

REPORT ON EDUCATIONAL EVENTS

OTTAWA, NOVEMBER 2016

During the first two weeks in November, Ann Hyland, Ted Terry and I represented the HKVCA-Ontario Region at three educational events in Ottawa.

Our standard display for these events consisted of the three Canadians-in-Hong-Kong banners; a book selection; two bilingual VAC publications (*Canadians in Hong Kong* booklet and *The Defence of Hong Kong* information sheet); Writing Contest cover pages in English and French; colour photo of the Memorial Wall with the Government of Canada plaque text, and our Mission Statement on the reverse side; and the Gander bookmark which features our website address. In addition, we provided hand-out folders which contain much of the above material and the CD-Rom of the multi-media presentation developed several years ago by Ontario Region.

The first event, on 1 November, was the Teachers' Resource Fair, held annually at the Lord Elgin Hotel as part of the week-long Library of Parliament Teachers Institute on Canadian Parliamentary Democracy. The fair lasts a very intensive 1.5 hours and includes about 100 elementary and secondary teachers from across Canada. The rushed and congested nature of the event presents some challenges in engaging teachers in discussion, but we had productive conversations with a number of secondary-level teachers. The overall knowledge level of the Canadian defence of Hong Kong was low to moderate. We gave out 15 folders and a fair amount of individual information items. There was considerable interest in the Writing Contest, which we promoted as much as possible.

The Ontario History and Social Sciences Teachers' Association (OHASSTA) conference ran for two full days, on 3-4 November, and was attended by approximately 160 teachers from across the province. The HKVCA has been represented at this event in Toronto for a number of years. It was held in Ottawa for the first time this year, and will likely return next year. From our perspective this was by far the most successful of the three events, as much of our story and material is geared to high-school students and the format allowed for lengthy and detailed discussions with teachers. A considerable number indicated that they included Hong Kong in their WW-II lessons, and that our material would enable them to provide additional focus. We gave out 45 information folders, along with individual items from our display, and again promoted the Writing Contest.

The third event was a Veterans' Appreciation Day held on 8 November at the Billings Bridge Shopping Centre. Unlike the other two events, this was attended by about 300 grades 3-7 students accompanied by their teachers. In addition to our regular display, we featured posters of Gander (with his story and Dicken Medal citation), George MacDonell's book on Gander, and a similar poster on Sergeant-Major John Osborn. While our material is more appropriate for higher grades, the younger students were captivated by the Gander story, which gave us the "hook" to talk about the Canadians in Hong Kong. We were pleasantly surprised to learn that some of the

students knew something about the Canadian story—one even told us proudly that he had read a book about it!

Altogether, three events which enabled us to fulfil a goal of the mission statement, to educate Canadians on the Battle of Hong Kong.

Ian Doull