



# WASURERU-NAI "Never Forget"



## National Newsletter of the Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association Autumn 2019 Edition

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### Homecoming



*Gerry Tuppert*

It's time to kick start the Homecoming project!

We are looking to hear from the membership, yes, that is you out there! Everyone has heard a family story of how their loved one returned home.

Next year will be the 75th anniversary of that happy occasion, and sharing that memory is indeed something to celebrate. Coinciding with the national HKVCA convention in Ottawa, it is a milestone opportunity to gather and remember.

I am forever grateful to the HK veterans who took the time to document their experiences in articles and books. The much-anticipated reunions with family members, and the first time they see their friends again, never fail to warm my heart.

There is still, and always will be, a wealth of storytelling that can be shared amongst our membership. We know that this is an invaluable way of keeping our organization connected to the history of our soldiers.

What we do know, is not all reunions were that happy and sadly too many of our soldiers were left behind.



However, there is one way we can at least symbolically bring the memories of those young men home with us. We are currently working on a "Book of Remembrance", with all the names of those who served in 'C' Force.

This precious book will be taken across Canada, hopefully by train travel, to replicate the return journey of our soldiers, and will then be on display at the convention. A guest signature book will also be available for relatives, friends and politicians who recognize names and want to leave a written sentiment. More details about this aspect of the "75th Anniversary Homecoming"

in the next newsletter.

Your willingness to get involved by sending a story, attending a function, viewing the book will be an indicator of how successful our celebrations will be.

Let's get on board.

## President's Message



*Mike Babin*

The deaths of four hundred and twenty Canadians are commemorated at Sai Wan War Cemetery and Stanley Military Cemetery in Hong Kong, a city which is currently in a state of turmoil. We can only

hope that a peaceful and just solution is found soon, and that the great city for which these soldiers gave their lives to defend returns to normal.

### Convention 2020

I am very excited about the convention we're planning for August 2020 in Ottawa, which will be a commemoration of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the return of 'C' Force survivors to Canada. As you can read elsewhere in the newsletter, the theme of "Homecoming" is sparking some great ideas on how to celebrate the lead-up to the convention. We're especially interested in hearing about your families' homecoming stories. If you have memories of a returning Hong Kong veteran you'd like to share, please write it up and send it to [editor@hkvca.ca](mailto:editor@hkvca.ca). Think of how you might commemorate the "homecoming" in your own community, and let us know about the event so we can share it with all of our members across Canada.

It's not too early to plan your visit to Ottawa next summer! Mark your calendars for August 14-16, 2020. More details about the convention, including hotels and activities, will be in the next newsletter.

## HKVA Report



*Phil Doddridge*

This time I will write about a friend of mine, who has a deep interest in all things concerning the efforts of Canadian soldiers in the worldwide battles of the past century.

Tom Eden, a native of Gaspé, Quebec, first became interested in the story of his great-uncle who served in the Canadian Army in World War 1, and who was killed in France and is buried there. He has made several trips to France and has photographed the graves and studied the history of the battles.

He became interested in World War 2 and especially the Battle of Hong Kong. He has gone to Hong Kong and has studied the history of we Canadians who fought there and were imprisoned for nearly four years. We have spent some time together, when he has listened to my stories and has written a book, yet to be published, to which he has given the title, "Mr Phil and Me".

### Memorabilia Room Planned

Please consider bringing artifacts to share in the display with a focus on the Convention's "Homecoming" theme. Details in the next newsletter. Ken Skelton will be assisting in coordinating the display with the Convention Committee.

### Hong Kong Commemorative Trip

In spite of the current unrest in Hong Kong which I mentioned above, I have received a few inquiries about the possibility of a group commemorative trip to Hong Kong in 2020. If you would be interested in such a trip, please send an email to [hkvca.trip@gmail.com](mailto:hkvca.trip@gmail.com). In the past, these trips have been about 7 to 10 days in length, and some have included an optional visit to the Yokohama War Cemetery in Japan.

### Comments and Feedback

We're interested in whether we are communicating well with our members. If you have any feedback on the contents of our newsletters or our web site, please email me at [president@hkvca.ca](mailto:president@hkvca.ca). What could we do better or differently? Your comments on this, or any other issues, are always welcome.

### We Will Remember Them



He has presented the story of Hong Kong on a number of occasions at Canadian Legion Branches around the district, at which he attracts large audiences. All this he does at his own expense, including a series of folding plaques depicting the story of the Royal Rifles from recruitment, to training, to garrison duty in Newfoundland, to the journey to HK, to the battle, to internment, and to return home.

Thank you, Tom!

That will be all for this time. Be good to each other and may God Bless.

Philip

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

## In Remembrance

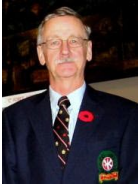


### In Memoriam

Mary LeBlanc, widow of E30364 Jean LeBlanc RRC, on June 5, 2019

Yvonne Hogle, sister of John Payne, WG, on August 7, 2019

## From the Editor



*Jim Trick* (editor@hkvca.ca)

Due to an error in our last newsletter, the names of surviving Hong Kong veterans were incorrect. Names are: George Peterson, Bob Barter, Eugene Lapointe, Hormidas Fredette,

George MacDonell, Ralph MacLean, and Phil Doddridge.

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.

## The Sgt. Gander Project (Update)

*JP Bear*

Hello everyone, I just want to give you an update as to how things are developing for film production.

Over the summer I have been in contact with many industry Professionals who are assisting me with my project. Though I am not in production at this time, I have been able to look forward to being not only at the Convention next year but also of being able to show a Trailer of the film there. I am looking forward to travelling on the Remembrance Book Train.

Since the last newsletter, I have been in contact with many of the family members of some of the veterans and in a couple of weeks my wife and I, after completing an Alaskan Cruise, are heading to Penticton to visit with Mona Thornton.

An added treat for the trip is that a reporter of the Penticton Herald is going to interview me about Gander, the Battle of Hong Kong and about the film.

I plan on visiting the War Museum in Penticton. I want you to know that I have been working extremely hard to accomplish my goal of getting this film made, so that the remaining HK Veterans can see the finished product.

I know this is short, but I wanted to update you all as to my progress and if you send me an email, I would like to send you the pitch that I have prepared to be presented to the industry Professionals.

I can be contacted at: [dicksonbearje@hotmail.com](mailto:dicksonbearje@hotmail.com)

Looking forward to meeting you all next year!

## BC Region Report



*Gerry Tuppert*

Here on the west coast, the summer season started badly with the passing of our only resident Hong Kong veteran [Horace Gerry Gerrard, RCCS](#).

There was a well-attended celebration of life held for Gerry at one of his two favourite Legions. Some of his long-time cohorts from the Pacific Signals Association were present to pay their respects to his family.

As a result of this connection, two HKVCA plaques will be installed later this fall.

One at the Ashton Armoury Museum in Victoria (<https://www.ashtonarmourymuseum.com/>) and the other at the Vancouver Island Military Museum in downtown Nanaimo, BC (<http://vimms.ca/>).

Two more wonderful opportunities to educate the public about the Defence of Hong Kong and the role that "C Force" soldiers like Gerry played during the hostilities.



Thank you once again, Mr. Gerrard! Your lifelong legacy of continuing to tell the Hong Kong story lives on, and we the members are always appreciative.

As I write this there are many troubling reports from the turmoil happening in present-day Hong Kong. The west coast of Canada, especially Vancouver, has a large population of Chinese Canadians who still have strong bonds and family ties to the former British colony. The large protests and the ensuing heavy-handed response by the Government are fuelling the unrest and uncertainty and it remains to be seen how it will all play out.

## Prairie Prose



*Carol Hadley*

Hello from the Prairie Region. I hope you are all enjoying fine weather and the time outdoors to rejuvenate for the fall work.

### **John Osborn VC ANAF Plaque**

Wednesday, July 10, 2019, at John Osborn VC ANAF in Winnipeg, there were about 30 people present as we dedicated a plaque. This event was coordinated with the assistance of Roxanna Fenning, HKVCA member and Judee Brown, Executive member of the branch.



*L-R - MP Robert Falcon-Ouellette and MP Dr. Doug Eyolfson*

John Osborn, VC ANAF Colour Party with the HKVCA Colour Party, and Robert Falcon-Ouellette, MP (bugler) began the ceremony. Dr. Doug Eyolfson, MP Charleswood-St. James-Assiniboia-Headingley - Standing Committee for Veteran Affairs and Robert Falcon-Ouellette, MP for City Centre unveiled the plaque and addressed the audience. There were too many men who enlisted in Winnipeg to read out the names for the Roll Call.

Roxanna Fenning, granddaughter of Edwin Swanson and Joyce Sewell, daughter of Edwin Swanson WG HK Vet, removed the chairs and Barry Mitchell read the FEPOW

We trust and hope that somehow a peaceful resolution will be negotiated that could work for all interests.

Wishing you all great fall colours and inspired storytelling.

Gerry Tuppert  
BC Regional Director

### **We Will Remember Them**

*PS: (Excellent article about the battle and Gerry Gerrard in the Red Deer Advocate*

<https://www.reddeeradvocate.com/opinion/michael-dawe-red-deer-soldier-survived-ghastly-battle-of-hong-kong/>

prayer. We were very pleased to learn that Robert Falcon-Ouellette was in the services and was a bugler, so he played O Canada, Last Post and Reveille and the marching off of the Colours. Well done!

A brief history of the episode involving CSM John Osborn was given after the Protocol was completed. Brochures were placed on tables for the audience to learn more about the many “firsts” that involved ‘C’ Force.

We were pleased to see ANAVet member, Roger Burden, son of Samuel Burden, WG, HK Vet, who had a presentation of his father’s medals and other memorabilia.

We had many members present - Prairie executive – Carol Hadley, Prairie Regional Director; Barry Mitchell, Treasurer/Membership; Marleen Bell, and Marilyn Gelanais, Secretary; the HKV Colour Party (Stan Lopata, Alex Taylor), as well as Allan Hadley, Joyce Sewell, and Roxanna Fenning. Thank you everyone for attending and for the lovely refreshments following the event.



*George Peterson and Marleen Bell*

We are blessed to still have a couple of HK vets - Ralph MacLean and George Peterson and our wonderful 26 widows. We appreciate everything that our vets and widows have done.

Marleen Bell and I visited George Peterson at Deer Lodge Centre to show him a copy of the plaque that we are dedicating in various facilities to remind them of the Canadians that

served in Hong Kong, and what they did for our country. He was pleased to see the plaque and that we are doing this, but with his limited vision could not read the words on the plaque. These were read to him and he acknowledged his pleasure.

I recently talked to Ralph who is his usual upbeat self and appreciates all our calls. 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 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.



We are continuing to research requests for plaques from different Legions, ANA vets and other areas in Winnipeg and Manitoba. So far, we have September 14 in Portage La Prairie, Manitoba and September 19 at St. James Legion, Winnipeg. As soon as we have the other dates confirmed, we will inform our members so that they may attend and if possible, participate in the dedication. We are grateful for the help from our members who have searched out the venues and initiated the arrangements for these plaques. We have submitted summaries of these events with pictures that are located on our website. A big THANK YOU to our Colour Party and Region

## Ontario Offerings

### Attention Toronto-area Members

You are cordially invited to a luncheon for HKVCA members on Saturday, November 9, 2019 at noon at the Royal Canadian Military Institute.

The RCMI has an excellent set of displays of military memorabilia. One of great interest to our members is a display on nursing sister Kay Christie, who served in Hong Kong with 'C' Force. Following lunch, one of the RCMI's historians will give a talk on Lt. Christie and will give a tour of the RCMI.

The cost per person, including buffet lunch, tea/coffee, tax and gratuity is \$50, payable by cash or cheque at the door. Beer, wine and other drinks will be available and can be paid for with a credit card.

If you would like to attend, please **RSVP by October 31** by email to [hkvca.on@gmail.com](mailto:hkvca.on@gmail.com), or by calling (416) 239-9192 and leaving a message with your name and phone number. **In**

executive and members who have supported these events and often participated in the ceremony.

We are working with Paul Dartnell from Legion 215, to help with a Remembrance Display in that Branch. Marleen Bell and I went with Paul to Manitoba Museum to select items for the display and will also be checking with the Military Museum on Marion, and St. Vital Museum for items for the display.

Thank you to the Colour Party (Alex Taylor, Stan and Vince Lopata), for participating in the Belgian Legion parade and attending the Korean Veterans candlelight service at Brookside Cemetery.

We were saddened to lose Yvonne Hogle on August 7, 2019, a dedicated HKVCA member, and sister of John Payne WG, who was killed trying to escape from prison camp. Our sympathy has been extended to the family.

Plans have begun for the Annual Dinner to be held at Neil Bardal Centre, 3030 Notre Dame Ave, Winnipeg on October 20, 2019 at 2 p.m. We are hoping to have a guest speaker and representation from other veteran groups. Invitations will be sent out near the end of September for people to RSVP. As you have noticed we have not held a VJ Day event as the number of people able to attend has declined for various reasons. However, if you are in downtown Winnipeg in August, 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.

### Plaque Ceremony - Red Deer Legion

An HKVCA Commemorative plaque was unveiled at the Red Deer Legion Branch #35, on August 9th. Kathie Carlson's article with photos is published in our online version.

**either case, please indicate the number of attendees.** Please note that Business Casual dress is required at the RCMI. Men need not wear a jacket, but worn, torn or soiled jeans, sweatshirts, suits, athletic shoes, hats, shorts, casual beach sandals nor apparel with bold slogans or commercial messages are permitted.

The RCMI is located at 426 University Ave, Toronto. There is parking nearby, but we recommend that you take the subway to avoid traffic. The RCMI is just a few steps from the St Patrick subway station. Parking information is available at [https://www.rcmi.org/Contact\\_Us/Parking\\_Options](https://www.rcmi.org/Contact_Us/Parking_Options).

### Invitation to Niagara-area Members

*Lori Atkinson Smith*

Oh boy, am I ever getting excited. I visited the Niagara Military Museum in Niagara Falls, Ontario this past week. You



should see the exhibit '*C*' Force - *The Hong Kong Story* that they are developing for the grand opening of that exhibit at the end of September, 2019. Just phenomenal!



If you can't make it to the Niagara Falls Military Museum between September 28, 2019 until April 2020, you will have a chance to see parts of it next summer of 2020. I will be borrowing some of their display for the HKVCA Convention being held in Ottawa in August 2020.



The Niagara Military Museum requests the pleasure of your attendance for the grand opening of '*C*' Force - *The Hong Kong Story*, a new exhibit at:

The Armoury  
5049 Victoria Avenue, Niagara Falls

On **Saturday, September 28, 2019 at 1:00 p.m.**

An HKVCA commemorative plaque will also be unveiled at the event.

Reception to follow.

If you plan to attend, please RSVP by September 21 by email to [niamilmuseum@gmail.com](mailto:niamilmuseum@gmail.com) or by phone to (905) 358-1949.

### Smiths Falls Plaque Dedication

My name is Stan Lasenba, son of Hong Kong vet Earl Lasenba of Bury, Quebec. I have been a member of the HKVCA for a number of years, and although not overly active I try to attend the ceremonies at the Memorial Wall every year.

Thanks to the HKVCA for the donation of the plaque to Smiths Falls Legion Br #95. The ceremony was attended by Gail Angel and Mitzi Ross on behalf of HKVCA. Special guests were George Wood, Deputy G District Commander, and Bob Atkinson, Zone Commander G6, who had 2 uncles serving in Hong Kong. Family members of Howard Ward, another vet from Bury, QC, were surprise participants, as was Mavis Martin from Merrickville, who I had met at a general meeting in Ottawa. In all with friends and members of Br # 95, there were about 40 who attended.

Bury, a small town in Eastern Quebec, had 32 Royal Rifles that went to Hong Kong. Last summer they dedicated a plaque to the memory of these veterans. My cousins Larry Everett, son of George Everett, and Larry's wife Debby Batley-Everett, daughter of Eric Batley, unveiled the plaque in Bury.

Our local paper in Smiths Falls ran an article to publicize our event and then covered the event with pictures in the paper.

I was very pleased with the publicity we received and the many comments from local media and from many vets at our Legion.



*L to R: Emily Starks (granddaughter), Stan Lasenba, Brenda Starks (daughter), Jean Lasenba (wife), Sara Starks (granddaughter)*

### Memorial Wall Ceremony



*Mitzi Ross*

In Ottawa, on Saturday, August 17th, we marked the "74th Anniversary of the End of the War in the Far East" (VJ Day) which was declared on August 15th, 1945. The memorial service was held downtown at the 'C' Force Memorial Wall. In previous years, the event was held on the Saturday closest to Dec. 8th, to commemorate the "Beginning of the Battle for Hong Kong". However, due to challenging winter weather and fear of injury, we decided at our last Annual General Meeting to hold the service in August from now on to commemorate VJ Day.

We were honoured to again have veteran George MacDonell from Toronto join us at the wall and lay a wreath on behalf of all Hong Kong Veterans. Ted Terry (son of veteran Edward L. Terry) did a masterful job as our Emcee, a role he has performed since we started doing these memorial services approximately a decade ago. Derrill Henderson (son of veteran Stewart Henderson) shared the Prayer and the Benediction, as he has also done since the first service. His sentiments were as always timely and insightful.

We had in attendance, and laying wreaths, some invited guests such as MP Mona Fortier, on behalf of the Government of Canada, Robert Loken on behalf of Veterans Affairs Canada, Dwayne McCarthy on behalf of the Royal Canadian Legion, Randy Stowell and John Stuart on behalf of NATO Veterans

Organization of Canada and Cooper Bradley on behalf of War Amps Operation Legacy.

In a particularly poignant moment, George MacDonell shared a few sentiments in his, as always, tasteful and articulate manner.



*George MacDonell (97) giving words of wisdom at the Hong Kong Memorial ceremony in Ottawa on August 17, 2019. (Photo submitted by Ian Englehart)*

Following the service, everyone was invited to the Grill 41 Restaurant, located inside the Lord Elgin Hotel, for a delicious meal and, best of all, for the extraordinary camaraderie that the HKVCA family always exhibits when gathered together.

As in previous years, I would like to thank all the family members of our veterans and everyone else who attended the service. I am confident that those who have passed before would be moved by our efforts to keep the memory alive. Let's not forget!

In closing, I wish you all a very pleasant Fall, Winter and Spring seasons. I look forward to seeing everyone at the 2020 Convention next summer which will be held here in Ottawa from Friday, August 14th to Sunday, August 16th. More information will be forthcoming in the next 3 newsletters as well as information/registration packages, which will be sent out in the spring of 2020

If anyone wants some advance or specific information please feel free to email me at [mitziross@rogers.com](mailto:mitziross@rogers.com) or call me at 613-225-5105. Looking forward to seeing you all next summer.

### **South-Central Area Report**



*Pam Newhouse*

Hello all, and greetings from Niagara! As we move toward fall, the days and nights are getting much more comfortable here.

On June 8 our annual luncheon was held at the Burlington Legion, Branch #60. Sixteen people attended and those that did had a wonderful, moving experience due to our guest speaker, Nancy

Hamer- Strahl. Nancy is an award-winning History teacher from Port Perry who has taken a particular interest in our veterans and their story of The Battle of Hong Kong. She has passed this interest during class onto her many students through the years and was one of several teachers, including her husband, Mike, who accompanied 200 students to Hong Kong in 2005.



*Nancy Hamer Strahl, Pam Newhouse, Mike Strahl*

Nancy showed us a powerpoint presentation which consisted of many photos and anecdotes from that trip. She also included her extensive collection of memorabilia from her students. One item, in particular, fascinated me. It was a large binder that included a short article, poem or artwork dedicated to each Hong Kong veteran. Throughout Canada, students were assigned one of our veterans, by name, to research and write about. My father, Ken Pifher (RR), had a poem written for him. Nancy, assisted by her husband Mike, were wonderful presenters and their enthusiasm for their topic was obvious. I hope to host them again. Teachers like Nancy and Mike play a huge part in keeping our veterans' stories alive by informing the younger generation.

Just a quick note regarding next year's luncheon. I'm going to host it in late May, instead of June, at the Burlington Legion, Branch #60, hoping to boost attendance. Details will be released in the spring.

### **Hong Kong Veterans Tribute Facebook group**

*Lori Atkinson Smith*

Have you been on the Hong Kong Veteran's Tribute Facebook page lately?

You might notice the research that Lillian Roesch is delving into for us at HKVCA, is slowing down somewhat. Her research is harder and harder to dig into. It is so very frustrating to see even birth dates that are still missing for some of our 'C' Force guys. How can that be!!! These men were in our Canadian army! Your help is needed!

Some of these men do not even have a picture for us to put a face to their name. Lillian and I believe that there are pictures



and stories out there on all of our 'C' Force members. Ask your siblings, parents, family members. If you have information to add, a clearer picture, a life story of a 'C' Force member, please send them to our webmaster at [webmaster@hkzca.ca](mailto:webmaster@hkzca.ca)

No matter where you are - share their stories with each other. And for certain share them with 'C' Force thru the HKVCA website. Everyone can help to make 'C' Force a complete and forever story.

Heaven forbid, but if you see typos (or wonky symbols) on the 'C' Force reports that need correction, please advise our Webmaster. He will be certain to let me know. All the help you are able to send our way is greatly appreciated.

## Quebec Report



*Lucette Mailloux Muir*

Greetings all! Trust you are all still enjoying a lovely end of summer. Summer is generally a quieter period for most of us.

On June 23, Quebec Region presented two Commemorative Plaques on the east coast in St.Jules-Cascapedia (New Richmond) at the Royal Canadian Legion Branch.



*L to R: Br. V-P Donna Fallow, Phil Doddridge, Lucette Mailloux Muir. Nancy Doddridge*

Branch Vice-President, Donna Fallow introduced our special guest, Philip Doddridge, Lucette Mailloux Muir of the HKVCA, RCL Commander Ross Smith, Bay des Chaleurs Military Museum President Gordon Dell, Mayor of Cascapedia-St. Jules Guy Boudreau. She then welcomed family members, friends as well as Branch and Museum members. A great turn out.

## Area Reps

*Lori Atkinson Smith*

A sign of the times- paying online for a HKVCA membership. As the information we receive from a membership paid online is a name and an email address, HKVCA Ontario has gone to connecting with our members through email. We have one member, Shelagh Purcell who has taken on the phoning of Ontario regular members who do not have email, all our Ontario widows, and our one veteran.

At this time we want to thank Dorothy Felix, Tim Hodgkinson, Jackie LeDrew, Marilyn Morgan, Pam Newhouse and Mitzi Ross for their time over the years of developing the personal connections with our members over the olde telephone. I thank you for all your help as an area rep for HKVCA- Ontario. Please know it was greatly appreciated and served a communications purpose for the times.

Following words from the dignitaries, writer/author Tom Eden gave a talk on the Battle of Hong Kong. Lucette and Nancy Doddridge proceeded with the presentation and unveiling of the Commemorative Plaque for the Branch and then the Museum Plaque.

The ceremony closed with a thank you to all.

Great comments of appreciation were received followed by a lovely light lunch and great conversation.



*L to R: Bay Chaleurs Military Museum President, Gordon Dell, Phil Doddridge, Lucette Mailloux Muir, Nancy Doddridge*

More presentations are planned for the coming months.

That will be all at this time. Take care and enjoy a lovely Thanksgiving and autumn.

Lucette  
Quebec Region Director