

CAMPBELLTON NB

HONG KONG

THE HONG KONG VETERANS OF CANADA “OUR FORGOTTEN HEROES”

LES ANCIENS COMBATTANTS DE HONG KONG AU CANADA : « NOS HÉROS OUBLIÉS »

ON SEPTEMBER 19, 1941, BRITAIN ASKED CANADA FOR MILITARY SUPPORT TO AID IN THE DEFENCE OF HONG KONG. THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT AGREED TO SEND TWO BATTALIONS AND A BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS TO REINFORCE THE BRITISH ENCLAVE.

THE TROOPSHIP AWATEA, ACCCOMPANIED BY AN ESCORT SHIP THE H.M.C.S PRINCE ROBERT, SAILED OUT OF VANCOUVER HARBOR DURING THE NIGHT OF OCTOBER 27, 1941. ONBOARD THE TWO SHIPS WERE 1,975 CANADIAN SOLDIERS AND 2 NURSES WHICH FORMED “C” FORCE. THE SOLDIERS WERE FROM THE ROYAL RIFLES OF CANADA, THE WINNIPEG GRENADIERS, AND THE VARIOUS SUPPORT CORPS WHICH FORMED BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS. THEY ARRIVED IN HONG KONG ON NOVEMBER 16, 1941.

UNFORTUNATELY THE MECHANIZED TRANSPORT CONSISTING OF 212 VEHICLES DESTINED FOR USE BY “C” FORCE NEVER ARRIVED IN HONG KONG. THESE VEHICLES WERE LOADED AT VANCOUVER ABOARD THE AMERICAN FREIGHTER DON JOSE WHICH SAILED NOVEMBER 4, 1941. THE VEHICLES WERE DIVERTED DECEMBER 19 (WITH CANADIAN APPROVAL) FOR AMERICAN USE IN THE PHILIPPINES.

HONG KONG WAS BEING DEFENDED BY BRITISH AND INDIAN TROOPS AS WELL AS THE HONG KONG VOLUNTEER DEFENSE CORPS. WITH THE ARRIVAL OF THE CANADIAN SOLDIERS, THE ALLIED DEFENCES NUMBERED APPROXIMATELY 14,000.

ON DECEMBER 8, 1941, ONLY HOURS AFTER THE ATTACK ON PEARL HARBOR, OVER 50,000 SEASONED AND WELL EQUIPPED JAPANESE TROOPS ATTACKED HONG KONG. THESE TROOPS HAD THE BENEFIT OF AIR AND NAVAL SUPPORT. THE BRUTAL BATTLE OF HONG KONG LASTED 17 DAYS AND ENDED ON CHRISTMAS DAY, 1941.

ALMOST 300 CANADIAN SOLDIERS LOST THEIR LIVES IN THE BATTLE AND MANY MORE WERE WOUNDED. SIMILAR NUMBERS OF CANADIANS WOULD DIE IN JAPANESE POW CAMPS DURING THE NEXT 3 YEARS AND 10 MONTHS AS A RESULT OF STARVATION, DISEASE AND SLAVE LABOR. WHEN THE CANADIAN SURVIVORS WERE REPATRIATED IN SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER 1945, DOCTORS DID NOT SEEM TO RECOGNIZE THE MANY TROPICAL DISEASES WITH WHICH THEY WERE AFFLICTED AS WELL AS THE EMOTIONAL DISTRESS THEY HAD EXPERIENCED.

THE CITY OF CAMPBELLTON RECOGNIZES THE SERVICE OF THESE BRAVE YOUNG CANADIANS WHO SACRIFICED THEIR FREEDOM ON CHRISTMAS MORNING 1941 AND DEDICATES THIS BLUE SPRUCE CHRISTMAS TREE TO THE EVER LASTING MEMORY OF THESE YOUNG CANADIANS!

THE CITIZEN'S OF CAMPBELLTON

LE 19 SEPTEMBRE 1941, LA GRANDE-BRETAGNE DEMANDE LE SOUTIEN MILITAIRE DU CANADA POUR AIDER À LA DÉFENSE DE HONG KONG. LE GOUVERNEMENT CANADIEN ACCEPTE D'ENVOYER DEUX BATAILLONS ET UN QUARTIERGÉNÉRAL DE BRIGADE POUR ALLER PRÊTER MAIN-FORTE À L'ENCLAVE BRITANNIQUE.

LE NAVIRE DE TRANSPORT DE TROUPES AWATEA, ESCORTÉ PAR LE NCSM PRINCE ROBERT, QUITTE LE PORT DE VANCOUVER PENDANT LA NUIT DU 27 OCTOBRE 1941. LES DEUX NAVIRES ONT À LEUR BORD 1975 SOLDATS CANADIENS ET DEUX INFIRMIÈRES QUI CONSTITUENT LA FORCE C. LES SOLDATS VIENNENT DES ROYAL RIFLES, DES WINNIPEG GRENADIERS ET DE DIVERS CORPS DE SOUTIEN COMPOSANT LE QUARTIER GÉNÉRAL DE BRIGADE. ILS ARRIVENT À HONG KONG LE 16 NOVEMBRE 1941.

MALHEUREUSEMENT, LES 212 VÉHICULES DESTINÉS AU TRANSPORT MÉCANISÉ DE LA FORCE C N'ARRIVERONT JAMAIS À HONG KONG. EN EFFET, EMBARQUÉS À VANCOUVER À BORD DU NAVIRE DE CHARGE AMÉRICAIN LE DON JOSE QUI APPAREILLE RA LE 4 NOVEMBRE 1941, LES VÉHICULES SONT DÉTOURNÉS LE 19 DÉCEMBRE (AVEC L'APPROBATION DU CANADA) VERS LES PHILIPPINES POUR ÊTRE UTILISÉS PAR LES AMÉRICAINS.

LA DÉFENSE DE HONG KONG EST ASSURÉE PAR DES TROUPES BRITANNIQUES ET INDIENNES, AINSI QUE PAR LE CORPS DE DÉFENSE VOLONTAIRE DE HONG KONG. AVEC L'ARRIVÉE DES SOLDATS CANADIENS,

LES CITOYENS DE CAMPBELLTON

