

**HKVCA Annual General Meeting – June 29, 2021**  
**President's Remarks**

Needless to say, this has been one of the strangest years likely any of us have ever experienced. It has profoundly affected the lives of many Canadians. More than 26,000 Canadians have died from COVID-19, and nearly 1.4 million have contracted it and, thankfully, recovered. Medical staff in hospitals and care homes have laboured ceaselessly, and thousands of workers in essential businesses have put themselves at risk to keep Canadians safe and fed. We owe all of them an enormous debt of gratitude. But at long last, we appear to be emerging from this trial, and with luck the next year will be an infinitely better one than the last.

Obviously, our activities in the HKVCA have been curtailed due to the pandemic. As you've just heard from your Regional Directors, most of our commemorative and educational activities have ceased, or have been dramatically altered. In spite of this, though, our members have been able to find ways to continue to honour our Hong Kong Veterans. Last year on V-J Day, August 15, and again on Remembrance Day many small commemorations were held across Canada. Jim and Anne Trick have continued to keep our members informed via our quarterly national newsletter and through our web site, to which many of you have contributed article and photos. More recently, our virtual events series has attracted a total of 441 live viewers over 4 events, with over 350 additional viewers and growing who have watched the recordings of those events. If there's any silver lining at all for the HKVCA in the pandemic, it's that we have been forced to find alternative ways to connect with our members and their families and friends, and these new methods have proven to be very effective.

There are also several projects under way spearheaded by others, such as developing "virtual maps" of the Battle that go way beyond a simple map to include troop movements, photos and documentation of battle sites, and personal stories of the soldiers, all easily accessible to anyone from a tablet, phone or computer. Also, several films and TV programs have been produced and shown to Canadians which have highlighted various aspects of the Battle and the POW story. By engaging with the developers of these projects, we can help to ensure that the story of the Battle of Hong Kong remains in the public eye, and fulfill the HKVCA's mission of educating the public about it.

I would like to thank our Regional Directors for their diligence in keeping in touch with our members, and in promoting commemorative events in their regions. And I also offer a big thank you to Barry Mitchell, our long-time Treasurer, Lucette Mailloux, our Secretary and Jim Trick, who in addition to managing our web site and editing our newsletter, handles our national membership records. These

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folks are largely unseen, but are essential to the smooth functioning of an all-volunteer organization like ours.

Finally, a reminder that this year is the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Hong Kong. Please find a way to commemorate it and do your part to honour the members of "C" Force. For example: order a lawn flag from your Regional Director and display it in front of your house or in your window; on V-J Day, August 15, hold a ceremony at your local cenotaph or veterans section of a cemetery; contact your local news media and tell them the story of your Hong Kong Veteran; encourage a relative or friend to join the HKVCA or to attend our virtual events. Let's together ensure that the hardships endured by and the sacrifices made by Canada's Hong Kong Veterans are not forgotten.

We will remember them.