PRESIDENTS REPORT 2015

To begin, I offer my deep gratitude to Mitzi Ross and her team that have headed up the organizing of this convention. Great job everyone.

I realize how valuable an individual’s time is and appreciate your contribution to the HKVCA. I will begin by thanking you all for coming to this convention, thank you to the National BOD and the Regions executive that keep this organization moving. We have been blessed to have some wonderful people let their names stand for offices on all levels to do the work that we have been tasked by the veterans when this Assn was formed but also the work we can see that is needed.

Since we were formed, we have accomplished much over the years of which we can be very proud. As you have seen by our financial statement that Barry has recently distributed, the Memorial Wall was a huge endeavour. This was accomplished by team work from all our members to ensure that the money was available when needed. We had outside and inside expertise that gave of their time and resources to make our veterans dream a reality.

Another part of their vision was to see that their stories would not be forgotten. This has been realized with the website that has captured the pictures and stories that have come forward from various resources. These have helped educators and students in their search for information for school projects and anyone who wanted to know the story of the Canadians in the Battle of Hong Kong.

There is a database on the website with all the members of C Force with their military record with as much information that can be gathered. This information has been gathered over many years and is helpful to families and friends of C Force.

Most of the stories on the website have been translated into French or English as needed for inclusion for all Canadians. This work has been done with the help of many people – members and non-members – for which we are truly grateful.

In pursuing our mission of educating the Canadian public on the role this country played in the Battle of Hong Kong and its aftermath, we are building a legacy via our online presence. From our first web site created by Linda May over 15 years ago, our online presence has grown dramatically, based in no small part of our members' support. The breadth of information we now have online is significant. Here are some examples:

1. A library which has become a permanent  repository of our veterans' stories, diaries and media interviews; used by students, researchers, families, and a curious public.
2. A database which focuses on the individual 'C' Force member, allowing visitors to produce dynamic Individual Reports featuring all we know about the person. (This is intertwined with the Monument Badge project which Lori will address)
3. Our Teachers' Zone providing guidance for teachers as they assist students in their assignments, encouraging them to learn more about this part of our history.
4. Guidance and support for those who wish to create their own tribute to a veteran.
5. Our book list - check out our Suggested Reading page for a comprehensive list of books on Hong Kong, some from a Canadian perspective, others looking at the larger view.
6. A photo gallery which documents our history and activities over the years. (That's where you'll find convention photos!)
7. Online versions of Wasureru-Nai, our National quarterly newsletter.
8. Our Facebook page which keeps us up to date on events, and allows everyone to submit their own insights and links. Very active!
9. Links to other sites that have valuable information about the battle, POW experiences, and post-war efforts focused on giving this part of our history the attention it deserves.

What's next? We are looking into providing an online option for joining HKVCA including dues payments, and membership renewals. As well, our web sites need to be updated and reorganized. We continue to look for more personal accounts and images so that we can increase the value of our library. Lots of work yet to do!

These tasks have been done by our dedicated members – I applaud you all – well done.

We were sorry to hear that Sheila Forsyth (our previous editor) had to resign due to work and personal commitments. We sincerely thank Sheila for all her work on the newsletter and wish her well.

 We were pleased to have a volunteer, Marjorie Stintzi, offer to be the newsletter editor. She will be introducing herself in the newsletter and we are grateful to have this essential means of communication to continue. Welcome Marjorie.

 Flags have also been a topic with requests from our members – Barry has some information on that.

As we move forward we have the challenge of declining membership. As the veterans and widows pass on the family falls away. We need to look to keeping members, attracting new members and to have replacements for our aging executive. To do this we need to start with a fundraising chairperson to generate the funds needed for our programs and a publicity person to spread the word that our Association exists and we need members to take on the tasks that need to be completed and to generate or explore new areas to promote the story of the Canadians in the Battle of Hong Kong.

I look forward to the Board of Directors taking the lead of the Association into the future with new ideas and opportunities for the Association. I wish to thank you all for the opportunity to serve this Association and sharing the many wonderful events with you. The new BOD will need all your support and enthusiasm to carry on the work that our veterans have begun.