



WASURERU-NAI "Never Forget"



National Newsletter of the Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association

Autumn 2023 Edition

Editor: Jim Trick

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President's Message



Mike Babin

Hello everyone! I hope that despite the hardships brought on by the terrible forest fire situation affecting many Canadians, you have been able to enjoy your summer.

Many of us attended V-J Day commemorations across the country last month, and I'd like to thank all of you who did so, and especially those who were involved in organizing these wonderful events.

80th Anniversary

Just two short years away is the 80th anniversary of the release and repatriation of Canada's 'C' Force POWs, and our Board of Directors has decided that we will recognize this very significant occasion with some high-profile commemorative events and programs to properly remember and honour the bravery and sacrifices of 'C' Force, and to communicate their legacy to all Canadians.

We want to do this right, so we are establishing an 80th Anniversary Organizing Committee whose mission will be to create the 80th Anniversary plan and implement it. We invite enthusiastic and dedicated volunteers interested in serving on this committee to send me an email at president@hkvc.ca. We especially welcome those with good organizational and communications skills. Event management experience would be an asset. Because the committee will be geographically dispersed, the ability to participate in Zoom meetings and use email are essential (you do not need to have a Zoom account).

Even if you're not interested in joining the committee, we welcome your ideas on how we can honour and perpetuate the legacy of the veterans of the Battle of Hong Kong. Please send your ideas and suggestions to president@hkvc.ca for the committee to consider.

Pitch in and let's do our veterans proud!

Plaques



There are hundreds of Legion branches and dozens of military museums large and small across Canada. Hong Kong Veterans lived in many of these communities, but only a handful display any information about the Battle of Hong Kong. We have a terrific plaque that would shine in these places. And it's free! We offer horizontal (as above) and vertical versions. Aussi offert en français! For more information, [visit our plaque information page](#).

Make your own personal 80th Anniversary project to place one or more of these plaques in your community.

Virtual Events

Our virtual events program will resume on Monday, September 18 at 7:30pm ET. The speaker is Michael Petrou, historian at the Canadian War Museum. Michael has conducted over 200 interviews with veterans and family members, including Hong Kong veteran families. Join us to hear some of the fascinating stories Michael has uncovered.

Look for your invitation to register in your email and on Facebook in early September. Or [register right now](#).

The following month (October 23) our own Jim Trick, webmaster extraordinaire, will take us behind the scenes of

In Remembrance

In Memoriam

Florence McGee, widow of John McGee, WG HK vet, passed on Jun 29, 2023

our newly revamped website, which has received high praise from the many people who use it for learning about the Battle or for more serious research. He will be joined by Lori Atkinson Smith who is an Administrator on our Facebook Group and who updates our Individual Report details on a regular basis. This will be a great opportunity to get answers to your website and newsletter questions as well.

Happy fall!

We will remember them.

Online News



Jim Trick

There have been many changes and additions to our online presence over the past few months, along with new projects. Let's get into them.

Fighting it Out: Canadian Troops at Hong Kong and in Memory by Brad St. Croix

We have converted this document to digital and it is now [available online](#) on its own website.

This thesis will be of great value to Canadian Hong Kong historians. Here is an extract from the abstract:

This dissertation examines how the Battle of Hong Kong's negative legacy has developed in Canada. By using the concept of "zombie myths," which was first introduced in *Zombie Myths of Australian Military History*, this study will examine how many individuals, including historians, journalists, and authors, contributed to these myths' creation and propagation for starting from the Second World War and continuing today. The study draws its conclusions from official texts and histories, personal recollections, newspaper articles, popular historical works, and academic monographs and articles, all relating to the battle.

This study delivers a much-needed re-examination of the battle and its legacy in Canada. By explaining and dispelling the numerous myths related to the Battle of Hong Kong, a clearer understanding of the battle's legacy can be achieved.

Gems from the Canadian War Museum

We are strengthening our connection to the Canadian War Museum as it possesses many artifacts relating to 'C' Force.

Pearl MacPherson, widow of Don MacPherson, WG. HK vet passed on June 2, 2023

We have already received a post-war account by WWII John Thomson, RRC. This is of special interest, as it was dictated to his wife late in 1945, so events were fresh in his mind, and unlike many of the diaries, he could be frank and honest. You can find the link to this document on our [Personal Accounts](#) page.

Dark Side of the Sun - digital

Many of you will be aware of Michael Palmer's book focused on his grandfather (George Palmer). Michael and I are now starting work on converting *Dark Side of the Sun* to digital format so it can be read online by the public.

In the meantime, feel free to get more information by [visiting this item on our reading page](#).

More to follow!



“Roll Call” and “Tenko”

Thank you Jim Laidlaw! Jim, the son of Hong Kong Veteran, William (Bill) Laidlaw, Winnipeg Grenadiers, recently found a treasure-trove when going through his mother's effects. As Jim says:

As the son of a Hong Kong Veteran (William (Bill) Laidlaw, WG, H6681), I have visited the HKVCA website a number of times, and have looked through the archived records. I noted that the "dusty old archive documents contain some British Columbia-based newsletters published back in the late 1970s and early 1980s (titled "Roll Call" and "Tenko"), but there was not a complete set present.

I was recently going through my mother's effects (she passed away over a year ago, but I have put off doing the necessary clean-up until now), and came across a couple of boxes that she had put away. The boxes contained my father's mementos (he passed away in 2000), and included photographs, newspaper clippings and documents pertaining to the Battle of Hong Kong, the return of the POWs, and subsequent published stories over the years. There were even some coins and paper currency (with Chinese script) that I assume were

from Hong Kong in the 1930s/1940s era, together with his sergeant's stripes and insignia. Also, in the bottom of one of the boxes, was a set of newsletters that were written and distributed by a good friend of my father's, John Fonseca. These newsletters represented what I believe to be a complete set of the Roll Call and Tenko newsletters that were published.

I made a list of the newsletters posted on the HKVCA website, and have made copies of the newsletters that I recovered and that were not listed.

I've received the copies as you can see in the above photo, and over the next few months, will be converting them to a digital format so that all interested folks can view them. This is a long-term project.

Hong Kong Veterans Memorial Service - Ottawa



Ian Englehart

After a severe rain and thunderstorm on Thursday August 10, 2023 in Ottawa, there was concern that the ceremony may have to be cancelled due to severe flooding in parts of Ottawa. Our Hong Kong Veterans looked down on us and said in their usual way "never give up" and the Hong Kong Veterans Memorial Service took place on Saturday August 12, 2023, as planned. Thank you, Hong Kong Veterans.

Saturday was a beautiful, warm, sunny day (25C) for the Hong Kong Veterans Memorial Service which was held at the 'C' Force Memorial Wall in Ottawa. This was the 78th anniversary of the end of the war in the Far East.



Mona Fortier MP Vanier-Ottawa, Donald Macdonald Piper with the Sons of Scotland Pipe Band, Ian Englehart MC

The ceremony was well attended by approximately 55 people. Once again, the event was supported by the National Research

Council (provided free parking) and the National Capital Commission (Memorial site upkeep).

The master of ceremony was Ian Englehart, son of Royal Rifles Veteran Harold Englehart. Live music for The Last Post / The Silence / The Lament / The Rouse was provided by bugler Charles Armstrong of the RCMP Pipes and Drums band, as well as two pipers from the Sons of Scotland Pipe Band, Donald Macdonald, and Bob Derry.

Derrill Henderson provided the Prayers and Benediction. The Acts of Remembrance were given by Julie Carver.



All of the 20 wreaths that were laid. (Photos by Gwen Englehart)

Mme. Mona Fortier MP laid a wreath on behalf of the Government of Canada, and Mr. Dawolu Saul laid a wreath on behalf of Veterans Affairs. It was an honour to have Master Sailor Justin Daoust lay a wreath on behalf of the Canadian

Armed Forces. Gail Angel laid a wreath on behalf of the Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association. Mr. Gerry Wharton laid a wreath on behalf of the Army, Navy & Air Force Veterans in Canada. Mr. Stephane Ouellette laid a wreath on behalf of the Merchant Navy Commemorative Theme Project. Mr. Dante Fortia laid a wreath on behalf of the War Amps. Mrs. Gail Angel laid a wreath on behalf of Debbie and Kevin Jiang in honour of the last surviving, 106 year old Hong Kong Veteran, Mr. Hormidas Fredette. Ten family wreaths were laid. One of these wreaths, laid by Julie Carver, his grandniece, was on behalf of an Indigenous member of 'C'

Force, Robert Blanchard, who was killed in Hong Kong. Mitzi Ross laid a wreath in memory of Gander.

Following the Memorial service, 28 attendees went to the Lord Elgin Hotel, Grill 41 for a luncheon.

The ceremony was Livestreamed and recorded via Facebook by Laura Scaffidi and can be found at [this link](#).

(More images may be found in our [Photo Gallery](#))

Robert Farquharson, Burma Veteran, at the Commemoration of the 75th Anniversary



Gail Angel

August 2015 marked the 70th anniversary of the end of the war in the Far East. The HKVCA and Veterans Affairs co-hosted a National Convention in Ottawa, and the Veterans of the Burma Squadrons

Association were invited. We were enriched by the additional attendance of 17 such veterans, one of whom was Mr. Robert Farquharson.

That year, the Commemoration Service was held at the National War Memorial, and Mr. Farquharson gave a short address. I found it riveting and I asked for a copy. He mailed it to me shortly thereafter, and I put it away for safekeeping until I could share it with everyone. As they say, better late than never. While going through some old papers, I found it! I was delighted to see it again. And now, I share it with you, exactly as it was written.

.....
Mr. Minister, members of the Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association, ladies and gentlemen, I am honoured to speak to you on this occasion and on behalf of 435-436 Burma Squadrons Association. I thank Veterans Affairs Canada and the Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association for making it possible.

It is appropriate that our two associations share this occasion, this celebration of the end of World War II, because we already share not only the fight against Japan, but also the questionable distinction of having been involved in a forgotten war.

The trouble is, Japan actually fought two wars, one called the Pacific War and the other known, if known at all, as the

Southeast Asia war. Thanks to the dramatic opening act at Pearl Harbour and the zeal of the American press, the Pacific War stole the show. Our war was simply overlooked, unjustly forgotten.

I want to spend just a minute now correcting that injustice.

Seventy minutes before the bombs dropped on Pearl, Japanese troops landed in force on the eastern shores of the Malayan peninsula and began the war in Southeast Asia.

Why?

Because Japan desperately needed oil, rubber and rice to carry on and complete its War against China and to feed its starving population at home. Malaya produced 90% of the world's rubber, the Dutch East Indies produced 60% of the world's oil, and Burma exported more rice than any other nation. The Southeast Asia campaign was not just a side-show — it was the main event and deserves to be recognized as such.

It's not just a matter of correcting the historical record. It is a matter of reminding Canada that 2500 young Canadians were sent into a Hong Kong trap and then endured four punishing years in Japanese POW camps; 550 of them died there. It's a matter of reminding Canada that 7 or 8 thousand young Canadians fought in Burma and more than 500 are still there.

The Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association is doing a good job in telling the story. Thank you for that. And with events such as this, Veterans Affairs is trying to do its part. But there is more to tell, and it is good when we tell it together. This weekend is a good beginning; may the work continue.

Thank you and God bless you all.



Bury Banner

Deborah Legg

Joel Barter, along with the Bury Historical & Heritage Society and the Town of Bury,

Quebec created banners for their town lamp posts remembering local volunteers of 'C' Force, Royal Rifles of Canada. Of the many from Bury and the Eastern Townships,

12 Banners were made to represent some of the men who volunteered from the area. There had been 32 volunteers in all from Bury.

Although the Banners are already on display, an official ceremony will be held in Bury on October 21st at 1pm;

Bury Historical Society
569 Rue Main
Bury, QC J0B 1J0

All are welcome to attend. The Banners will hang outside from May until November 11th, Remembrance Day and from November to May the Banners will hang in the Bury Historical Town Hall.

The following is the list of names sponsored to appear on the Banners:

- Leo, Lawrence and Raymond Ross (photo)

Volunteer update

Lori and Jim

All of the work done by HKVCA, whether it be projects, serving on the Board, newsletters, online activities such as Facebook or our websites, is all done by volunteers. Here is a **thank you** to some.

A huge shout out of THANK YOU to Judy Brown Giraldi, niece of Alfred Ernest ROWEN, RRC, for stepping up and helping find missing gravestones and information about our 'C' Force members. She even pulls in her friends to go to cemeteries to take pictures of missing gravestones.

Another huge thank you goes to Stephen, Elaine and Dan James, family of John Edward James, WG. They gave us our

Prairie Prose



Carol Hadley

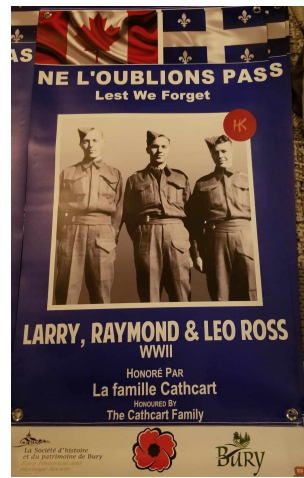
Greetings everyone

We sincerely hope that the summer has given you time to enjoy your family and friends with nice weather.



The Winnipeg Grenadier Cadets at Minto Armouries in Winnipeg held their Annual Inspection.

(Photo) Alex Taylor presenting the Hong Kong Veterans



- Ralph, Glen, James and Cpl. John Coleman
- Clifford Royea & James Royer
- Argyle and Edmund Harrison
- Howard Grey
- Earl Lasenba
- Allen Kelso
- Cpt. E. L. Hurd
- Elwin Herring

Facebook identities. They started us on our Facebook journey in 2007! And keep us moving today in our group: [Hong Kong Veterans Tribute](#), with members recently counted at over **1600** (yes, sixteen hundred, that is not a typo).



To our newsletter proofreaders Kathie, Barbara and Anne - your eagle-eyes create a better reader experience.

And, of course to those who submit articles, whether it be once in a while, or for each issue. There would be no newsletter without you.

Association - Most Efficient Cadet trophy to Cadet/Sergeant Eunice Leonardo of The Winnipeg Grenadiers Cadet Corps at their Annual Inspection on June 12, 2023.

On June 20, 2023 we dedicated the Dryden, ON plaque. The event was set up by zoom as we were unable to get there. Thank you to everyone who took part in arranging the event and attending in uniform even though the temperature was 38 C and there was no air conditioning in the building.

The HK flag flew at the Cenotaph in Winnipeg for the month of August.

We had a wonderful service for the 78th Anniversary of VJ Day at the Field of Honour at Brookside Cemetery and a reception at the Neil Bardal Centre with Dr. Jim Fergusson as the guest speaker. There were 90 people in



attendance including Marty Marantz, MP for Charleswood - St James - Assiniboia - Headingly; Métis Federation, Cabinet Minister John Fleury; VAC - Sarah Russel; Métis Veterans Legacy Program, Commissioner Alex

Maurice; Last Post Fund, President Matthew Halpin; Aboriginal Veterans, Shauna Mulligan; Provincial Command ANAVETS, Sheldon Clupp; ANAVETS #283, President Len Cook; CVMS, Terry McCharles; Portuguese Veterans, President Peter Correia; Prince Edward Legion #81, Judy McMillan; **Yvonne Still**, daughter of Joseph Oige, WG, HK veteran - all were wreath layers. The HKVCA wreath was laid by 3 generations of **Art Diehl's (WG) family - daughter Darlene Diehl, granddaughter Nicole Schiedel and her daughter Lyanna** with escort **Wayne Stebbe**, son of Larry Stebbe, WG.



As I had a personal commitment that prevented me from doing the whole service, **Stephanie Mitchell** presided over the service in the Field of Honour and did a marvellous job from all accounts. **Pam Heinrichs** spoke on the Métis Veterans Legacy funds and there will be a report elsewhere in the newsletter.

Thank you to our Piper – George Morrison and Bugler – Ray Vance for their services. Big thank you to **Eirik Bardal** (grandson of Njall Bardal WG HK veteran) for the use of his facility and Paddy Douglas for his assistance. Thank you to Padre **Rev. Canon Dr. Murray Still**, grandson of Joseph Oige, WG, HK veteran for the devotions and to the Colour Party, **Alex Taylor and Stan Lopata**. Many thanks to our members, family and

friends for coming, remembering and thanking our 'C' Force members for their sacrifices.

A beautiful brochure has been produced by Stephanie Mitchell, focusing on the various places in Winnipeg where commemorative information is located dedicated to the Winnipeg Grenadiers and 'C' Force. These are available from **Barry Mitchell**.

Kathie Carlson made this report of what occurred from August 11th to August 18th, 2023, to recognize VJ Day in Lethbridge, AB.



A flag raising of the HKVCA Commemorative flag occurred at 11 a.m. on August 11, 2023, at the City of Lethbridge Cenotaph. Joining our small group was **Cynthia Melanson** from Cardston, AB, daughter of Veteran Joe Michalkow, and her daughter **Alecia Melanson** from Rimbey, AB. A picture of HKVCA members holding the Hong Kong Veterans flag in front of the Banner display is included. The media were represented, so we did get a lengthy and informative article and picture in the Lethbridge Herald, and



Bridge City News provided television coverage of our event. The flag was up for a week.



On August 14th and 15th, the City Hall was lit up with red and green colours as seen in the photo.

On August 18th, we set up a display at our local General Stewart Legion Branch #4, from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. As



Fridays are their busiest days, we had many people ask questions while looking at the display, and picking up our resource booklets, as over 90 people attended that day. It proved to be very successful in enhancing

perceptions and knowledge of the Battle of Hong Kong.

Big thank you to Kathie, Cynthia and Alecia for the work you are doing in Alberta. With the 80th Anniversary fast approaching we hope to be expanding on the event of VJ Day. Let your executive know if you wish to be involved with any planning. We have other projects to be worked on if you have any time to give, please let us know. If you are in Winnipeg on the 2nd Thursday of the month we hold our monthly meetings at Smitty's Restaurant at 580 Pembina Hwy. at 11:30 am.

Ontario Offerings



Shelagh Purcell

We Celebrate the Two '100's'

Remember when it wasn't considered polite to ask a woman her age? Well, with the widows of Hong Kong Veterans, we've now found a second lady who celebrated her 100th birthday in June.

Barbara Hardy of Brockville, Ontario (Joseph Ralston Hardy, RRC) was honoured by members of her family on this special day despite being in Brockville General Hospital. In June, Barbara Hardy turned 100 and had family and friends to help enjoy the day. Unfortunately, Barbara had suffered a broken leg and so her birthday was marked by a return to the hospital for further treatment.

In an article in "The Recorder and Times", Mrs. Hardy is described as a longtime resident of Brockville, but she was born in the Gaspé region near New Carlisle, PQ. In wartime she joined the Canadian Women's Army Corps in 1942. She married her husband after his liberation from Hong Kong in 1945 and they went on to have a family of four children.

In our summer newsletter we mentioned Oda Barlow (Edwin Barlow, RCASC) happily celebrated her 100th birthday with family and friends in Picton Ontario. When contacted recently, Oda said she was fine and getting ready for a family wedding, more happy moments.

There may be more widows approaching the age of 100. But we won't know until we hear from their families. They deserve to be recognized too as survivors of the Hong Kong experience.

Irene Firlotte (Lawrence Firlotte RRC) is doing okay at 97 despite some speech difficulties resulting from her stroke, but she is being fitted for a new wheelchair so she can still get around happily.

Barry Fair (John Grey Fair RRC) discussed the situation of the exhibit at the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa and mentioned some ideas for changes. Something to follow up on.

Gloria Fortune (Herbert Fortune WG) is starting to feel better after a bout of shingles - her second bout. Her daughter Vicky and son Keith were interested in discussions about the Hong

Our thoughts and prayers go out to all who are experiencing the ravages of nature - take care, be safe. God bless all our members.

Kong story being told properly that 'C' Force didn't surrender, the British Governor did.

Mavis Martin (John Martin RRC) was happy to reconnect with some old friends at Saturday's gathering at the 'C' Force wall in Ottawa. She also brought Joanne Parkes to the gathering, a young woman she met after moving to her residence in Kemptonville. Joanne's father also served in Hong Kong (Walter Parkes RRC) and Joanne was able to meet other HK members.

Susan Ewing (Kenneth Ewing RRC) was at the Memorial Wall celebration with two family members and enjoyed the ceremony and the lunch. Meeting her friend Mavis Martin was important as both now live in Kemptonville.

Jean Killoran (John Killoran RRC) is doing okay and will celebrate her 96th birthday on September 4th.

Grace Thornton, Barbara Cunningham Drew, Jim Hurd, Donna Drimmie, Esther Jane Geraghty are all on my list to try to reach before our next newsletter.

Follow up to Ontario members- you received an email prior to Saturday August 12th ceremony at "The Wall". Mark and I spoke to attendees and discovered most had never seen the Hong Kong exhibit at the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa. (even those that lived in Ottawa). Let's consider this the start of our hope to see the story of 'C' Force told well at this National Museum. We'll carry on and keep you updated.

V-J Day in Markham

A V-J Day commemoration was held at the Markham, ON cenotaph on August 12. It was arranged by the Royal Hong Kong Regiment (The Volunteers) Ontario Association, the Hong Kong Ex-Servicemen's Association, and the Markham District Veterans Association. Speakers included the local MPP, MP, Deputy Mayor and Mike Babin. A group of cadets from the Central Ontario Area Cadet Activity Program – York Site, attended.

It was heartwarming to see so many attendees of Chinese heritage in attendance.



The event began in the rain, but by the end the sun was shining brightly!

Quebec Region Report



Lucette Mailloux Muir

Greetings everyone.

Hope you all enjoyed a beautiful summer in the good company of family and friends. Our prayers go out to all who were or are dealing with forest fires, heavy rain or floods.

As usual, summer is quieter, not much news to report. Many family members and friends gathered to pay their respect to our veterans on VJ Day or joined their local Legion for a commemorative ceremony. We Will Remember Them!

Announcements

Dues are Due

Not sure if you've paid your 2023 dues? Contact us at membership@hkvca.ca and we'll let you know.

Due to space limitations in this printed copy, some detail that appears in the online version has been omitted, and some photos cropped and resized.

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.

Want to contact us by mail? Here is our postal address:

HKVCA
Suite 164
1826 Robertson Road
Ottawa, ON K2H 1B9

Royal Canadian Military Institute



The Royal Canadian Military Institute hosted a dinner and presentation on June 14 focused on the Battle of Hong Kong. Mike Babin provided the background to the conflict, and Jon Reid spoke very movingly about his father, Dr John Reid, one of 'C' Force's medical officers.

Photo: L to R: Jon Reid, Eric Morse (RCMI), Mike Babin

We are resuming our activities with our meetings and contacts with members by giving them all local and national news available. A "Call for Membership Renewal" to members will be going out soon as well as "Birthday" and "Season Greetings".

Take care all and stay safe.