

in a prisoner of war camp in the Battle of Hong Kong.”

The course out-line says it will compare and contrast the specific histories of two individuals in *The Dark Side of the Sun*, about surviving a Japanese POW camp, and *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*, about a woman whose cancer cells have been mass-produced without her consent to create a multi-billion dollar industry, to examine how individual histories can have a big impact and/or tell a larger story about history.

“They’re doing two character studies on two different books,

one of them being mine,” Palmer said.

He added he was blown away to be approached about having the book incorporated in the university’s curriculum.

“Just publishing the book for me was exciting.”

Palmer said Wilson invited him to do a lecture for the class, which will be taking place Nov. 10.

“I’m really excited about that,” he said. “She’s got about 50 or 60 students in her class.”

Palmer said he never expected his book to be incorporated into a university course, and especially

not an English course.

He said, although there are other books about Japanese POW camps, his is the only published book in the world about this particular camp.

There were about 166 Canadians at the camp and 700 men in total.

“That makes it fairly unique. So from my point of view it’s a history book, but what is ironic is that’s an English course that they’re going to use this in.”

Since completing the research for the book and learning so much about his grandfather’s story, Palmer said Remembrance Day has an increased significance for him.

“He went off to war, basically, to support his wife and child,” Palmer said. “He was married at the time and he had a child – my father. After the war he came back and had seven more kids, but at the time he had to support himself.”

During the Great Depression people picked up whatever work they could, Palmer said, and his grandfather lived in P.E.I. where most work was seasonal.

“He went off to the war to fight for freedom. To survive what he went through – four years in a POW camp. They were brutalized, starved, worked 10 hour days. It’s significant in the sense that he was able to pull through that. And hope saved him.”

Palmer described his grandfather’s story as a “beacon” for him.

“When things get me down in life I look to his story. That pulls me up and allows me to trudge on and jump over those little obstacles that I think are big in life. I hope it’s kind of beacon for other people. When my kids grow up and read this story, maybe it will be a beacon for them to think ‘some of these day-to-day speed bumps that I’m going through are nothing compared to what he went through.’”

He added it might be helpful for the university students in *The World As We Know It* course.

“Maybe it will help change their attitude on life. That’s the significance for me.”



George Palmer (right) pictured with fellow soldier Graham Boudreau.



Antigonish native Michael Palmer’s book *The Dark Side of the Sun* has been incorporated as part of the curriculum of a course at the University of Calgary. (Contributed photo)