



# WASURERU-NAI "Never Forget"



## National Newsletter of the Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association Summer 2021 Edition

Editor: *Jim Trick*

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### President's Message



*Mike Babin*

By the time you read this, well over half of Canadians will have received their first COVID vaccination, with a great many having been jabbed twice. At long last we seem to be nearing the end of this drawn-out

ordeal. Woo hoo!!

#### Virtual Events

COVID has encouraged us to look at new ways of staying in touch. A good example is our Virtual Event Series. We've run three of these monthly events so far, with a fourth coming on June 21. Your feedback has been extremely positive, and so we plan to continue these at least through the end of this year, and perhaps beyond. Our aim has been to highlight stories and aspects of the Battle of Hong Kong that many of you may not be familiar with, and your post-event comments indicate that we are accomplishing that goal.

If you have not been able to attend these events, you haven't really missed them. We've recorded each one, and you can watch them on our [YouTube channel](#). Try it!

Make sure you attend our last summer event:

The HKVCA and the Royal Canadian Military Institute present the story of Canada's Nursing Sisters in the Battle of Hong Kong. The event will include a tour of the RCMI museum's extensive collection of military artifacts and its library and archives.



Join in to hear the fascinating story of Lt. Kay Christie and Lt Anna May Waters, and visit Canada's foremost institute promoting the study and discussion of military history, defence, security and international affairs.

### THE STORY OF CANADA'S NURSING SISTERS IN THE BATTLE OF HONG KONG

Monday, June 21  
7:00pm (ET)



Link:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/8416209952015/W\\_N\\_qNUHVf0OT6irXD32xASnEA](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/8416209952015/W_N_qNUHVf0OT6irXD32xASnEA)

Our fall event schedule will be in the next newsletter and published on our [HKVCA home page](#).

## Virtual Mapping Projects

Several exciting projects are underway to use the latest technology to bring the Battle of Hong Kong and the members of 'C' Force vividly to life. One of them is described in "The Passion Project" in this newsletter. Another project, which we hope will be unveiled late this year, will enable anyone to visit the battlefields in Hong Kong virtually, and to learn about how the battle unfolded and who was involved. You can see an example at this website: <https://map.project44.ca> which maps the Allied advance from D Day to VE Day. As interesting as these projects are to us as descendants of Hong Kong veterans, they are invaluable tools to teach the next generation of students about the Battle and what followed. With so few veterans still with us, this kind of technology will help to keep their experiences and sacrifices in the minds of Canadians.

## AGM

This year's Annual General Meeting will be on Tuesday, June 29 at 2pm ET. Details are in an insert to this newsletter. This year we are using Zoom so that you can see your HKVCA Board of Directors! Those without a computer will also be able to call a toll-free phone number to join in. Please plan to attend!

## V-J Day

Last year many of you held your own commemorations for V-J Day. Please consider doing the same again this year on August 15 at your local cenotaph, veterans' section of a cemetery, or another appropriate location. Send your photos and a brief write-up to [webmaster@hkvca.ca](mailto:webmaster@hkvca.ca) and we will publish them on our website and include a selection in the next newsletter. Read

## In Remembrance

### In Memoriam

Helen Prieston, widow of [Riley Prieston](#), Winnipeg Grenadiers, on 19 May 2021

## Online Updates



*Jim Trick*

### HKVCA Website Updates:

[Randy Steele's Story](#) - submitted by his son, Jason

## Web Statistics

Pam Newhouse's article elsewhere in this newsletter about our new lawn flag, and think about ordering one from your Regional Director for your own lawn!

## Pension Lawsuit Status

A couple of years ago, the Veterans' Ombudsman revealed that the government had made an error in veterans' pension calculations beginning in 2002. As a result, the pensions of some 250,000 veterans have been underpaid, likely including those of Hong Kong Veterans. The government says that as of January, around 100,000 of these errors had been corrected, and about \$77 million paid out to veterans and their families. Some of you have asked where this stands, and what you should be doing to receive the corrected pension amounts. No action should be necessary, as the government has said it is continuing to work through the list of veterans and will make the rest of these payments in time.

## Indigenous Veterans

'C' Force members came from all walks of life, faiths and ethnic backgrounds. Among them were a number of men of Indigenous heritage, whether First Nations, Métis or Inuit. The HKVCA wants to recognize these Indigenous peoples' contributions to Canada's military history. Please read Pam Heinrich's article in this newsletter for more information on what we are doing and why.

## Have a Great Summer!

With the likelihood of many Canadians being fully vaccinated in the next few months, the prospects for an enjoyable, family summer are good. Please be sure to continue to follow the government's advice to stay safe and have a super summer!

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

Google gives us a snapshot each month which goes into details on visits to our various sites including tidbits such as visit duration, popular pages, devices used and current country of the visitor. Here are some selected stats for the last month:

- Unique visitors: 1515
- Devices used:
  - Desktop: 60%

- Mobile: 35%
- Tablet: 5%
- Not surprisingly most of our visitors are from Canada, with the USA second, and Hong Kong third.

## Social Media

*From: Dan James*

Many of you may be wondering what happened to the Facebook page and why you were not seeing the birthdays and

announcements. Well, at the beginning of March, I was hacked, and my Facebook account was subsequently deactivated and deleted. When that happened, it also led to the Facebook page being deleted. After that I had to create a new Facebook page for the Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association.

Please like us again on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/hkvcaCanada/>

## Recognition Project

The HKVCA is pleased to announce a project to recognize our Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) veterans. This project is undertaken as a way for our Association to contribute to reconciliation with Canada's Indigenous peoples. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) defines reconciliation as the process of "establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in this country." The TRC went on to say that in order for reconciliation to happen in Canada, "there has to be awareness of the past, an acknowledgement of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behaviour." Through this project, we hope that the HKVCA hopes to attempt to do just that.



Pamela Poitras Heinrichs, HKVCA member and daughter of HK Vet/Winnipeg Grenadier [Ferdinand \(Fred\) Poitras](#), will be coordinating our efforts. Pam introduces herself and our plans below:

Hello everyone,

By way of introduction, I will do so in the traditional way, naming my families and homeland....

My name is Pamela Poitras Heinrichs. I am Métis, from the Métis Homeland of Red River, and I reside there to this day. My father and our Métis ancestors were from Red River. My grandmothers and grandfathers are from the Poitras, Beaugrand dit Champagne, Fisher, and Grant families. These families are some of the roots of the Métis people and all were involved in the fur trade, buffalo hunts, and the Red River Resistance. I am very excited to work on this project and provide you with the following information:

Indigenous Peoples in Canada have been involved in all aspects of Canada's military since World War I, including fighting on the front lines of every battle Canada has been

involved in. It is estimated that over 7,000 First Nations peoples served in WWI, WWII, and Korea. An unknown number of Métis and Inuit have also served.

The HKVCA wants to recognize and honour its Indigenous veterans. We are looking into ways to do this. Some examples of how this may be done are:

- Identification and recognition on our website
- Identification and recognition in our educational materials
- Featured articles/stories on our website and/or in our newsletters

To begin, we need to identify our Indigenous veterans. As the records do not indicate if a veteran is Indigenous, and as we do not have contact with all HK families, we are asking for your help. If you know of a First Nations, Métis, or Inuit HK vet or if your family's veteran is First Nations, Métis or Inuit, and should you feel comfortable doing so, please let us know. We will then follow up on any information received. At this point, we are looking for the following details:

- the name of the veteran
- if the veteran is First Nations, Metis, or Inuit
- your contact details

Once we receive your information we will contact you to discuss the project. Your information, or any questions you may have, please use the **Contact Us** button on our website or send by regular mail to HKVCA Suite 164, 1826 Robertson Road, Ottawa, ON K2H 1B9.

Our work is in the very beginning stages. Updates will be provided as we gather information and move forward with development. Thank you in advance for providing your assistance, and I look forward to working on this project!

## The Passion Project



*Hope Hinchey*

Hello, my name is Hope Hinchey, and I am a student at Balmoral Hall School in Winnipeg. I am completing an individual passion project for school concerning the Battle of

Hong Kong. Exploring the website, I was happy to learn how the HKVCA continues to spread awareness about this significant battle and the valiant grenadiers and officers who fought and sacrificed their lives for our country. I believe it is extremely important that Canadians recognize the sacrifices these young men made for our country, and the hardships they faced not only in the POW camps, but also when they were repatriated to Canada. I was interested in the

geographical features in Manitoba that were named after the deceased from the Winnipeg Grenadiers regiment. However, I could not find a digital version of a map marking the commemorative features. Consequently, I decided to create a [digital map on Google Earth](#) that displays every commemorative geographical feature named after deceased grenadiers from 1941-1945. If you click on one, it displays information about the individual, their commemorative feature, and their picture.

*(More info can be found in Carol's Prairie Report below)*

## Sgt Gander Project - Update



*J P Bear*

I wanted to pass on to you how things on the "Gander Film" front are going:

I have been watching the monthly HKVCA virtual events and find them very interesting. After watching the latest one with Craig

Mitchell, I asked him questions in regards to the possibility of finding Gander's collar. He said since the temperatures are going up more, they won't be going out to search, but they will work on research in the libraries till the temps cool.

I sent a question to Professor Kwong Chi Man, Professor at the Hong Kong Baptist University, regarding if there was any idea as to the road where Gander's body laid in the morning of December 19th, and where 'C' Company of the Royal Rifles of Canada were at during December 18/19th?

He wrote me:

"The short answer to your question is yes, the company fought along what is now the northern section of Tai Tam Road. In fact, we are finishing an interactive map of the battle and I can show you some of the screenshots of the whereabouts of the 'C' Company if you are interested!"

"We also tried to locate Gander as an entry of the "Faces of War" part of our interactive map and we located its story along the road too. In fact, the story is quite well known in HK!"

I am passing this information on to Craig, so he can see if his team can locate this area where the unit was, and where Gander's body might have ended.

Adding to some of my excitement, I am working with Canadian Director/Producer, Andrew Wall, whose team is helping me with grants that can help with the production monies for the film. In fact, he is having an Illustrator to assist

the making of a film using Illustrations, Interviews and Re-enactments to tell Gander's story and the Battle of Hong Kong...

Well, I am just so glad that things are moving, and with the help of so many good and dedicated people, who knows, maybe we will have a "finished product" to show at next year's Reunion/Convention...

I would like to also mention how honoured I am to have the many friends in the HKVCA and to mention how much respect I have for All! I especially would like to mention Mitzi Ross and her husband, Alan Sandeman... As you probably know he performs the song, "We Are Canadian" and they were so kind to send me the music, without the video, so I could put it on my I-Pod for me to listen to in my car.

In preparation for the US Memorial Day holiday, May 31st, I asked my Pastor if I could read the poem written by LTC John McRae, "In Flanders Fields". When I was young, my father was the Parade Marshall of our hometown's Memorial Day Parade, and he made it a point to always have the poem read at the ceremonies.

Being raised hearing that poem, I want to take a moment to not just say, "Thank You for Your Service" to all Veterans, but, because I am a Vietnam Veteran, I want to say, "WELCOME HOME" to all the Battle of Hong Kong Veterans for as it is said:

"ALL GAVE SOME.... AND SOME GAVE ALL"

Please Stay Safe and know, I am staying the course to get "Their Story" told...

JP Bear

## Gravestone Markers



*Lori Atkinson Smith*

Have you considered the purchase of a unique gravestone marker to honour your Hong Kong veterans' gravestone?

The creation of the Gravestone Marker is based on the shoulder flash the Canadian government gave our veterans as they returned from Hong Kong in 1945. This shoulder flash can only be worn by a Hong Kong veteran. For this reason alone, the Gravestone Marker is unique.



Check this picture out. Don't you agree the red brass HK of the gravestone marker makes these 2 gravestones stand out?

You can order from 'our' store here- <https://www.hkvca.ca/store/index.php> or mail to HKVCA, P.O. Box 381, WINNIPEG, MB R3C 2H6

\$75.00 each. Postage included. The 3" cast metal disc comes with instructions to affix to

the headstone, and a registration form

## Follow up on Memorial (Silver) Cross by Derrill Henderson

Last newsletter- Spring 2021- we told a delightful story of lost and found pertaining to a Memorial Cross. Did you know our Hong Kong vets may qualify for it?



If any family member is interested in it, it must be a direct family member.

It officially is restricted to Mother; Father; eldest living sibling, (in that order), but I understand they are now considering grandchildren. Veterans Affairs will handle the cases on a case-by-case basis.

The following documentation is

required:

### Veteran Information

Full name  
Date of birth  
Date of death  
Service number  
CSDN ID or VAC File number (if applicable)  
Medical certificate of death

### Applicant information

Name  
Phone number  
Relationship to the Veteran

If you are interested in the possibility of receiving the cross, each case will be looked at as it arrives. Email me at [derrill2021@gmail.com](mailto:derrill2021@gmail.com)

## Prairie Prose



*Carol Hadley*

The Prairie Region has had some unusual weather the last few months with snow, drought conditions, fires and occasional sunshine, but hopefully summer will come soon and we can enjoy some time

outdoors. Due to the health restrictions in Manitoba, we cannot meet in person but things are opening up in other provinces to celebrate events. Enjoy!!

Happy Birthday greetings were sent to George Peterson on his 100th birthday on February 8. We also celebrated birthdays for:

Eugene Lapointe on Jan 16, 2021 who turned 97 years young;  
Phil Doddridge on April 2, 2021 who turned 99 years young;  
Hormidas Fredette on April 11, 2021 who turned 105 years young;

And to George McDonell on August 5, 2021 who will turn 99 years young.

We were saddened to hear of the passing of **Helen Prieston**, widow of Riley Prieston WG, and mother of Judy Preston, on May 19, 2021. Helen and Judy have been great supporters of the HKVCA and all veterans. We appreciate their efforts.

The HKVCA Board of Directors meet monthly, and are working on ways to recognize the “80th Anniversary” of the Battle of Hong Kong. There will be an update in this newsletter for you to review with everything that is current in the HKVCA across Canada, but current information is always available on the website ([www.hkvca.ca](http://www.hkvca.ca)).

Hopefully, you have your dues paid up so you can attend the **Annual General Meeting on June 29th, 2021** at 2 pm ET (1 p.m. in Manitoba and 12 noon in Saskatchewan and Alberta) if not, you may pay them online or contact Barry Mitchell as soon as possible.

As part of the “80th Anniversary” of the Battle of Hong Kong, the Association has arranged for virtual presentations with time for questions and answers, on aspects of the action and the effects on the Canadians that were prisoners of war. At each presentation, we have had over 150 people view and participate, who have said they were informative and educational. Please refer to our website to see what has been presented to date and to learn of the upcoming events.

**Education:** The students that attend the Red River Heritage Fair, which is held at the beginning of May, is not happening this year. We are usually a presence at these events but this year they will be virtual with the individual schools.

I was invited to attend a presentation by a grade 10 Balmoral Hall student, Hope Hinchey, who has spent this past year researching the 250 Canadians who were killed or died in Hong Kong, and who has a geographical place in their name in Manitoba. She also incorporated this information into Google Earth with a poppy placed at the geographical place. In her

## Ontario Offerings



*Sandy Strom, (Daughter of Augustin Cyr, RRC and niece of Clement, Leo and Wilmer Cyr, RRC).*

I am the newest volunteer news correspondent for HKVCA Ontario Region. My two sisters Jackie, Linda and I have been involved in HKVCA for many years. One of our favorite parts was when we manned the information table for over five years at the annual OSSTF History teacher conferences in the Niagara and Toronto regions, and truly enjoyed sharing the history and also enjoyed spending sister time together.



*Pam Newhouse, West Central Ontario Rep.*

As I write this, at last we can see light at the end of the Covid tunnel! Hopefully, life will be back to normal in the fall.

presentation, when you click on a poppy, the name and picture, if available, comes up and the story of the person. It is such a wonderful asset for our members, teachers, students and anyone researching or looking for a family member. I have her permission to put this on our website.

I was impressed with her knowledge and her deportment as she presented her project. Not only did she learn more about the Battle of Hong Kong and the Canadians that were sent there, but by putting all the pieces together, it was a tremendous learning experience for her. The link for her project is <https://jetnjag70.wixsite.com/my-site-1>.

We invite any family member or friend of the members of ‘C’ Force to review the information that we have on our website and add to it with a picture, family history or write a short story to give us more insight into the amazing Canadians. You can do this by visiting our website – [www.hkvca.ca](http://www.hkvca.ca), selecting the **Contact Us** button found at the top of any page, and filling in the form.

Another HKVCA project we would like to initiate nationally is to recognize our Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) veterans. To do this we require the assistance of our members, families and friends, if they are comfortable doing so, to supply information on their ‘C’ Force member. We are pleased to have Pam Heinrichs (daughter of Fred Poitras) to coordinate this project. She will be introduced in a separate article and give you an outline of this project. As she is from a Métis family, she has some insight into the issues that others experienced.

Just a quick announcement that I am waiting until May or June of 2022 to hold my next HKVCA luncheon at the Burlington, Ontario Legion.



I have included a photo of the new HKVCA lawn sign that I ordered from Lori Atkinson Smith. I think it looks great in my garden, especially with my Canadian flag. So far, 3 neighbours have asked about its significance, so I've been able to tell our veterans' story, so it's also an educational tool! (Note: “Contact your Regional Director if you would like to order a sign”)

Let's hope we can have a fairly normal summer, even if it is just the later months before vaccinations make our local and international world safe enough to physically be with our loved ones, back to our jobs and favourite activities.



*Shelagh Purcell Eastern Ontario Rep.*

Eighty years ago in 1941, Canada sent 1,975 men to Hong Kong to help protect the British Colony from the Japanese. Members of HKVCA know the story well.

With lots of time to think during the “Ontario lockdown” I began to wonder how many children were left behind when the Dads left Canada. My sister was 7 years old and I was 2 when our father (Leonard Corrigan WG) was taken as a Prisoner of War.

My survey was very limited and many of the widows I spoke to were married after the war (listed below).

Esther Jane Geraghty (Donald Geraghty, RRC)

Jean Killoran (John Killoran, RRC)

Mrs. Nugent (William Nugent, WG)

Dorothy Sauson (Oliver Ray Sauson, RRC)

Yvonne Southworth (Donald Southworth, RRC)

Margaret MacDonald (Allison MacDonald, RRC)

Barry Fair, (John Gray Fair, RRC) recalled family connections to Hong Kong Veterans, but found it difficult to say how many children were affected.

Jim Hurd (Edmond Lionel Hurd, RRC) was also 2 years old in 1941 and had two brothers, 1 year old, leaving three children in his family when his father went to Hong Kong.

There must be all kinds of stories not yet told about those years, 1941 to 1945.



## Quebec Region Report

*Lucette Mailloux Muir*

Greetings from Québec Region. For months, everyone has been living with many health restrictions and confinement. Hopefully, we will return to a more normal life soon.

Things are quiet and we hold virtual meetings. We stay in touch with our members by email, by post or by phone.

So far this year we welcomed three (3) new members to our Hong Kong Family. Welcome and Thank You for your support.

We invite and encourage our members to take a moment to honour our Veterans for the” 80th Anniversary” of the Battle of Hong Kong.

In early May, I attended a virtual Change of Command Ceremony for Les Voltigeurs de Québec. It was a very nice but brief ceremony due to the health restrictions.

Congratulations were made to the incoming Commander Lt.Col Bernard Pettigrew.

Take care and stay safe.



## From Our “InBox”



### Medals

James Downey contacted us, as he has acquired a medal group originally belonging to a Hong Kong veteran, and is asking for our help in identifying the original recipient. Note the Coronation Medal (1953) and Centennial Medal (1967). James acquired it on eBay from a seller in Quebec who found it at a flea market. If you can help, please visit our website and fill in the “**Contact Us**” form.

### Memory Project

An initiative of Historica Canada, the [Memory Project](#) is a volunteer speakers bureau that arranges for past and present members of the

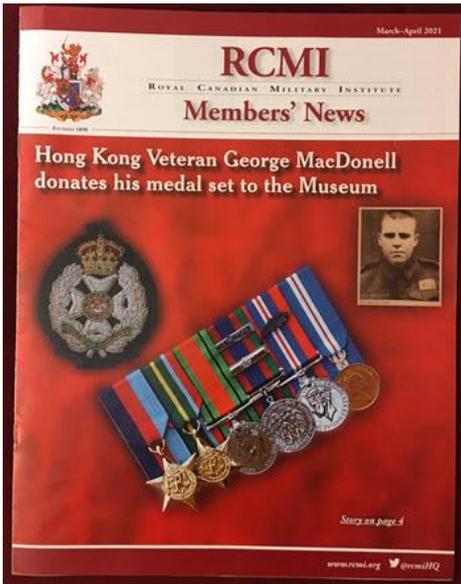
Canadian Armed Forces to share their stories of military service with school and community groups across the country. The program operates year-round, and our speakers have reached more than 3 million Canadians since we started in 2001.

We are looking for new speakers to join our team, and we hope that you might help us get the word to potential speakers.

Every story matters. Help us help veterans bring military history to life for Canadians.

Best regards,

Katharine and the Memory Project team



**George MacDonell’s Medals**

Received from Sue Beard: Hong Kong Veteran [George MacDonell](#) is donating his medal set to the Royal Canadian Military Institute. We hope to provide a link to the story when received.

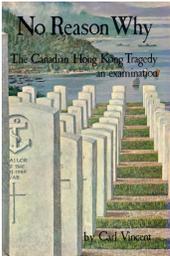
**A Photo Tribute to FEPOWs**

From FEPOW Gallery: We are collecting photos of Far East prisoners of war/internees (of all nationalities) as a tribute to all the men, women and children who suffered so much. We are aiming to collect 1000 photos for VJ Day, 15th August, so if your relative was a FEPOW/internee, please join our group and post their photo with brief details of their service.’ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/511536153140001>. Photos may also be sent to [fepowgallery@outlook.com](mailto:fepowgallery@outlook.com) and we can be found on twitter @FepowGallery.



**Announcements**

**“No Reason Why”**



– by Carl Vincent. This book, of which we have a limited number of copies, has been called the best book written about Canada's involvement in the defence of Hong Kong. It covers the background of the regiments; the politics involved; the battle; years of imprisonment; and the return to Canada. No

library on the subject on Hong Kong is complete without this book!

Ordering details below.

**Hong Kong Veterans Merchandise**

*Barry Mitchell*

- Lapel Pin.....\$5.00
- License Plate Holder (front plate).....\$5.00
- Gravestone Marker.....\$75.00

- Winnipeg Grenadier Tie.....\$20.00
- DVD—Slaves of the Rising Sun.....\$10.00
- Golf Shirt—Large or XL.....\$20.00
- Flag.....\$100.00
- Postage Stamps—sheet of 50.....\$65.00

**Books**

- No Reason Why..... \$20.00
- From Jamaica to Japan.....\$20.00
- 17 Days Until Christmas.....\$20.00
- Where Life & Death Hold Hands.....\$20.00
- One Soldier’s Story.....\$20.00

To order send cheque to

HKVCA, P.O. Box 381, Winnipeg MB R3C 2H6

Want more books? Visit our [Suggested Reading Page](#).

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.