



# WASURERU-NAI "Never Forget"



## National Newsletter of the Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association Winter 2020 Edition

Editor: *Jim Trick*

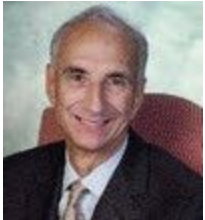
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### President's Message



*Mike Babin*

As the pandemic drags on (and on), I hope this finds all of you and your families doing well, both physically and mentally. What we are all enduring now is barely a hint of what our POWs were faced with in the camps. But the relentless bad news, upheaval to daily lives, lockdowns (for some) and deaths of friends and relatives, does give us a bit of an idea of the stress the POWs were subjected to. It certainly gives me an appreciation of how mentally tough those men were. Like them, we constantly hope for an end to it.

### Documentary

A hugely interesting new documentary, '**The Fence**', is being premiered on **December 6 at 9pm ET and PT** on the Documentary Channel. I urge you to watch it, as it gives some wonderful insight into the prison camp experience. Two of our Hong Kong Veterans are featured in it. Read more about it, and hear from the documentary's director, in Lori Atkinson Smith's article elsewhere in this newsletter. Alternate viewing times are also included there, if you are unable to view on December 6. You can visit the film's website [here](#).

### Convention

We had all hoped that by this point the worst of the pandemic would be behind us, and life would be returning to normal. With this in mind, we postponed our national convention from August 2020 to next August 2021. But even though there are now very positive signs that a vaccine is coming sometime in 2021, there is just as much uncertainty about our ability to organize an event, and to have enough people willing to travel to Ottawa to make a go of it. Therefore, I am saddened to report that once again, we are faced with having to change our plans, as the Board of Directors has decided that the situation will not permit us to hold a convention in 2021.

Our conventions have traditionally been a way for us to gather, share experiences, learn and socialize. Let's turn adversity into opportunity by finding creative alternatives: for example, by using technology, such as video conferencing (e.g. Zoom or Facebook Live) to hold events, such as historical talks, story swaps, videos and the like, which will have broad appeal among our members and their families. Many are already using Facebook to post information and ask questions about 'C' Force members and the battle, and we will be encouraging this to continue. Unsure about using technology? Invite your

younger family members to show you how ... and encourage them to participate, too!

Gail Angel is leading our effort to reshape the convention. I encourage you to contact her with your creative ideas. Gail's email is [ideas21@hkvca.ca](mailto:ideas21@hkvca.ca). We'll be posting events and schedules on Facebook, our website, and the newsletter. So keep an eye out and join in!

### Sai Wan War Cemetery Ceremony

Here's an example of how creative thinking and the use of technology can help to overcome restrictions imposed by the pandemic, and at the same time enable more people to become involved. No doubt many of you know that the Consulate of Canada in Hong Kong has held a commemoration ceremony at Sai Wan War Cemetery every year since 1947. In spite of COVID-19, which has forced the Consulate to drastically restrict attendance, this year will be no exception.

Traditionally, very few Canadians have been able to travel to Hong Kong for the ceremony. But this year the Consulate will be livestreaming it! It will take place at 10am Hong Kong time on Sunday, December 6, and the livestream will be on Facebook here [www.facebook.com/CanadainHKandMacao](https://www.facebook.com/CanadainHKandMacao). Anyone, anywhere can watch it. As this may be an inconvenient time for some of us Canadians (9pm ET/ 6pm

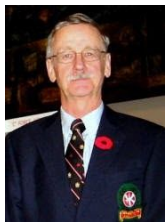
### HKVA Report



*Phil Doddridge*

Phil is doing just fine and would like to wish all HKVCA members and their families the best of the holiday season, along with the hope for a better 2021.

### Online Updates



*Jim Trick*

#### 'C' Force Web

As many of you know, our ['C' Force web](#) is the place to go when you're looking for information on a specific 'C' Force member, and we constantly update the

Individual Reports with details gleaned from a variety of sources. Our most prolific researcher is Lillian Roesch who hangs out on Facebook, contributing to the [Hong Kong Veterans Tribute](#) group and encouraging others to dig through closets and photo-filled shoeboxes to share memories with the online community. The result has been a landslide of information uploaded to Facebook that is only now being linked to the individual records on our 'C' Force

**PT on Saturday, December 5)** a recorded version will be available for later viewing at the same link as above. Don't miss this!

Not to be outdone, some of our own commemorative events here in Canada have already been livestreamed, especially by our creative HKVCA members in Western Canada. So we know how to do this!

### Books

I've written before about new books being published which include material on the Battle of Hong Kong. One such is historian Tim Cook's ["The Fight for History"](#), which you'll find in an article elsewhere in this newsletter. Another is ["Letters Across the Sea"](#) by Genevieve Graham, to be released in April. Read, learn, and be entertained!

The holiday season will be a bit different, and perhaps a bit strange for most of us this year. But I'm sure we will all find ways to celebrate with our families and friends. I wish you all the best, and hope that everyone will stay safe and healthy in 2021.

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

### In Remembrance

#### In Memoriam

Nancy Furey, widow of James Furey, WG, on August 18, 2020

Lynne Matenchuk, HKVCA member, on February 14, 2020

web. A small team is sifting through these elements, updating records, and creating a compressed file archive for each 'C' Force member for which we have additional information. This will be a long-term project but you can get an idea of the results by visiting [Paul Mondor's report](#), scrolling down to the General Comments block and clicking on the "compressed (zip) file" link. A file containing additional details on this 'C' Force member will be downloaded to your computer.

We are always on the lookout for any type of digital memorabilia that will assist us in fleshing out the stories and experiences of 'C' Force members. To contribute, get in touch by emailing [webmaster@hkvca.ca](mailto:webmaster@hkvca.ca) or using our "Contact Us" link.

## Recent Additions

Hong Kong veteran, [George MacDonell](#), has published another story: [Clark and Cameron...Unsung Canadian Heros](#) which is a riveting account of shipyard sabotage by two members of 'C' Force.

Hong Kong veteran Leonard Corrigan's daughters, who [published his diaries in 2008](#), have graciously allowed us to provide an [updated online version](#). Recommended reading!

Also, check out our [Submissions page](#) for recent articles added to our site.

## Social Media

As mentioned earlier, our Facebook presence has evolved into a supportive community, composed of those interested in the members of 'C' Force and their experiences. If you haven't joined our Public Group [Hong Kong Veterans](#)

## Angela Remembers



*Pat Turcotte*

Who would believe that out of the hellish conditions of a POW camp there would be a heart-warming story that has just come to light again.....after 75 years!

Lieut. L.B. Corrigan, of the Winnipeg Grenadiers became good friends in Sham Shui Po POW Camp with Eduardo "Edo" DaSilva who, as a resident of Hong Kong before the war, had fought with the local Volunteers in the Battle to save their city. As such, he was imprisoned along with the others who survived the battle. The two had a mutual love of music, Leonard with his saxophone playing and Edo with his excellent tenor singing voice. As part of various musical groups, they helped entertain their fellow POWs many times during their years in camp.

Just after the August 15<sup>th</sup> ceremonies this past August, the four Corrigan sisters, Leonard's four daughters, had an opportunity to discuss the very special relationship between these two men. To confirm more of what we already knew about their connection, we decided to get in touch with one of Edo's children, Angela DaSilva, now living in the Calgary area, to provide some of the details that we couldn't remember. Angela responded with a very touching letter that we felt should be recognized for the significance of the situation.

Here is some of what Angela was able to tell us:

During the years when both Edo and Leonard were at Sham Shui Po, they often discussed the likelihood of Edo of being able to live somewhere in the world away from Hong Kong,

[Tribute](#) (900+ members) and our Community page [HKVCA](#) (1500 followers) then you might want to give it a try.

Thanks to Dan James and crew for their dedication in making our Facebook presence a key education and information tool.

## Stop the Presses!

We have just received a windfall from our friend [Gene Labiuk](#) who is working on a large project: *Operation Magic Carpet, Bringing the Boys home*, which tells the story of the repatriation of British and British Commonwealth Prisoners of War from the Far East who came home through Manila, Philippines. He has provided HKVCA access to all of the clippings from various newspapers that formed part of his research. We've added them to the HKVCA [Gallery](#). Thanks Gene!

even though both he and his wife had been living in Hong Kong before the war. Canada came up often in those discussions as a possible final destination. The two agreed at one stage that if it seemed the logical thing to do, Edo would apply to come to this country and that Leonard would assist him in whatever way he could.

When the war was over, Edo and his wife, Maria, found themselves in the middle of unrest and riots, and knew even then that Hong Kong would be returned to China and Communism so they began searching for a new life. Edo first worked his way on board a ship to Belfast, travelling from there to England to search for a job. No luck. He and his wife then travelled to live in Brazil but found it too corrupt. Then they tried moving to Singapore. On the ocean liner they had taken to get there, Maria went into labour, and delivered her first son, Phil, with the help of an unknown woman, as the ship's doctor refused to assist in any way. Edo did find work for two years, but the business collapsed and he and Maria moved back to Hong Kong for a time as they both had relatives there. The couple's second son, Mike, was born there. The China Light Corporation for which Edo worked was a fair employer, and provided a house for them. They were well enough off that they had an Amah to help with raising the boys, as well as a gardener. Maria had been a teacher before the war, and was able to provide a second income for the family, with private lessons for adults wanting to learn English, as well as helping students who needed to be tutored. At this point in time, they realized that they would still need to continue the search for a country that they could call home.





*Maria, Edo and children - arrival in Canada 1957*

In 1956, Edo wrote a letter to Leonard Corrigan in Saskatchewan, asking if he would sponsor him and his family to come to Canada. In that letter he assured Leonard that he would not be a financial burden, and that all that was needed was his being named as the person who would sponsor the DaSilva family. Leonard agreed to do this, and by 1957 they were on their way. They boarded a steamship for the United States, and for a full month were plagued with seasickness from very rough seas. The fact that Maria was 8 months pregnant, meant for a difficult crossing considering that she and Edo were also trying to look after their 9 and 7-year-old sons. San Francisco was their point of entry in the U.S, and from there, they travelled by train to Vancouver and then White Rock, BC. Then they continued by train to Swift Current, Saskatchewan, another two-day journey from the West Coast - in the middle of the prairies.

The Corrigan's lived in the very first of the wartime houses built in Swift Current to honour those soldiers returning from their service in World War II. As soon as Leonard realized the DaSilvas were really on their way, he began building a large room in the basement in which the visitors could stay, at least temporarily. He and his son-in-law completed the work just in time for the new arrivals. When they were assigning the rooms, our parents chose to give the DaSilva family the upstairs bedrooms and stayed in the new addition themselves. As it turned out, it wasn't long before the family had found a basement apartment to rent after just a few weeks with the Corrigan's. Shortly after they settled in, Maria delivered her third child, daughter Angela on August 7, 1957. Leonard had already been able to secure a job for Edo as an Accountant with the Electric Department of the City of Swift Current, so it wasn't long before the family did feel sure that they had made the right move. The family's new life in Canada had indeed begun.



*Leonard (left) with Maria and Edo Da Silva*

As it turned out, the Corrigan's and the community certainly did make the family feel welcome. Before long, the children were in school, and their parents were adjusting to a very different life from that of the faraway world of Hong Kong. Edo and Maria, with grace and good humour adapted, their children all graduated from High School, and Maria and Edo made their mark as good citizens in their new country. Both Edo and Maria contributed to the life of the community. Maria was particularly active, and, as Angela has noted, she was a teacher, a librarian, and ultimately a Gold Level Figure Skating Judge, as Angela had taken the sport very seriously. When Maria agreed to become President of the Swift Current Figure Skating Club, she made many improvements in the Club, as recognized by the Figure Skating Association of Saskatchewan.

Ultimately, she was admitted to the Swift Current Athletes Hall of Fame. Edo, as an Accountant for the City, was a hard-working, conscientious employee. Through 30 years, Edo and Maria stayed in Swift Current, enjoying the friendship of the Corrigan's and many others in Swift Current until Edo retired. Phil had attended University in Winnipeg, and then moved to Calgary, Mike became a Meteorologist in Eureka on Ellesmere Island, and then moved down south to Calgary. Angela followed their lead in 1975. When Edo and Maria went West soon after that, they settled in Vernon, BC, but they too moved to Calgary when their first grandchildren were born in 1977. Till their deaths, they enjoyed their family in this new part of the country.

In Angela's own words: "Mom and Dad took us all out for supper every year for their birthdays. They continued to take us all out - as the family grew to 15 - about once a month. We celebrated all Christmases and the big events all year round. They were so generous and loving. We were very blessed. Fittingly, we were able to "see them off"."

There is much more to the story, but all agree that the DaSilva family, through determination and hardship, certainly succeeded in making living in their new country a true home indeed. The help and friendship of Leonard Corrigan and his family were essential in making that possible.

As an afterthought, members of HKVCA may be interested to know that when we had our Convention in Calgary in 2007, we four Corrigan sisters invited the three children of Edo and Maria, now adults, to the Convention where they

were not only delighted to meet us again, but also able to chat with a number of the veterans that Edo and Leonard would have known in Sham Shui Po. Surely, a story with a happy ending for all involved.

## Sgt Gander Project - Update



*J P Bear*

Hello to all, and I pray that you are all staying safe during this turbulent time we are going through. As I have had to work through some of my own health issues, I have continued to work to get Gander and 'C' Force's story onto the big screen. Though over the last 6 months, I have developed Pulmonary Fibrosis, I have continued to keep working diligently on the film and its production. With the assistance of some super documentary producers, I have been able to have the opportunity to be in contact with various Canadian Documentary Production Companies and Directors. I want you all to know that I won't let anything deter me from accomplishing my goal... after reading about the lack of

funding for the Remembrance Wall parking lot to be made and completed, I am considering the idea of closing my Gander bank account, and sending the funds to HKVCA to add to the coffer to help with this very meaningful project. Let it be known that I have not a lot to offer, but I would like for it to be put in so as to help. The one thing I plan on, is to attend the reunion/convention in 2021, but with this pandemic messing up plans, I don't know if I will be allowed to enter Canada to attend the activities in August. I will keep you posted, and if things don't change, I will continue to work on achieving my goal, and be assured "THIS IS A STORY THAT WILL BE TOLD!" God Bless You All, Stay the Course and Cheers to You All!!

## 'The Fence'



*Lori Atkinson Smith*

In Mike Babin's article at the start of this newsletter, he mentions a documentary I hope you all get a chance to view. It is 78 minutes long, so set aside some time! See the end of this article for viewing dates and times.

I want to acquaint you with Viveka Melki. She is the director of the documentary 'The Fence'. I know a few of us have been waiting to view this documentary. The film's air date commemorates the anniversary of the beginning of the Battle of Hong Kong, which began on December 8, 1941.

The following is taken from the press kit for the documentary 'The Fence'.

HONG KONG, 1941-1945. Prisoners of War and survivors reflect on how one of the longest incarcerations in WW2 affected their lives. In a broader sense, the film examines how time and history have created a 'Fence' separating truth, memory and forgiveness.

Viveka Melki is a Canadian filmmaker, curator and producer based in Montreal. Melki wrote, directed and executive produced 'The Fence'. It took her nearly ten years to research, and the film includes never-before-seen archives from inside Hong Kong and Japan.

For the film, Melki and her team built replicas of Hong Kong's Sham Shui Po prison, circa 1941, to exact scale in Cuba. Cuba was chosen due to its topography and architectural similarity to a now-vanished 1940's era Hong Kong. Melki explains: "In a story that addresses revisionist history, I felt our veterans deserved not only the highest production quality possible for their story, but that every single detail of the film is historically accurate and verified by several military historians and archives".

### Viveka Melki, Director's statement

There is a 'FENCE' between the act of violence, and the reflection upon those acts. Human nature wants the narrative of war to be black and white: we had a 'good' war ; we fought on the 'right' side... otherwise, our human suffering has had no meaning. This film is about what stays in between remembered and witnessed. It is a documentary with those who have humanity as their 'nation' that runs concurrently with intimate drama portraits of acts of darkness ... and light. Together, these lines make up a common history that highlights the futility of nationalism and war. The actions of war are never black or white. The perception of the acts of violence differ depending on whether you're the one enacting, enduring, or just watching. Memory is what slips through the gap in 'THE FENCE' to become what we imagine, as history.

Over 10 years, and late into the night, I would spend months linking together pieces of stories to make a whole picture. This was a story with little visual proof. Japan has never prioritized the classification of its WW2 archives, and the Imperial Army took thousands of propaganda footage. I worked with the



POW Research Network of Japan, with G UWALO, with Mansfield, and websites off the grid to find the truth.

Japanese historian Dr. Tanaka says, “We are sorry for what you suffered, but we are sorry for what we suffered also”. I am so sorry that you suffered... that Japanese Veterans came home to Japan and had to hide, made to feel shame for what they had done - or for what you, their government, ordered, drove, and condoned them to do.



I am sorry that you suffered... Canadian Veterans sent into a battle you were never going to win. That Mckenzie King sent you a Christmas Card wishing you well - while you were inside a POW camp starving in Christmas, 1942. There is no grey zone when it comes to acknowledgment and apology. Just as for me

there was no grey zone wherein every detail of the film had to be reconstructed to historical accuracy.

Ten years ago, when I met the Veteran’s children, who grew up in houses where walls were filled with silence; with father’s whose memories were violently triggered by seeing a bowl of rice; who slept on the floors beside their beds... Yet, how could these men possibly tell their loved ones what they had experienced? Some tried, too many were not believed - not

## BC Region Report



*Gerry Tuppert*

There is very little activity to report here on the west coast and it’s painfully obvious why that is.

The pandemic has increased its grip on all our lives and it looks like it will be well into the

New Year before things return to normal.

However, there is one constant that we hope will never fade and that is the resolute determination of Canadians to honour their veterans on Remembrance Day. This year’s memorial ceremonies were subdued and muted but no less significant in content. Most wreaths were laid by previous arrangements and the general public was dissuaded from attending. A truly unusual scene, that oddly seemed to contribute to the solemnity of the occasion.

Whatever method of remembrance our membership chose on November 11th, the effect is almost always the same. A deeper connection to our veterans and acknowledgement of the sacrifices they endured.

only were they never compensated for their work in the shipyards and mines of Japan, they were never compensated by the Canadian government well into the 1950’s. “When they came home, many of them never recovered from 4 years of systematic starvation” (George MacDonell). Too many Veterans died in their late 40’s and 50’s, their bodies damaged from starvation.



They never told what they saw through the fence, unlike many prisons, -the fence was not a solid wall. You could see through it, and so were forced to watch, helpless, your fists clenched, your voice muted in your cage. For me this film was about acknowledging suffering on all sides; and forgiving yourself for a time when you

were unable to act. But that was not my time. My time is now, a time to use my voice, to stand up for a modern day battle of democracy, to bring forward erased history, and to tell this story with as much grace, and truth as I can manage. —Viveka Melki.

‘The Fence’ premieres on **Sunday, December 6 at 9 pm ET and PT on the CBC Documentary Channel**. You can also watch it on the following dates and times:

Dec. 6: midnight & 3 am ET/ 9 pm & midnight PT

Dec. 8: 11 am, 3 pm & 7 pm ET/8 am, 12 noon & 4 pm PT

Dec. 13: 9 am & 3 pm ET/ 6 am & 12 noon PT

Jan. 8: 9 pm & midnight ET/ 6 pm & 9 pm PT



*Mr. Brian McFadden examining the South East Asia POW Display*

In keeping with our remembrance theme, I received a [link to an article](#) from the November 5th Sherbrooke Record newspaper in Quebec. Near the bottom of this article, you’ll find a well-written account of the Doull brothers from Drummondville. [Llewellen](#) and his older brother [Lloyd](#), illustrates why we reflect with respect and awe at what our fathers experienced during their captivity.

**We Will Remember Them**

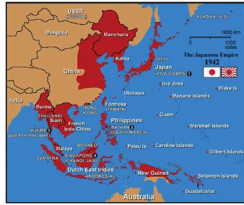


## PRISONERS OF WAR. JAPANESE P.O.W. CAMPS WWII SOUTH EAST ASIA & THE PACIFIC



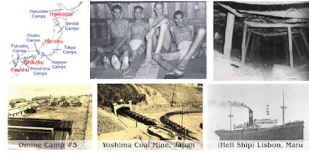
Japan's conquest of overseas territories began in 1935 when its military forces invaded mainland China. In December 1941, Japanese forces launched an all-out offensive in South East Asia and the Pacific capturing thousands of Allied soldiers, sailors, and airmen. As Japanese forces swept through the region more than 150,000 civilians were sent to internment camps in the Dutch East Indies, Malaya, and the Philippines. Of those prisoners held by the Japanese in both military and civilian camps in South East Asia and the Pacific, almost all who perished died from forced labour, starvation, punishment, and disease.

Japanese Attacks on:



### ① JAPAN

In the early stages of the war in South East Asia and the Pacific, Japan won some unexpected and important military victories resulting in the capture of thousands of Allied soldiers, sailors, and airmen from the conquered territories. In April, 1942 over 80 Prisoner of War Camps were built in Japan to house Allied prisoners transported to work as forced labourers and help supplement the local civilian work force. These camps were built in industrial areas close to mines, factories, and shipyards. By 1944 these industrial areas were being targeted by American bombers as the Allies brought the war ever closer to the Japanese home-land. The total number of Allied POW's in Japan was estimated at 86,000. Thousands were worked to death or died from malnutrition, starvation, or disease. In addition, hundreds more, being transported in cargo vessels known as "Hell Ships" died when these ships were sunk by the Allies who were unaware that prisoners were locked in the ships' cargo holds.



### ② PHILIPPINES, (THE BATAAN DEATH MARCH)

On December 22nd, 1941 the Japanese invaded the Philippines and after lengthy and costly battles finally crushed all resistance. By April, 1942, American and Filipino troops defending the islands were out of supplies and severely weakened by starvation and disease. Unable to mount an effective resistance they were forced to surrender. The Japanese vented their rage on the sick and exhausted troops and ordered the prisoners to march to a prison camp near Iloilo on the Bataan Peninsula. This 100-mile journey was later named "The Death March" by those who survived. During this hellish march prisoners were randomly beaten and denied food and water and those too sick or weak who fell behind or collapsed from the heat were killed on the spot. Many of those wounded, exhausted, or too ill to continue were carried by their comrades. It is estimated that as many as 5,000 American troops captured by the Japanese in the Philippines died in captivity. After the war ended in 1945, the Japanese General in command during "The Death March" was executed for the atrocities carried out by his soldiers.



### ③ BURMA & MALAYA, (THE DEATH RAILWAY)

The Death Railway, begun in the fall of 1942, was built to connect Thailand and Burma for the transportation of Japanese troops and supplies throughout the Malay Peninsula. Sixty-thousand Allied prisoners were forced to work on the railway in the most appalling conditions. This forced labour caused the death of more than 15,000 Allied POW's. Prisoners were forced to work through the monsoon season from dawn to dusk. Using primitive tools and human endeavour they moved tons of earth, built bridges, cut through solid rock, and laid miles of railway track. The railway traversed more than 250 miles through dense jungle and included 600 bridges built mostly on wooden trestles spanning deep gorges and fast-flowing rivers. Here many prisoners were beaten to death by their Japanese guards for not working fast enough. By the time the first locomotive had travelled the length of track it is estimated that one-in-three prisoners died during its construction. Those not beaten to death died from cholera, dysentery, exhaustion, and starvation. After the war more than 100 Japanese were convicted of war crimes committed during the railway's construction; 52 were sentenced to death.



### ④ SINGAPORE, (CHANGI JAIL)

Singapore fell to the Japanese in February, 1942 and more than 40,000 Allied soldiers were captured and imprisoned in Changi Jail. This was one of the most notorious Japanese POW camps that would eventually be used to house both military and civilians. Food and medicine were always in short supply and death from dysentery, malnutrition, and vitamin deficiencies became common. All prisoners were expected to work. It was strictly no work, no food. Those too sick to work relied on their healthier comrades for their meagre rations. Beatings were common for not working hard or fast enough. Prisoners laboured on the docks loading ships while others cleared roads, and repaired buildings damaged when the Japanese attacked the city. Changi had originally been built to house 1,000 prisoners, however, by 1943 more than 7,000 POW's were crammed into conditions with inadequate sanitation creating rampant disease and death.



*Close up of Poster in the Asia POW Display*

I wanted to update members on the work being done to create a museum list. The object is to identify museums across Canada that would be willing to accommodate Hong Kong veteran memorabilia.

The impetus for this was a plaque presentation at the [Nanaimo Military Museum](#) that led to a renewed display of WWII POWs in the South East Asia theatre.

Mr Brian McFadden, VP of the museum, seized the opportunity to do more research on the subject and create an attractive display in what was essentially a very small area. We thank Brian again for his foresight and dedication to this often neglected topic of military history.

We are hoping that other museums, no matter the size, will also see the possibilities and offer some space for our members' contributions.

This effort is in direct keeping with our mandate to educate the public on the Canadian role in the Battle of Hong Kong, and the effects of the aftermath on our veterans.

The 'C' Force virtual museum is altogether a different affair that we are discussing, and would be an ongoing project if adopted. It is disappointing that so far we have received no indication of support from the membership regarding this undertaking. Given that Covid is trending upwardly we may have to do all things virtual by default.

Wishing you all a very safe and happy holiday season and may the New Year bring us all glad tidings indeed.

## Prairie Prose

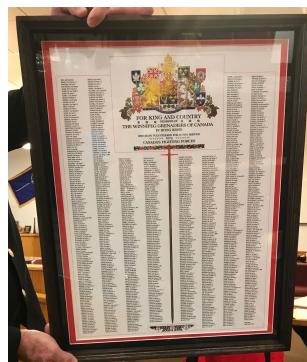


*Carol Hadley*

Greetings from the Prairie Region. As I begin this report, Manitoba is in the Red Zone so we will not be having any monthly meetings or plaque presentations until it is safe to do so.

With this new health situation Winnipeg did not have the annual Remembrance Day at the Convention Centre.

However, there were some podcasts available for anyone to view and I sent out links as I received them.



One podcast was the Charleswood Legion in Winnipeg, who finished filming a Remembrance Day service that was posted on their website <https://www.rclwinnipeg100.ca/>. I have posted the direct link when the film was posted. The photo shows the coloured Winnipeg Grenadier Honour Roll the Charleswood



Legion framed and in the next picture are the wreaths that were laid for the Remembrance Day service. Our Association has been involved with this Remembrance Day service for several decades, as there were many HK vets who bought their land in this community through the Veteran's Land Act, like Bob Lytle WG HK vet. My father, Borge Agerbak, HK vet, was the last to be involved in this service, and I was honoured to be asked to continue this.



*Remembrance Day wreaths at Charleswood Legion #100*



*Judy Preston with her grandchildren*

**Reston, Manitoba** – Judy Preston sent this in - Here is a picture with my grandchildren and I laying wreaths in remembrance of our HK Veterans. There is a photo of my dad, Riley Prieston, WG, HK vet with the grandchildren, their great grandfather. The poster was made by my 6-year



old grandson.

Thank you to Kathie Carlson HKVCA Area Rep for keeping in touch with the other Area reps in Prairie Region and to the Area reps for keeping in touch with the members.

**From Saskatchewan** – Marion Pho, HKVCA Area Rep for Regina, daughter of Bernard Jesse, WG HK vet sent this information on Saskatchewan's approach to November 11th, 2020. No formal gatherings would be held, but a four minute video is available at [YouTube](#), done by the Saskatchewan government, which is very interesting.

**From Alberta** - In recognition of November 11th, in **Lethbridge and Beaumont, Alberta**, Kathie Carlson, daughter of HK Veteran **Leonard Corrigan**, contacted and distributed the Veterans Affairs booklet "The Defense of Hong Kong" to four school divisions, grades 6 to 12. The booklets, in both English and French, are an excellent condensed version of the story of the Battle of Hong Kong. The school division staff were excited to receive these resources, and were requesting more booklets than we had on hand. Other HKVCA members may wish to consider this approach in their communities, to help in carrying the story of our veterans to our younger generation. These booklets are available online, or free of charge, from the Canada Department of Veterans Affairs at

1-866-522-2122, - the booklet Catalogue No. is V32-138/2005, ISBN 0-662-68645-4.

An article appeared in the Beaumont News based on an interview with Mik Bergersen about her father, HK Veteran Leonard Corrigan entitled "Beaumont Resident Remembers Hong Kong Veteran". Reference was also made to the 75th Anniversary of the liberation of POWs from Hong Kong in the Lethbridge Herald.

**Calgary, AB** – Karen Boland - I thought I would send this photo of myself, Gary Boland and Marilyn Pridgen, daughter of Ralph MacLean, RRC, HK vet (Blake, Marilyn's husband took the photo) that was taken at the Military Museum.

We will never forget Remembrance Day 2020! The Remembrance Day service at the Military Museum was closed to the public and only a few VIP's were invited due to COVID-19. The Museum opened to the public at 1:00 pm for those people that secured a ticket for entry. There was a limited number of people allowed in at specific times. We took this opportunity to lay the wreath for our Hong Kong Vets



at the Eternal Flame, just outside of the Museum. We were grateful to be able to remember them.



*L to R: Karen Boland, Gary Boland, Marilyn Pridgen (Blake Pridgen photo)*

## Ontario Offerings

### Plaque Presentation in London

On November 16th, 2020, I had the privilege and honour of meeting with Mayor Ed Holder, City of London (on the right) and Councillor Shawn Lewis.



Shawn had researched the Battle of Hong Kong and discovered that the Canadians entered Hong Kong on this date in 1941. He said it seemed appropriate to unveil the plaque in the Hall of Honour at London's City Hall on this day.

After photos were taken, I was invited to the Mayor's office to talk more about Dad (Lawrence Ross) and his experiences. Both Mayor Holder and Councillor Lewis were moved by the tragedy of it all. Mayor Holder suggested that I approach the RCR Military Museum at Wolseley Barracks in London. I

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We are grateful to the Manitoba Legislature, who 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.

Thank you to all our members that remembered Remembrance Day in their own way and to those who sent in information on their event. In this challenging year, it is wonderful to see the innovative ways that people have found to say "thank you" to our veterans. I have seen flags displayed, wreaths on doors, or in windows, crosses in the yard, etc. or just wearing a poppy.

At this special time of year, I hope that you all will celebrate the Peace and Joy of living in this great country Canada, and for the gifts of freedom that our veterans have fought for. Remember to be thankful with the present. Never forget the past. Trust the future. Let the spirit of Christmas be your guide this Holiday season.

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

informed him that an exhibit was already scheduled for the reopening after Covid-19.

Shawn has been instrumental in helping me achieve many of the goals I set for myself, to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the Liberation in Hong Kong. My main focus was to educate as many Londoners/Canadians as possible about this little known battle. With two remaining projects close to completion, I'm satisfied that my mission is a success. I especially love the deeper connection I feel with Dad.

Lest we Forget and

God bless.

Debbie Legg



*Shelagh Purcell*, daughter of Leonard B. Corrigan, WG. Shelagh is HKVCA Ontario Regions' volunteer, who connects with our members that do not have email. This is her latest update.

The Covid-19 virus meant some of our members watched Remembrance Day on TV. These include Donna Drimmie (daughter of Victor Oliver Fehr, RRC), Oda Barlow (widow of Edwin Barlow, RRC), Madeline Smith (widow of John H. Smith, RRC), while Margaret McDonald (widow of Allison MacDonald, RRC) found

Remembrance Day services too sad to watch. Agnes Fehr (widow of Victor O. Fehr, RRC), Esther Geraghty (widow of Donald Geraghty, RRC), and Dorothy Sauson (widow of Oliver Ray Sauson, RRC) are all fine. Jim Hurd (son of Edmund Lionel Hurd, RRC) found that Remembrance Day stirred memories of four years of separation of the Hong Kong POWs, and experiencing rations of food, gas, tires and other materials for Canadians. Today's quarantine isn't quite the same.

Barry Fair (son of John Grey Fair, RRC) appreciated being together with family and friends for the London, Ontario Remembrance Day. Again lots of memories were stirred. As well for Frank Miller (son of David R. Miller, RRC). Gloria Fortune (widow of Herbert R. Fortune, WG) shared memories of Herb Fortune and their connection to George Peterson's (WG) family. Jean Killoran (widow of John Killoran, RRC) is enjoying her new home and loves to have phone visits.

We are trying to track widow Yvonne Southworth (widow of Donald Southworth, RRC). Any information would help.

## Book Review - The Fight for History



*Gordon Coyne*

The much-admired Tim Cook, Historian, Canadian War Museum, has once again written a survey of our military past that explains, inspires, and gives the reader much to be proud

of. Published recently, its title is "The Fight for History: 75 Years of Forgetting, Remembering, and Remaking Canada's Second World War." I read its 496 pages eagerly for its broad scope of the post-war years, and with much anticipation of what he might say about 'C' Force. I was not disappointed, for he has covered our experience in the Battle of Hong Kong with deep research, great insight and sympathetic passion. As a member of the HKVCA, I feel deeply indebted to him for giving the heroism and suffering of our troops the respect they deserve, but not always acknowledged.

Tim Cook is the author and editor of 13 books. He is a frequent commentator in the media, a member of the Royal Society of Canada, and a member of the Order of Canada. In a

## Quebec Region Report



*Lucette Mailloux Muir*

Greetings everyone,

Hope you are all keeping well during these difficult times.

We are still going through a period of no gatherings with many restrictions. Meetings are held by telephone or electronic ways. Things are quiet.

recent exchange of correspondence with him, I learned the following of his motivation for his latest book. He has permitted me to share it.



My new book, "The Fight for History", explores how Canadians have come to understand the Second World War over 75 years. Despite the incredible exertions of Canadians from 1939 to 1945, with 1.1 million men and women in uniform and more than 3 million people directly engaged in war work across the country, we have done a poor job in teaching our history and in telling our story. In this book I have tried to understand why we didn't expend more energy and effort in celebrating or commemorating our history, instead of a historical absence and self-inflicted apathy during much of the 20th century in writing history books, creating cultural products, and building memorials to properly honour our veterans.

As some readers will know, I have written about 'C' Force's gritty battle in Hong Kong, and the harsh prisoner of war conditions that followed in my previous books. In this new book, I explore how successive governments failed to care for the survivors of those terrible camps, where Japanese guards treated the Canadians inhumanely, starving, beating, and carrying out war crimes. The book also tells the story of how the survivors banded together in the war's aftermath, finding solace and strength in each other. Finally, "The Fight for History" presents the important story of how these veterans righted the historical record, and their quest for an official apology from Japan. This history is placed within a larger presentation of the strange, even bizarre way that successive generations refused to tell the Canadian war story and what that means for our country.

(This book is available through [Amazon](#).)

For November 11, a small number of members deposited wreaths at their local cenotaph as others, in the comfort of their home, watched the Commemorative Ceremony on TV. WE WILL REMEMBER THEM!

Hopefully we will have more to report as early as possible in the new year.



We wish you all a safe Merry Christmas and Health for the New Year. Stay safe.



## Calling ALL VOLUNTEERS!

*Lori Smith*

Our association is as strong as the dedicated volunteers that put in hours to help with our mission to educate Canadians about the Battle of Hong Kong.

A small branch of these volunteers diligently tries to research and upload information to the 'C' Force individual reports. Jim Trick manages the 'C' Force Individual reports. Dan James & his family provide us with a "platform" to communicate & share info on the HKVCA Facebook group and page. Lillian Roesch shares her research on the Facebook HKVCA Tribute group and from there, I update some areas on the Individual reports. We have been doing our tasks for a few years.

This year we have been joined by volunteers: Jana Leo and Barbara Andres. We thank them for adding to our branch of the HKVCA tree. They certainly help with the volume of work. 'Many hands make light work.'

Do you follow the Hong Kong Veteran's [Facebook group](#) and [page](#)?

You might notice the research that Lillian Roesch is delving into for us at HKVCA is slowing down somewhat. Her research is harder and harder to dig into. It is so very frustrating to see even birth dates that are still missing for

some of our 'C' Force guys. How can that be!!! These men were in our Canadian army!

Your help is needed! If someone comments 'hey that's my dad or grandfather, etc.', we need someone to follow up. Could you help us with this?

Some of these men do not even have a picture for us to put a face to their name. We believe that there are pictures and stories out there on all of our 'C' Force members. But where? Ask your siblings, parents, family members.

Thoughts on how you might help:

- Finding typos (or wonky symbols) on the 'C' Force reports
- Follow up on missing pictures and details through Facebook posts
- Transcribing articles from our files

Any amount of help you are able to send our way is greatly appreciated. Remember- we are trying to commit ALL of 'C' Force to be forever remembered online. If you don't know the best fit for you, rest assured.....we will gleefully help you find the right fit!

If you would like to volunteer please send a note via our "Contact Us" link found at the top corner of most of our web pages. We could use the help.



## From Our "InBox"

### From Phillip Cracknell's Blog:

This is the story of a charming colonial house called 'The Lookout', situated on South Bay Road. It is still there today, but in December 1941, it was the home of William and Isabella Ritchie. One night a Canadian soldier, who had escaped from a house called 'Overbay', swam from Repulse Bay to South Bay, and knocked at their door.

Read about: ['The Lookout'](#)



### Submissions Requested

**Call for Papers:** Canadian Military History Special Issue on the Battle of Hong Kong - To commemorate the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Hong Kong, Canadian Military History will be publishing a special issue in Fall, 2021. We invite submissions that examine the Battle of Hong Kong from multiple perspectives. Canadian and non-Canadian perspectives are welcomed. More info at this [link](#).

## Announcements



### **From the Treasurer - Dues and Donations**

*Barry Mitchell*

Regular members' membership dues for 2020 should be in the hands of your Regional Treasurer by now. We also encourage you to save a little time and money (postage) by paying for 2021 and even 2022 right now as well. You can "get it out of the way" by making a single payment and not have to worry about it for years to come.

An Application form, along with Region contact addresses, is on a separate included page in this issue, or use our [online option](#) to pay your 2021 dues.

Information about dues and ways to pay can also be found on our [membership page](#).

Thanks for your support. We appreciate you keeping up-to-date with your dues.

Also, a reminder that all donations (not dues) of \$20.00 or more are eligible for a tax receipt so we encourage you to consider an extra contribution as well. For example, a

cheque to HKVCA for \$60.00 will give you membership for two years (\$40.00) and you will also receive a receipt for a deduction on your income tax for \$20.00. A further example would be a cheque for \$100.00 which would provide three years membership plus a tax receipt for \$40.00. Please give this some thought.

### **Flag Raising at the Niagara Military Museum**

On Monday, December 7, at 10 AM, our HKVCA flag will be raised at the Niagara Military Museum to bring attention to the Battle of Hong Kong and the role of the almost 2000 Canadian soldiers in the battle. [Read more...](#)

### **Finished Reading?**

Why not pass along this copy to someone who might be interested in what we do as an association, and might wish to support our mission.

## Best Wishes for the Holiday Season and a Better Year in 2021

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.