



# WASURERU-NAI "Never Forget"



## National Newsletter of the Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association Winter 2019 Edition - Season's Greetings!

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### Homecoming



*Gerry Tuppert*

Our 2020 Homecoming theme is gaining some traction with this lovely story submission by Shelagh Purcell, daughter of Lt. Leonard Corrigan, WG.

<https://www.hkvca.ca/cforcedata/indivreport/indivdetailed.php?regtno=X40>

#### Coming home- (by Shelagh Purcell)

I was six years old, waiting with my grandfather on the platform of the Winnipeg train station while my mother, sister and grandmother went to look for my father. We were standing in a huge crowd when suddenly a very tall man swept me off my feet and held me up in the air. A news photographer captured the moment when I saw my father for the first time. I was two when he left for what would be a 4 year imprisonment in Hong Kong. In the midst of the moment I still remember the rough texture of his uniform. Our family was reunited and I'm sure there were many tears and laughter.

The newspaper later describes the event as a "riotous welcome" of some four thousand people who did a welcome in their own style, "not organized,

and nobody cared." The official reception committee didn't get much attention as family members looked for their sons.

The Grenadiers had arrived on a special troop section and were wearing the new HK red and gold shoulder flashes - seen for the first time.

Again from the newspaper- "There was much noise, much confusion and completely uninhibited."



**FATHER GREETS SON:** With the deep emotion of reunion, Joseph Boissonneault, of Danville, looks through tears at his returning son, Rifleman Adrien Boissonneault, a hero of the Hong Kong siege.

We can certainly imagine and feel what that meant to you because in one way or another we are all connected to this story.

There is nothing quite like a first-hand heartfelt account of a reunion like this one.

Thank you Shelagh!

*(Photo) With deep emotion of reunion, Joseph Boissonneault looks through tears at his returning son, Rifleman Adrien Boissonneault*

The Winnipeg Free Press has a voluminous archive of Hong Kong related stories, and they remain a great source of research material to this day. Many of their newspaper articles during the war kept the families of the Grenadiers

informed and when that great homecoming day arrived, they were present to document it all.

In our home town of Quebec city the French language publication, "Le Soleil" and the Quebec Chronicle Telegraph were the harbingers of the good and the bad news.

In early October 1945, their pages were filled with colourful accounts of reunions that made for great reading and even better, many photographs with happy looking people in them.

Let's keep that homecoming momentum going by sending us your very own story of that memorable family experience 75years ago.

## President's Message



*Mike Babin*

Many of you likely attended services on November 11, as did I, and perhaps we had the same thought: it's unfortunate that most Canadians don't think about the men and women of our Armed Forces for the rest of the year. Why just this one day? I wish I had the answer.

The preparations for our convention in Ottawa in August of next year are coming along well. Mitzi Ross gives you some information in her article on page 3. Ken Skelton, our Memorabilia Coordinator has information for you on page 4, and Gerry Tuppert tells you about the Book of Remembrance in the article above. We're lining up some excellent content for the weekend, and the event promises to be enjoyable, educational and solemn. It's a tall order combining all three of these, but I think you'll be pleased at the result. Please set aside August 13 to 16, and plan to bring your families. There's lots to see and do in Ottawa!

## HKVA Report



*Phil Doddridge*

Phil wishes everyone a very Merry Christmas and all the best for the New Year

Work continues on the "Book of Remembrance". With the timely help of our webmaster Jim Trick, and access to a workable list of "C" Force soldiers", we are back on track to have the book ready for printing before the year is out.

As mentioned in our previous newsletter it will be on display at the 2020 Ottawa convention and will include a very special ceremony at the Memorial Wall on Saturday.

We will be holding an election in the spring of 2020 to elect our Board of Directors. You will see more information about this in the next newsletter, but in the meantime, please consider putting your name forward for the Board. We are especially keen on having Board members from the second and third generations ... that is, the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of Hong Kong veterans. With all respect to my fellow Board members, we are all getting on in years, and we would welcome some young, energetic members with new and fresh ideas. If the HKVCA is to survive, this is essential!

The holiday season is upon us, and on behalf of the Board of Directors I wish all of you a wonderful Christmas and a very happy and prosperous New Year!

## We Will Remember Them

(Read [Phil's memoirs](#) on our website)



## In Remembrance

### In Memoriam

Vivian Henderson, wife of Derrill Henderson, HKVCA, on Dec 2, 2019

Myrtle Lytle, widow of Robert (Bob) Lytle, WG, on Nov 20, 2019

Helen Trick, widow of Charles R. Trick, WG, on Nov 18, 2019

Marion Norris Bisson, widow of Gerard Bisson RRC E30304, on Oct 28, 2019

Hazel Vale, widow of Sidney Vale, WG, on April 29, 2019

## From the Editor/Membership Rep



*Jim Trick* (editor@hkvca.ca)

I hope you enjoy this latest newsletter. Lots of interesting articles including quite a few describing plaque presentation events in various regions. And of course, there's more information about our Homecoming 2020 convention. Oh, and our mailing address has changed. See the notice at the end of this issue.

### Dues

2020 is upon us, and that means it's time to remind our Regular members that it's a great time to pay annual dues. We've made it more convenient by setting up an online payment option, (<https://www.hkvca.online/services/index.php>) so you'll even save a stamp. Our membership form with a list of membership reps and their addresses is an insert to this newsletter.

### Telephone Scam Warning from VAC

Veterans Affairs Canada is aware of frauds and scams attempting to mimic real federal government services to gain

### Convention 2020



*Mitzi Ross, Chair*

Hello from Ottawa! I hope you are all looking forward to this festive season. I like this time of year so I am certainly feeling festive.

I am writing to let you know how the arrangements for the HKVCA Convention 2020 are coming along. I know that it is still 9 months away, but it is incredible how fast time flies!

I have secured the Lord Elgin Hotel for the Guest Room Accommodations, Registration, Annual General Meeting, BOD Meeting, Memorabilia and Exhibits Room, Hospitality Suite and the Farewell Breakfast. (Booking link: <http://bookings.ihotelier.com/bookings.jsp?groupID=2707054&hotelID=12200> or phone: 613-235-3333 or 1-800-267-4298). As you may know, the Royal Rifles of Canada stayed at the Lord Elgin in October of 1941 before boarding the train that would take them out west to Vancouver. That is where they boarded the ship that would take them into the nightmare that they could never have imagined.

I know that for many of those men, their stay at the Lord Elgin would bring them a lasting memory of their last good meal and soft bed before leaving Canada. I understand they thought of it often during those horrendous years of captivity. In the past 74 years since their return, we have held many of our Ottawa

access to personal and financial information. We take these matters very seriously.

You are reminded that we will never request a Social Insurance Number, banking or credit card information over the phone. We urge Veterans and all Canadians to be vigilant when a person claiming to be from Veterans Affairs Canada asks for personal or banking information.

If you believe someone is fraudulently seeking your personal information, we encourage you to report it to the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre and your local police.

The alert can be found here:

<https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/about-vac/news-media/alerts#1>

Due to space limitations in this printed copy, some detail that appears in the online version may have been omitted.

**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.

conventions and luncheons at the Lord Elgin Hotel, so it is still a piece of their history.

For our Friday night "Dinner/Dance" I have reserved a ballroom at the Westin Hotel and for the Saturday night "Dinner/Dance Gala" I have reserved a ballroom at the Chateau Laurier. Both of these venues are top notch and their dedicated staff will undoubtedly take excellent care of us.

On Friday morning we will hold our Annual General Meeting in the Lady Elgin Room at the Lord Elgin Hotel. On Saturday morning we will gather at the "C" Force Memorial Wall to pay tribute to all those men who fought in the Battle of Hong Kong, those who survived the subsequent nearly 4 years in the POW camps and those who did not, those who have passed away over the following 74 years and of course those who are still with us.

There are several other events that will take place throughout the convention weekend and I will keep you posted over the next two newsletters. I am looking forward to seeing you all here in August. Have a very merry Christmas season!

If you have any questions about the CONVENTION please contact me at: [mitziross@rogers.com](mailto:mitziross@rogers.com) or 613-225-5105.

## Memorabilia Display 2020 Convention

*Ken Skelton – son of Sydney Skelton (RRC)*

The 2020 Convention will once again include a memorabilia display, with the theme of LIBERATION and COMING HOME.

Your participation in enhancing the Liberation display will be of tremendous help and will honour your family's member of 'C' Force.

Consideration needs to be given to:

- a) supporting the Liberation and Coming Home theme.
- b) framing that special artifact(s), when possible, for display and safety. Larger items most welcome.
- c) Label the display item(s) using an easily readable font such as "Arial" with a larger font size eg : 16 - 18 or greater; legible handwritten labelling acceptable, too.

## Plaque Presentations

### Ashern, MB, Legion Br #57

*Joyce Sewell*

Tuesday, September 17, 2019, about 50 people gathered at RCL Ashern Br #57 for an afternoon of soup and sandwich lunch, then games of cards to mark Legion Week. We were then given the floor for the presentation of the HKVCA plaque.

I, Joyce Sewell, HKVCA member conducted the ceremony. With family members unable to attend, Comrade Bill Ebbers, Branch President and Doug Sewell, my husband, removed the chairs. I read the members names from the area and mentioned my Dad, though not from the area. I used my Dad's medals for the display. Our MP for the Interlake, James Bezan, read the Far East prayer for us. Later James addressed us and was very up to date on our endeavour. Then Cde Ebbers and James Bezan unveiled our plaque. Our audience showed their appreciation by giving us a warm round of applause.

During refreshments and comradeship, many complimented the HKVCA on their efforts to REMEMBER! So much time has lapsed that most of this history is forgotten. Now every time they are in the Legion and see our plaque they will be reminded and remember.

d) Identify the veteran and his unit who returned with the memorabilia,

e) Show a local newspaper clipping of his return.

f) A picture taken soon after his return is a benefit for us all to see.

Planning continues and additional information regarding display room location, set up, hours of display, possible public viewing etc. will be provided in the new year.

Questions? Contact Ken Skelton at [ken.skelton@sympatico.ca](mailto:ken.skelton@sympatico.ca), and please put "2020 Display" in the subject line.



*Cde Ebbers and James Bezan*

I am honoured I was given this opportunity to Remember and share with the community. Many thanks.

## St. James, MB, Legion Branch #4

*Carol Hadley*

Thursday, September 19, 2019 about 80 people gathered at RCL St. James Br #4 for an afternoon luncheon to mark Legion Week for the local veterans from various care homes. There was a band playing and many feet were tapping to the beat and mouthing words to the music even though many were in wheelchairs.

After lunch we were then given the floor for the presentation of the HKVCA plaque.

The Colour Party, Stan Lopata and Alex Taylor, marched on the Colours to begin the ceremony. The Protocol was done with the help of Barry Mitchell, Treasurer and son of Lt. Vaughan Mitchell, WG who read the FEPOW prayer. Then he and Anne Richardson, widow of Douglas Moore WG, removed the chairs. The Honour Roll of the men from this region was read.

A brief history of the Canadians in Hong Kong was given including the activities of HKVCA. A brochure informing the attendees of the unique "firsts" of 'C' Force was put on the tables prior to the ceremony.

Following the ceremony, many complimented the HKVCA on their efforts to keep alive their family members' memories. They mentioned names that they knew and, in some cases, went to school with. It was an enjoyable afternoon.



*Past Pres. Ron Anderson and Pres. Mike Thayer*

The plaque will be mounted in the entrance of the Branch for all to see and encouraged to remember.

## Lundar, MB, Legion Branch #185

*Carol Hadley*

Friday, September 20, 2019 we were invited to Lundar to recognize the veterans from this area and dedicating a plaque for their branch.

The Protocol table had pictures and medals from 2 of our veteran's families (Etienne Lamblin and Alex Fortin, WG HK vets).

We had the Colour Party to march in the Colours, then began the Protocol service with the assistance of Joyce Sewell, daughter of Edwin Swanson who read the FEPOW prayer.



*Darlene Sweetland, Past President and Janet Amblin*

Then Kathy Einarson, daughter of Alex Fortin removed a chair along with Debbie Chartrand, daughter of Etienne Lamblin. The plaque was unveiled by Janet Lamblin, Chair of the Dedication Committee and Darlene Sweetland, Past President. We continued with the ceremony and enjoyed a delicious lunch following.

Thank you to the Lundar Branch, President Dan Thorkelson, Janet Lamblin, Chair of Dedication Committee, Joyce Sewel and community of Lundar for hosting this plaque ceremony.

## Lac du Bonnet, MB, Legion Branch #164

*Carol Hadley*

Sunday, October 6, 2019 we travelled to Lac du Bonnet to present and dedicate a plaque to those members of 'C' Force that came from that area. There were about 50 people in attendance, with several people representing their families – Sellers, James, Gold, Blow and Nobiss families.

We were welcomed by Bob Hampshire, Branch President and set up the table for the Protocol service.

The service began with the marching in of the Colours by our Colour Party (Stan and Vince Lopata and Alex Taylor). The Branch Padre, James Schwabe was also in attendance.

The Protocol service was presented with the assistance of Marleen Bell, widow of Dennis Bell, (daughter-in-law of William Bell, WG HKV) who read the FEPOW prayer. Regional Director Carol Hadley read the Honour Roll for this area.

Chairs were removed by Donna Remillard, daughter of Ray Sellers, WG HKV and Bruce James son of John James, WG HKV.



*Carol Hadley, Jeff Nobiss, Bruce Blow, Branch President. Bob Hampshire*

The plaque was unveiled by Jeff Nobiss, son of George Nobiss and Bruce Blow, son of Sidney Blow, WG HKVs.

Following the service, we were served a delicious lunch by Jackie Hampshire and the ladies of the Branch.

While we were enjoying the lunch, the plaque was mounted on their Honour Wall in the Branch.

### **Medicine Hat, AB, Legion Branch #17**

*Kathie Carlson - Daughter of Len Corrigan, WG.*

On October 30th, on a rather crispy winter evening, a number of us from Lethbridge and Calgary descended on Medicine Hat, Alberta, to join the family of Hong Kong Veteran John Doiron and Medicine Hat Royal Canadian Legion #17 members to unveil the HKVCA Commemorative Plaque. President Sheila Donner, and her Legion Executive invited us to present prior to their regular meeting, with about 30 people in attendance.

Medicine Hat was the family home of Hong Kong Veteran John Doiron, a Royal Rifle, and this evening brought together a dozen family members to honour their father, grandfather and great grandfather, and all Hong Kong Veterans. Several family members live in the Medicine Hat area. In attendance were John Dorian's daughter Norma and her husband Glen

Fuchs, his son Cletus Doiron, and his daughter Glenda with her husband Brian, their daughters Julie, Lori and family.



*Medicine Hat Royal Canadian Legion #17 Executive with HKVCA Commemorative Plaque*

It was very special to have John Doiron's Granddaughter Carrie Anne Bolger with her son Taiki who is John Doiron's Great Grandson, unveil the HKVCA Commemorative Plaque. They are the child and grandchild respectively of May Bolger, - John Dorian's daughter. May was a very active HKVCA Member in Medicine Hat area for many years. She later served on the High River Legion Executive until she passed away.

A warm thanks to President Sheila Donner, and the Medicine Hat Legion Branch # 17, for hosting our plaque unveiling.

### **Brandon, MB, Legion Branch #3**

*Carol Hadley*

November 1, 2019 at 2 p.m. we were at Brandon Legion #3 to dedicate a plaque to 'C' Force. About 40 people were in attendance, some representing their family member.



*Barry Cullen, Mr Logan, Frank Logan, Emily Lyons, Larry McGuire and Pres. Cindy Stumme*

During the Protocol service we had Renate Christenson, widow of Frank Christenson HK vet and Emily Lyons

daughter of Edgar Smelts (WG, MIA) remove the chairs. Murray Tallant, Past President of the Branch read the FEPOW prayer. Frank Logan Jr. son of Frank Logan, HK vet and Wendy Jarvin, related to John Hill HK vet unveiled the plaque. We were happy to have Larry McGuire, MP of the area and Barry Cullen, Deputy Mayor bring greetings on behalf of the Canadian Government and the City of Brandon, respectively.

We were pleased to see the family members and Branch members attend.

## The Sgt Gander Film Saga

*JP Bear*

To all concerned HKVCA Members and Veterans, I wanted to take a moment to first, wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! I wanted to give you an update as to where I have been and where I am heading in my travels.

Back in September, after completing an Alaskan Cruise, my wife and I sped off from Vancouver, just off the "boat" and travelled to Penticton to meet up with Mona Thornton, and to be interviewed by a reporter of the Penticton Herald about the film and the who, what, where and how I was doing working on Gander's Film. We had a great visit and are putting Penticton on our "to return to it list"!

I look forward to being in Ottawa for the next Reunion/Convention in August 2020. I plan on presenting the Trailer of the Film at the Convention and to say a few words to the gathering. I plan also to be available to answer questions at a booth, if space is available and with proper approvals. I am so proud of getting the Trailer made by the end of the year to be able to pitch it at various production companies throughout Canada.

The Trailer is being put together in Calgary by the CBC Heritage Minutes Producer, Craig Baird, who has me scheduled to receive the copy before the beginning of the

Special thank you to Murray Tallant who contacted the families and to Cindy Strumme, Branch President who arranged to have the plaque in their Branch. We also thank them for the hospitality and refreshments following the event.

Thanks to our members who travelled to Brandon to help with this event - the Colour Party, Stan Lopata, Alex Taylor, Marilyn Gelinias, Secretary and Allan Hadley (husband and driver).

year, so I can get into various film festivals. The film is being filmed as a Documentary genre film. Things can change when I get a production company ready to take on the project.

God Bless You All and as Phil Doddridge writes, A La Prochaine

**CITY & REGION**  
PENTICTON HERALD, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2019 A3

# Acting career possible for all Newfoundlander dogs

By MELANIE EKSAI  
Penticton Herald

**A** Canadian war hero has inspired an Arizona man so much, he's in the weeks of making a film about him.

Aspiring actor for the lead role must meet one qualification: you have to be a Newfoundlander dog.

J.P. Bear fell in love with the story of Sgt. Gander, a Newfoundlander dog who was formerly a family pet named Pal turned mascot for the Royal Rifles of Canada during the Second World War.

"I got involved with this via my dog," Bear said during a recent visit to Penticton to visit a friend he connected with through the Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association.

"She was a therapy dog, and I used to take her to libraries and schools. She would lay there, and kids would read to her and show her pictures. I started to print up true stories about non-fictional Newfoundlander dogs. One of those stories was about Gander."

Bear began to research Gander more and more, discovering

Gander was shipped to Hong Kong in December 1941. He died protecting his unit after picking up a grenade and racing it back towards the enemy.

In 2008, Gander was awarded the Dickin Medal, which is said to be the animal equivalent to the Victoria Cross.

"One day, I watched a movie called War Horse," said Bear. "And War Horse is about 1914."

So I took that story and said, "I would love to write a film about Gander."

Bear has written 17 different drafts of the script, and versions for four different genres.

"I've had producers and directors ... tell me that I should go in a different direction to get it done," explained Bear, adding a docudrama has been a popular option for Gander's story.

He's currently in the midst of working on a trailer to pitch to producers.

"There are some things that will never change: One, it's a Canadian story. I don't care if they offer me \$200,000 or \$50 million to do the film and then find out they want to use a Chihuahua and make it an American story."

Bear has been working on the project for nearly three years.

"My feelings are I'm disappointed a lot of people because I haven't produced this story yet. And I feel bad about that," he said.

Bear has a website, sgsgander-film.com, with more information. To help with costs associated with making the film, people are encouraged to buy a Sgt. Gander T-shirt.

## BC Region Report



*Gerry Tuppert*

For those of us attending the Victoria Remembrance Day ceremonies it was certainly a different experience without the presence of our HK veteran Horace Gerry Gerrard, RCCS.

<https://www.hkvca.ca/cforcedata/indivreport/indivdetailed.php?regtno=P7563>.

What encourages us all is the willingness of family members to pick up the commemorative gauntlet and carry on these time-honoured traditions.

So again on December 8th, just like Gerry did uninterrupted for 70 plus years, we will place a wreath and pause and reflect on those sacrifices so many years ago. All members and friends of HKVCA are welcome to attend and be part of this commemorative ceremony.

We Will Remember Them.



Gerry's two daughters, Beverly Campbell from Vancouver and Patricia White from Victoria, laid the HKVCA wreath at the cenotaph in what was a pretty emotional few minutes for the entire family (see photo).

## Region Remembrance Day Ceremonies

The threat of inclement weather at Victory Square in Vancouver certainly did not keep the record crowds away. Perhaps it was the long vitriolic federal election or the unfortunate Don Cherry comments that motivated the general public to be part of something truly unifying and Canadian to the core.

## Prairie Prose



*Carol Hadley*

Greetings from the Prairie Region. As I start this article it was raining, then not long after it was snowing – only in Canada, right!!

We are truly blessed to still have a couple of HK vets in Prairie Region - Ralph MacLean and George Peterson and our wonderful 24 widows. We appreciate everything that our vets and widows have done and try to stay in touch with them.

Once again our member in Vancouver Phil Mondor, son of Hong Kong Veteran Paul-Emile Mondor, WG. <https://www.hkvca.ca/cforcedata/indivreport/indivdetailed.php?regtno=L13472> was there to lay the HKVCA wreath. Phil, being from south Saskatchewan, was pleased to witness this and send along a quote from Global News.

*From Global News:*

Among the most affecting moments in the ceremony was the arrival of 99-year-old Paul DeLorme, a Metis man who served with the South Saskatchewan Regiment in the Second World War, who came to lay a long-stemmed white rose at the cenotaph to honour his fallen comrades. As DeLorme — who was wounded in the 1942 Dieppe Raid and kept as a prisoner of war for three years — was introduced, the crowd spontaneously broke out into applause.

Mr. Mondor also attended the 12:30 Remembrance ceremonies at the Chinatown Memorial Monument where the same dignitaries were present. Thank you once again for the HKVCA presence at these venues and the picture of our Defence Minister, the Honorable Sarjit Singh Sajjan, accompanied by some very proud Veterans.

## You Could Lay a Wreath

I would like to mention again that anyone can lay a wreath on the HKVCA's behalf. Buy one from your closest Legion and send the paid receipt to your treasurer. Use the “Contact Us” form on any HKVCA web page if you have questions. It would be truly gratifying if next year in honour of the 75th Anniversary Homecoming celebrations we could account for at least 75 wreaths being laid on VJ Day!

With my final remarks I wish to salute our widows. We know you are out there, and we as a group wish you all continued good health and glad tidings in the New Year.

Best Wishes and safe travels for your holiday season.

Ralph MacLean appreciates all our calls and has attended services for Remembrance Day in Calgary.

Thank you to those members who keep in touch with our widows and veterans. It's a few moments out of our busy lives but means everything to them to be remembered.

We were saddened to hear of 2 of our widows passing in November:

→ Helen Trick, widow of Charles R. Trick, WG, on November 18, 2019



→ Myrtle Lytle, widow of Robert (Bob) Lytle, WG on November 20, 2019

Our sincere sympathy to the family and friends. We will remember them.



*Bev Gauthier, (daughter of Juliet Lafortune, (R)) with her boyfriend Jerry Melnyk and little sister Jen Lindsay Purpur and our dear friend Hong Kong veteran, Mr. George Peterson*

We were able to arrange to have the HK Vet flag flying at the Cenotaph on Memorial Boulevard near our Legislative Building for the month of August and December to honour 'C' Force.



*St. Luke's church for Remembrance Sunday with Winnipeg Grenadier cadets*

Many members throughout Prairie Region have laid wreaths for Remembrance Day with the Colour Party, Barry Mitchell and Wayne Stebbe attending the Winnipeg service at the Convention Centre. I was asked to speak at the Charleswood Legion service that was attended by about 700 people – military, political and veteran groups laid wreaths and was streamed on YouTube for those who could not make it. Thank

you to all who participated in remembering those who defend our rights and freedoms.

We completed placing plaques in many areas throughout Prairie Region until Spring. So far, we have 31 plaques in Prairie Region. Selkirk Legion made a brass plaque with the names of the men from this area to be mounted underneath the HK plaque – thanks to Dennis Stewart for sending it to me. As soon as we have the other dates confirmed we will inform our members so that they may attend and participate in the dedication. We have submitted summaries of these events with pictures that are located on our website. A big THANK YOU to our Colour Party, Region executive and members who have supported these events and often participated in the ceremony.

Paul Dartnell from Legion 215 has a Display of the Battle of Hong Kong at the Branch. The Manitoba Museum has loaned items for the display and with contributions from the Military Museum on Marion and St. Vital Museum makes for a wonderful display



*Ralph with ALPHA Group*

The Annual Dinner was held at Neil Bardal Centre on October 20, 2019. We had Pam Shaw from Veterans Affairs as the guest speaker, and a good representation from other veteran groups and our members. Thank you for the support of the HKVCA.

If you are in downtown Winnipeg in December, please go to the Cenotaph on Memorial Blvd near the Legislature and take a few minutes to reflect on the Canadians who served in Hong Kong for our rights and freedom.

### **Battle of Hong Kong Parade: December 4, 2019**

I was honoured to be asked to review the Winnipeg Grenadier Cadet Corps at Minto Armouries on Wednesday, December 4, 2019.



There were families and friends of the cadets in attendance to see the parade. Some of the numbers of the cadets were down

tonight but those that attended were proud to be wearing their uniform and on parade to pay homage to the Winnipeg Grenadiers that were part of ‘C’ Force.

I was asked to address the cadets and attendees and gave a brief talk on the battle. I explained that they “carry on a fine tradition of these brave Canadians who persevered under adverse conditions to return to their families. The cadet corps is a living legacy to carry on their attributes and their memory. Be proud of your uniform and its history.”

## Ontario Offerings

### Toronto-area Luncheon

*Pat Turcotte – Daughter of Leonard Corrigan (WG)*

HKVCA members paid a visit to the Royal Canadian Military Institute on November 9. The main purpose of the visit was to hear a guest speaker tell us about the life of Nursing Sister Kay Christie, one of two Canadian Army nurses who served with the nearly 2,000 soldiers of the Royal Rifles of Canada, the Winnipeg Grenadiers and Brigade HQ to play their part in stemming the tide of Japanese aggression. Before the presentation, we were escorted to the Medals Room for a delightful lunch, followed by our speaker, one of the RCMI historians, who was able to tell us many fascinating details about the life Kay Christie led before, during and after the War. We learned a great deal about her.

*(Photo - Hong Kong Veteran George MacDonell speaks to luncheon attendees)*



Following this presentation, we were taken through five floors of the building with an opportunity to see the many displays on all levels, as well as the various rooms housing thousands of books in the several libraries which concern Canada’s Military history. The Medals Room itself was filled with

many of the Military’s medals from all the wars in which Canada has been involved. On display in this room are the medals of Brig John Lawson, commander of ‘C’ Force, and a large plaque naming all of Canada’s Victoria Cross awardees,

including CSM John Osborn. The culmination of the tour was the Kay Christie display on the main floor. Her medals were there, and a mannequin was dressed in the actual Nurse’s uniform she wore when she was in the service.

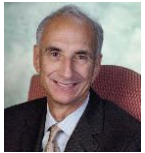


*Luncheon participants in the Library of the Royal Canadian Military Museum*

The visit was an eye-opener, particularly when we realized that Kay Christie was a game-changer herself, not only for her war service, but also for the influence she had in changing the approach to women being accepted at the Military Institute as members. In earlier times, women who were allowed into the building had to use the side entrance, as they were not ever to

be considered members. She not only reversed that procedure, but, ultimately, became a member of the Board. She was, no doubt, among the first female voices to pave the way for the current generation of liberated women. This visit was a wonderful opportunity to become more aware of the workings of the Royal Canadian Military Institute and its attempts to encourage a better understanding of the past in our Military history, and to recognize its efforts to become even more relevant in the present and the future. A most enjoyable time, and a special thanks to Mike Babin for organizing it.

### Commemoration Ceremony in Markham, ON



*Mike Babin – Son of Alfred Babin (RRC)*

On Saturday, October 26 the Royal Hong Kong Regiment (The Volunteers) Association of Ontario held a ceremony in Markham to commemorate the Battle of Hong Kong. It was a nippy, but sunny day at the cenotaph and the ceremony was well-attended. Local, provincial and federal politicians participated, and I was asked to give a short recounting of the Battle story. Many of the attendees were of Chinese heritage, and the event was well covered by local Chinese broadcast and print media. Several wreaths were laid, including by the St John's Ambulance organization. Members of The Volunteers fought alongside the Canadians in 'C' Force, and St John's Ambulance Corps members were also involved in the Battle of Hong Kong.



*Participants in Commemoration Ceremony at Markham Cenotaph*

### November 11 at National War Memorial in Ottawa



*Mark Purcell – Grandson of Leonard Corrigan (WG)*

I just got back from the National Remembrance Day Ceremony. Each year, I try to watch it on CBC as my way of commemorating our Vets. This year I was able to attend the ceremony in person at The War Memorial. As I waited for it to start, I had some time to think about Remembrance Ceremonies I have attended across Canada and overseas. I have attended/participated in Ceremonies in Calgary, Winnipeg, Cobourg, Granby, Fredericton as well as Ottawa at both the National War Memorial and our own HKVCA Memorial Wall. I have also had the privilege to attend ceremonies at Sai Wan Cemetery and Stanley Cemetery in Hong Kong as well as Yokohama Cemetery in Japan for the Veterans of the Battle of Hong Kong. It is very moving to hear the Last Post, the Lament and the Rouse as well as the reading of the Act of Remembrance, which this year was done in English, French and an Indigenous language. It is a very moving ceremony no matter where it is done and in what language it is done.

### Niagara Military Museum 'C' Force Exhibit Opening



*Lori Atkinson Smith – Daughter of Harry Atkinson (WG)*

September 28th, 2019 was the official opening of the 'C' Force, The Hong Kong Story" exhibit at the Niagara Military Museum. A truly overwhelming feeling for all 50 plus of us that attended. This exhibit was achieved because of Eugene M. Labiuk, Director of Research and Archives, and Jim and Kathy Doherty of the Niagara Military Museum.

Memorabilia items on loan include precious keepsakes from families who have a tie to the battle of Hong Kong - mementos belonging to one of our veterans, which he brought home; diaries of another; a HK jacket with an HK flash from Tom Eden in Quebec; pictures and stories from Jack Hunter, a local resident who had been the Quartermaster of HMCS Prince Robert – the ship that brought many of our "guys" home.

The research the NMM delved into for 'C'Force is pictured on ten banners. Banner #1 is specific to the 'C' Force members from the Niagara region. Banners #2 to# 9 are generic to 'C' Force and follow 'C' Force from Canada to Hong Kong, POW camps and home again.

I was speechless with the exhibit this museum has brought together for 'C' Force. The HKVCA sends a huge THANK YOU to the Niagara Military Museum! Thank you- Eugene, Jim, and Kathy. Your dedication to Canada's history and in particular to the Canadian part of the defence of Hong Kong history is much appreciated.



*Plaque unveiling by Lori Atkinson Smith and Eugene Labiuk*

An HKVCA Commemorative Plaque was also unveiled, and will be permanently displayed at the museum.

Alongside the HKVCA plaque is a plaque that honours the memory of those 'C' Force members who originated from the Niagara Region.

The exhibit is open for 6 months. If you are ever in Niagara Falls, do not miss this terrific exhibit. The exhibit will be on display till April, 2020. The HKVCA flag leads you inside. The museum will make this exhibit available after April, 2020 when the 'C' Force exhibit closes at Niagara Military Museum. Contact the museum if you are interested in further information. Email- [niamilmuseum@gmail.com](mailto:niamilmuseum@gmail.com) .

(no reports from Quebec or Atlantic regions for this issue)

## Notices

Our mailing address has changed - we've moved down the street! Our updated address is:

Suite 164  
 1826 Robertson Road  
 Nepean, ON  
 K2H 1B9

Yes, only the street address has changed.

## 2020 Dues for Regular Members

Dues: \$20 (Veterans and Widows do not pay). Application form is on a separate included page in this issue.

## Remembrance Day Ceremony in Cobourg



*Shelagh Purcell - Daughter of Len Corrigan (WG)*

Remembrance Day proved to be a cold wintry day, with wind off Lake Ontario, as we gathered for the service in Cobourg, Ontario.

Despite the weather and being a Monday, there was a good crowd and by the end of the ceremony, the Cenotaph was covered in wreaths representing all walks of life in the town. The 'Katie Band' brought the marchers into Victoria Park and the Salvation Army Band accompanied the hymns. Cobourg has a long military history and Remembrance Day is always special.

Jay Bevan was the MC - a name known in Hong Kong and he pointed out his cousin Ken Bevan laying a wreath for his father Clarence Bevin who served in Hong Kong.

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The election on October brought a Liberal canvasser to Barbara Cunningham Drew's front door. When asked if she had anything to discuss, Barbara mentioned our HKVCA President Mike Babin's letter to Prime Minister Trudeau re the lack of recognition of Japan's Second World War treatment of Canadian POW's. Barbara said the woman kind of laughed - probably nervous - because she didn't know the story. It just suggests that there is a lot more work to get the Hong Kong situation better known in Canada.

Barry Fair and I had a long conversation sharing stories about Hong Kong - his 32 relatives who served there and all the reasons that attending the Ontario conference next August is important. The convention gives us all the opportunity to meet family members of the POWs and share the stories that have been passed along - some that we may not hear again. Make plans!