track of some widows because the addresses we have are incorrect. If you have any information that would help us, please send Carol Hadley a message [carol.hadley@gmail.com](mailto:carol.hadley@gmail.com), call your regional director or area representative, or send a note to Carol, % P.O. Box 381, Winnipeg, MB, R3C 2H6.

Elizabeth Firlotte, Doreen Fleming, Ruth Horswell, Phyllis Lanyon, Ruth Thirlwell, Mary

Walker, Lyla Beattie, Jeannine De Champlain, Una Lapalme, Laura Ross, Margaret Mallery, Beverly Dayton, Mary McIntyre, Mary Lillian McAuley, Marguerite Mondor, Martha Murray, Betty Philip, E. Kathleen Wiebe, Gertrude Zacharko, Joyce Proffitt, Mona R. Zane

## Calling All Volunteers

The HKVCA is embarking on a project to develop a Communications Plan and we need your help!

- Do you want to contribute to the work of the HKVCA and just aren't sure how you can help?
- Do you have thoughts on the types of information you would like to receive from the HKVCA?
- Do you have great ideas on how the HKVCA could be better communicating in this digital age?

Our goal is to lay out the path to better communication with our membership and you, the members, are our best source of information to help make this happen.

Over the course of the coming months the Board of Directors will be working on a communication plan and we would like volunteers who would be willing to provide input and feedback throughout the stages of its development. The task would be simple. We will, through email and online surveys that are simple to complete and submit, ask for your thoughts on various parts of the plan.

If you are interested in contributing to this work, please send a simple email indicating your interest with the subject line "Communication Plan" to [nancy\\_doddridge@hotmail.com](mailto:nancy_doddridge@hotmail.com) by December 31, 2016.

## The "75<sup>th</sup> Logo



You may have noticed an unusual logo in the top-right corner of our cover page. The explanation of how it came to be created can be found online as part of our digital version of the newsletter. Just visit

[http://www.hkvca.ca/newsltr/current/logo\\_explain.html](http://www.hkvca.ca/newsltr/current/logo_explain.html)