

3-29-2018

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Recommended Citation

Sweeney, Mark (2018) ““Representing Canadian Interests in all Matters Relative to Canadian War Dead:” Lt. Col. J.A. Bailie and the Recovery, Concentration and Burial of the “C” Force Casualties in Japan and Hong Kong,” *Canadian Military History*: Vol. 27 : Iss. 1 , Article 14.

Available at: <http://scholars.wlu.ca/cmh/vol27/iss1/14>

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“Representing Canadian Interests in all Matters Relative to Canadian War Dead”

Lt. Col. J.A. Bailie and the Recovery,
Concentration and Burial of the “C” Force
Casualties in Japan and Hong Kong

MARK SWEENEY

Abstract: The processes and rituals of grieving, memorializing and remembering a nation’s war dead are well known, while the project of recovering, concentrating and preparing wartime casualties for burial is less clearly understood. The task of burying the Canadian war dead in the Pacific fell to one individual, former POW, Lt. Col. J.A. Bailie. This paper investigates Bailie’s experience that began with his POW journals and ended with the consecration of the Yokohama and Sai Wan Military Cemeteries in Japan and Hong Kong. Bailie’s efforts and the relationships he developed with Canada’s allies heralded successful results, despite meagre resources and support.

AS AN HISTORICAL and civic community, we are familiar with the processes and rituals surrounding the interment of soldiers in sacred spaces and the process of grieving, commemorating and remembering a nation’s war dead. From a Canadian perspective, memorialisation of wartime contributions at places like Vimy Ridge or centered around conflicts like the War of 1812 are omnipresent as anniversaries pass. However, the task of recovering, concentrating and

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preparing wartime casualties for burial is less frequently discussed.¹ Following the end of the Pacific War, one individual was assigned to advocate, investigate, and concentrate all Canadian remains and oversee their preparation and re-interment. Lt. Col. John Albert Bailie's involvement, and the lack of support and resources mobilized for the matter by the Canadian government reflects the broader trend of Canada making symbolic gestures to assist the British in maintaining their colonial holdings while keeping diplomatic focus squared firmly toward Europe.² Bailie's individual effort and the relationships he developed with recovery teams from Australia, Britain, and the United States heralded successful results, despite a lack of resources and support from the Canadian government.

Although there were units of war graves personnel deployed across former battle zones following the end of hostilities in 1945, the task of advocating, indexing, investigating, organising, identifying and overseeing the process of recovering and burying Canadian war dead in the Pacific fell solely on the shoulders of Bailie, a former Hong Kong prisoner of war (POW). Initially, these responsibilities landed with Canada's partners who had occupation forces in the region, and Bailie was sent in late to ensure that the solemn project closed out properly. Bailie's experience as a Hong Kong POW gave him the intimate knowledge to carry out his orders, while the practice itself, or rather the way he diligently carried out his work, suggests the

¹ While there is a considerable amount of scholarship pertaining to the burial and commemoration of the First World War dead, there is gap when we try to uncover the process used following the Second World War. Some useful examples include: T.A. Edwin Gibson and G. Kingsley Ward, *Courage Remembered: The Story Behind the Construction and Maintenance of the Commonwealth's Military Cemeteries and Memorials of the Wars of 1914-1918 and 1939-1945* (London: HMSO, 1995); *Canada and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (Maidenhead, Eng.: Commonwealth War Graves Commission, 2000); and Julie Summers, *Remembered: The History of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (London: Merrell Publishers, 2007). For a useful discussion of the American recovery effort for the Korean War see Bradley Lynn Coleman, "Recovering the Korean War Dead: Graves Registration, Forensic Anthropology, and Wartime Memorialization," *The Journal of Military History* 72 (January 2008), 179-222.

² For the decision to send Canadian troops to Hong Kong, see Galen Roger Perras, "Our Position in the Far East would be Stronger without this Unsatisfactory Commitment": Britain and the Reinforcement of Hong Kong, 1941," *Canadian Journal of History* 30, 2 (August 1995), 231-59; Paul Dickson, "Crerar and the Decision to Garrison Hong Kong," *Canadian Military History* 3, 1 (1994), 97-110; Timothy Wilford, *Canada's Road to the Pacific War: Intelligence, Strategy, and the Far East Crisis* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2011).

importance he placed on providing a proper burial and ceremony for his fallen comrades.³

Major (later Lieutenant Colonel) John Albert Bailie served with C Company Headquarters of the 1st Battalion, Winnipeg Grenadiers in Hong Kong, and was Company Commander of E2 of West Brigade during the attack on Hong Kong.⁴ Bailie was taken POW in December 1941 and was interned at the various camps around Hong Kong Island and Kowloon including Sham Shui Po, North Point, and Argyle Street camps.⁵ While under captivity, Bailie maintained a cache of information about Canadian casualties with particular detail about the deaths of POWs in the North Point and Sham Shui Po camps. The understanding of what had happened to the Hong Kong and Japan POWs was murky during the war due to sparse communication from Japanese authorities about the survival and well-being of the Canadian troops. Upon liberation, Bailie submitted a report to the Canadian government that was “the first intimate picture of the situation.”⁶

Lacking an occupation force in the Pacific or a sizeable troop presence, Canada did not have representation when Allied War Graves units began their work in Japan and Hong Kong in the

³ Bailie was one of a small handful of “C” Force veterans who returned to their original sites of internment in service of the Canadian government shortly after liberation. Sgt. Majors Harold Shepherd (Royal Rifles of Canada) and Robert Manchester (Winnipeg Grenadiers) served as a part of the Canadian War Crimes Liaison Detachment – Far East, assisting with investigative and administrative work and acting as witnesses during trials connected to the camps in which they were held (Omine and Niigata respectively). Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps officers Major S.M. Banfill and Lt. Col. John N.B. Crawford were both medical officers in the Hong Kong POW camps were brought in as witnesses at the Hong Kong War Crimes Trials.

⁴ The National Archives (United Kingdom) [hereafter NA], War Office [hereafter WO] 235/1015, Shoji Toshishige Trial [hereafter *Shoji Trial*], 67. For a more detailed discussion on the operational military history of the Canadian “C” Force in Hong Kong see such staples in the field as: Terry Copp, “The Defence of Hong Kong, December 1941,” *Canadian Military History* 10, 4 (2001), 5-20; C.P. Stacey, *Six Years of War: The Army in Canada, Britain and the Pacific, Vol. 1: Official History of the Canadian Army in the Second World War* (Ottawa: Queen’s Printer, 1957), particularly chapter 14; and Tony Banham, *Not the Slightest Chance: The Defence of Hong Kong, 1941* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2003).

⁵ NA, WO 235/1012, Pt. 1, Tokunaga Isao, Saito Shunkichi, Tanaka Hitochi, Tsutada Itsuo and Harada Jotaro Trial [hereafter *Tokunaga et al Trial*], 238.

⁶ Directorate of History and Heritage [hereafter DHH], 593.013 (D10), Lt.-Col J.A. Bailie, Report on Canadian War Graves – Pacific Theatre, d 1947, 2 [hereafter Report on Canadian War Graves].

immediate aftermath of the war. Canada had made a commitment late in the war to prepare and send troops to the Pacific in the form of the Canadian Army Pacific Force, but the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki precluded extended Canadian involvement.⁷ Similarly, with a prior commitment to the occupation of Germany, Canadian officials opted not to engage Canadian troops in the occupation of Japan, but did participate first in the Far Eastern Advisory Commission and later the Far Eastern Commission, a multinational supervisory and policy creation body that worked to see that Japan fulfilled the terms of surrender.⁸ Given the uncertainty and logistical complications of registering and organising Canadian casualties from afar, Bailie was identified and selected by the Department of National Defence as the officer “in an official capacity representing Canadian interests in all matters relative to Canadian war dead.”⁹ Bailie was selected based upon his “detailed knowledge of the subject,” and arrived in Yokohama, Japan on 25 September 1946.¹⁰

The military authority, Land Forces, Hong Kong, requested Canadian support as early as July 1946, seeking the assistance of Canadian Major J.T. Loranger, one of the judges at the Hong Kong War Crimes Court. The expectation was he could liaise on behalf of Canadian interests alongside the British War Graves Unit working in Hong Kong. The Canadian war crimes prosecutor, Major George Beverly Puddicombe had already been providing British authorities with pertinent information and they hoped that a Canadian representative might assist with identifications. Concerns with

⁷ Stacey, *Six Years of War*, 512-19.

⁸ John Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999), 300, 363. For an in-depth discussion of the Canadian role in the Far Eastern Commission and the developmental stages, please see Keith Webster, “Canada and the Far Eastern Commission,” (MA Thesis: University of Victoria, 2007), 25-36.

⁹ Report on Canadian War Graves, 2.

¹⁰ Ibid. In an article entitled “Tokyo-Bound” the *Winnipeg Free Press* reported that Bailie had departed for Japan via Seattle on 12 September 1946 to “begin a survey of war graves of Canadians killed in the far east.” *Winnipeg Free Press*, 18 September 1946.

impartiality in the courtroom precluded Loranger's involvement, but he did receive and maintain records of Bailie's work.¹¹

As with many other wartime and postwar issues in the Pacific theatre, Canadians had limited input in the development of policy and planning for the Commonwealth War Graves program, and sought involvement once matters had already been initiated. Canadian interests in the project rested with Bailie, as the Canadian war graves effort in Europe tied up significant manpower, while the Commonwealth and American programs in the Pacific were large and firmly established.¹² Bailie drew on the members of the Canadian War Crimes Liaison Detachment – Far East in Japan and Hong Kong for support on the ground. His accomplishments had far more to do with his commitment to the preservation of his comrades' memory and his own character traits than any organized, focused plan emanating from Ottawa.

Reassigning the final resting places of Canadians killed at the battle of Hong Kong and during captivity from hasty and often mass burial sites near battlefields, POW camps and worksites in Hong Kong and Japan required considerable research, collection, and advocacy. The British Commonwealth War Cemetery in Yokohama, Japan and the Sai Wan and Stanley Military Cemeteries in Hong Kong were the eventual results of a long process of planning, organising, and developing sites on paper and as landscape architecture and memorial projects. Bailie's contribution involved a relatively straightforward venture in Japan helping prepare for the reburial of Canadian remains at the British Commonwealth War Cemetery, and a much more onerous and ultimately less successful effort at Hong Kong, locating and concentrating Canadian remains for burial at the slowly constructed Sai Wan Military Cemetery. His work was drawn out and required considerable investigation and the navigation of the administrative pathways of various military occupations. His term abroad can be divided into two distinct periods: his initial and efficient work in Japan from September until December 1946, and

¹¹ Library and Archives Canada [hereafter LAC] MG 30, E 567, G. B. Puddicombe fonds [hereafter Puddicombe fonds], Vol. 1-2, Lt. Col. Oscar Orr to Secretary Department of National Defence, 30 July 1946. For Loranger's records see DHH, J.T. Loranger fonds, 2004/63, Series 1-2 – War Graves.

¹² For a discussion of the initial European concentration and reconstruction work see Ward and Gibson, *Courage Remembered*, 58-63.

then his toil and frustration in Hong Kong from December until his eventual return to Canada in August 1947.

Commonwealth War Grave work in the Pacific was overseen by the Australian and British forces. The Australian program covered the South Pacific, Northern China, Korea, Manchuria, and worked closely with the American 8th Army in Japan. British authorities oversaw Burma, Malaya, Indo-China, the East Indies and Southern China.¹³ This division of territory put Bailie in conjunction with both parties, and his effort and the relationships he developed with recovery teams from Australia, the United States, and Britain heralded successful results, despite his operating largely on his own without tremendous resources or a network of support.

BRITISH COMMONWEALTH WAR CEMETERY, JAPAN

Bailie had a great deal of success and an almost perfect return on his responsibility of recovering and concentrating deceased Canadian soldiers in Japan. The POWs who died in Japan were largely accounted for. Their deaths were typically recorded by camp staff and reported to the POW Information Bureau in Tokyo, noted in concealed POW diaries and later recalled in affidavits, and their remains were often interred and marked near the camp sites. The majority of Canadians taken to Japan during the Pacific War had been brought from Hong Kong as a source of labour as the demands of the war drained the Japanese labour force. Four drafts of Canadian POWs were shipped to Japan between 19 January 1943 and 29 April 1944, consisting of 1184 POWs.¹⁴ Deaths were typically isolated, and the result of medical problems and malnutrition, injuries from physical abuse causing death, and industrial or labour-related accidents.¹⁵

This was the case with the Omine POW camp near Fukuoka, Kyushu, where 163 Canadian POWs were shipped in January 1943. Under the supervision of the Imperial Japanese Army, the POWs were

¹³ Report on Canadian War Graves, 3.

¹⁴ Charles G. Roland, *Long Night's Journey into Day: Prisoners of War in Hong Kong and Japan, 1941-1945* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2001), 209-15.

¹⁵ Report on Canadian War Graves, 5. For an example of the record keeping of POWs, see LAC, MG 30, E 328, Frank William Ebdon fonds [hereafter Ebdon fonds], Vol. 1, File 1 - Diary.



P.O.W. Cemetery from Omine Camp [Geoff Tyson. 'The Last Phase' At Omine (Omine, Japan: G. Tyson, 1945)]

engaged in labour in the nearby coalmine operated by the Furakawa Mining Company. Of the 163 Canadian POWs, eleven died from malnourishment, illnesses, the results of physical abuse, poisoning or from accidents at the mine.¹⁶ Major John Dickey, a member of the Canadian War Crimes Liaison Detachment was investigating at the camp in May and June 1946 for three war crimes cases that he was preparing for prosecution at the Yokohama War Crimes Trials. At the end of one of his investigative trips, he noted in a letter home that he took a moment to visit the gravesite where

¹⁶ The Canadian POWs that died at Omine as recorded by Ebdon included: Murray, G.W. (RRC A-23153, RFM - 4-5-43), MacDonald, L. E (RRC- 30439, CQMS - 5-8-43), Savoy, E.J. (RRC, G-30318, RFM - 20-8-43), Wood, D.G. (RRC, E-30176, L/Cpl - 17-8-43), McKinley, S. (RRC, E-29981, RFM - 9-4-44), Chenell, W.R. (RRC, E-30381, RFM - 21-4-44), Fitzpatrick, C. (RRC, E-30684, RFM - 14-7-44), Campbell, R.W. (RRC, E30471, RFM - 14- 7-44), Blank, E.W. (RRC, E-30291, RFM - 28 - 1- 45), Chayboyer, D. (WG, H-41688, Pte. - 13-3-45), Bent, H.W. (RRC, F-40829, RFM - 7-9-45), and Cyr, C. E (RRC, -30414, RFM - 7-9-45). Ebdon fonds, Vol. 1, File 6, Notebook. Ebdon kept track of the deaths of all Canadians, and had a list of the eleven Royal Rifles of Canada that died at Omine in his notebook, as well as a note about the death of Chayboyer, a member of the Winnipeg Grenadiers.

the POWs had been buried.¹⁷ The remains of all eleven Canadians originally buried at Omine were later transferred to the Canadian section of the Commonwealth Cemetery in Yokohama and interred by the time Dickey attended the service that Bailie had organized in November 1946.

Bailie had orders to seek out 139 Canadian servicemen who had died in Japan. This figure included 137 POWs from “C” Force and two from the Royal Canadian Navy. By the time Bailie finished in Japan and departed for Hong Kong he had accounted for 137 Canadian personnel. One of the missing sets of remains had been mistakenly transferred to Labaun Cemetery in Malaysia, which Bailie tracked down through the Prisoner of War Information Bureau and the Australian War Graves Group. Although it was after he had departed, the missing Canadian was returned and buried alongside his comrades in the British Commonwealth War Cemetery on 26 July 1947.¹⁸ Bailie appears to have been pleased with the process and happy with an almost perfect recovery record in Japan, missing only one Canadian.

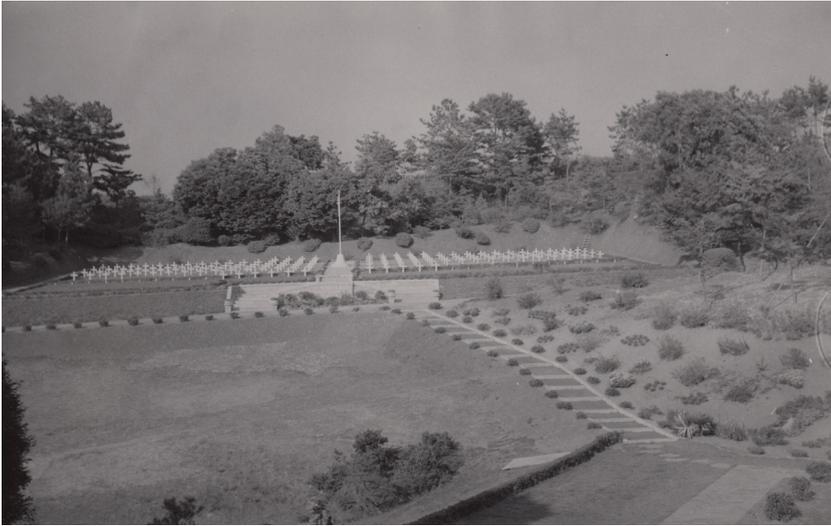
As a result of the regular reporting of POW deaths and the burial of the deceased at marked sites, all of the Canadian war dead in Japan had been recovered and brought to the United States Air Force (USAF) Mausoleum in Yokohama by the time that Bailie had arrived. The Australian Forces operated the war graves headquarters out of Yokohama and sent four operation and recovery units to various sites in Japan, Okinawa, Korea, and Manchuria with the goal of recovering and concentrating all deceased personnel from Australia, the United Kingdom, Canada, and India. Part of this high rate of registration was the result of an American policy that the Japanese turn over all Allied remains at the onset of the occupation.¹⁹

All of the Canadian casualties in Japan were concentrated at the USAF mausoleum, which operated in a converted bank. Bailie spoke highly of the site, and noted in his official report that it was supervised with an honour guard and featured the flags of all Allied nations with soldiers held there. As many deceased soldiers had been cremated by the Japanese, the facility had the capacity to manage the

¹⁷ The Army Museum, John Dickey Papers [hereafter Dickey Papers], 1999.6.1, John Dickey to Mrs. W.B. Wallace, 1 June 1946.

¹⁸ Report on Canadian War Graves, 5.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 3, 5.



Canadian Section – British Commonwealth War Cemetery. Hodogaya, Yokohama Japan. [DHH, 593.009 (D6), “C” Force Cemeteries – Hong Kong & Yokohama (2 Scrapbooks “Japan” & “Hong-Kong.”)]

volume of remains that were concentrated there. Ashes were placed in lacquered urns, indexed, and stored on shelves along the “‘Canadian Wall, Dutch Wall, Australian Wall’ etc.”²⁰ In Japan, Bailie’s role was mainly focused on matching numbers on nominal rolls and making sure all of the remains were properly identified, marked, and indexed.

The order for the construction of a British Commonwealth War Cemetery emanated from the British Commonwealth Occupation Force (BCOF) on 18 May 1946. The occupying force, the American 8th Army, procured a tract of land and the required funds from the Japanese government and began construction on 5 August 1946. The site was just outside Yokohama and was comprised of a former “Young Peoples Park” that totalled 60 acres. Construction on the site went smoothly and included “considerable cut and fill work to produce the surface,” the filling of a long disused pool and the construction of a sunken garden. The site featured a reception hall, a mortuary, paint shop, tool house, work shed, green house, as well as office space and living quarters for the war graves staff.²¹

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 4-5.

The design of the site included four sections, one each for British, Australian, and Indian troops, and a shared space for New Zealand and Canadian troops. Undertones in Bailie's writing suggest that he was displeased with the combination, but numbers predicated such a decision. A single flagpole adorned the end of the plot, of which Bailie noted, the Canadian and New Zealand ensigns were alternated daily. All of the Canadian remains that had been concentrated at the mausoleum were interred on 1 November 1946. Bailie was proud to report that the Canadians were reburied in the war cemetery with "full and correct detail of personnel concerned and the word CANADA is inscribed on the top of the upright with the colour patch of the force to which the deceased originally belonged also being shown on the lower part of the upright section."²²

When all of the site preparations were complete, Bailie organized a dual-denominational military service for the Canadians, who as POWs had not received the military burial service that "every Canadian soldier is entitled."²³ Bailie noted that he did not know the religious preference of all the personnel, and that all of the burial and reburial services had been conducted as Protestant last rites. Assuming at least some of the men were Roman Catholic, Bailie sought and received permission to have the service run dually, with the hope that "should the Department ever receive a query on the subject, it would be advisable to take the necessary action to reassure all concerned that everything possible had been done in the way of last rites for these personnel."²⁴

Bailie secured two chaplains, a bugler and firing party, had the Canadian Legation notify all Canadians in the area, and advertised the ceremony in *Pacific Stars and Stripes*.²⁵ Rather than decorate all 137 graves, Bailie coordinated a temporary monument so that wreaths could be laid during the service upon the Canadian flag adorned with a white cross labelled "Canadian Section." Bailie directed the service at which three wreaths were laid: Irene Norman, wife of Canadian Liaison Mission head Dr. Herbert Norman, laid a wreath on behalf of the reburied personnel's next of kin; Brigadier Henry G.

²² Ibid., 5-6.

²³ DHH, 593.013 (D14), Report on Reburial Service in CDN Section of Commonwealth War Cemetery, 6 Nov 46 [hereafter Report on Reburial Service], 1.

²⁴ Report on Reburial Service, 1.

²⁵ *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, 6 November 1946.



Overall Shot, Canadian Reburial Service, November 6th 1946 British Commonwealth War Cemetery, Yokohama Japan. [DHH, 593.013 (D14), Report on the Reburial Service in the CDN Section of Commonwealth War Cemetery at Yokohama on 6 Nov 46.]

Nolan, the senior officer present and Canadian representative for the International Military Tribunal for the Far East prosecution, laid another wreath on behalf of Canadians resident in Japan; and Bailie, as the only Hong Kong veteran present at the ceremony, laid a wreath on behalf of the reinterred “C” Force members. The ceremony closed with the Royal Welsh Fusiliers shooting a volley of rifle fire, followed by the Last Post and Reveille.²⁶

Although Bailie had hoped for better attendance at the ceremony, a heavy rain kept some of the crowd away. He was pleased, however, to report that even given the weather conditions and transportation problems, seventy-eight people attended including the “entire staffs of the Canadian Legation and the Canadian War Crimes Detachment... in addition to representatives from other services and Canadian

²⁶ Report on Reburial Service, 1. The ceremony was also reported on in the *South China Morning Post*, 16 February 1947 and the *Lethbridge Herald*, 7 January 1947.



Close up of wreaths placed on temporary monument, Canadian Section Br Commonwealth War Cemetery at [Canadian] Reburial Service 6 Nov 46.” Top Wreath laid by Mrs. Norman, right placed by Brig H.G. Norman, left by Lt. Col. J.A. Bailie. Cross marked “Canadian Section.” [DHH, 593.013 (D14), Report on the Reburial Service in the CDN Section of Commonwealth War Cemetery at Yokohama on 6 Nov 46]

Missionary Groups.”²⁷ Bailie later noted in a report that many of those present deemed the service to be “appropriate and fitting” and the arrangements “very satisfactory.”²⁸ One of the Canadian lawyers in the region serving as a prosecutor at the Yokohama War Crimes Trials noted that the “ceremony was carried out in quite inclement weather in the p.m.. There was quite a good attendance in spite of

²⁷ Report on Reburial Service, 2.

²⁸ Ibid.



Lt Col J A Bailie, Can War Graves (Pacific) representative, places wreath on temporary monument Canadian Section, British Commonwealth War Cemetery, on behalf of Officers, Warrant Officers, Non Commissioned Officers and Other Ranks of "C" Force during Canadian Reburial Service. 6 Nov 1946. [DHH, 593.013 (D14), Report on the Reburial Service in the CDN Section of Commonwealth War Cemetery at Yokohama on 6 Nov 46.]

some rain and much mud. The service was conducted by Protestant & R.C. Padres & was complete with firing party and bugler."²⁹

In his report, Bailie commented that the cemetery at Yokohama was "one of the best Commonwealth war cemeteries seen in the Pacific area."³⁰ He also emphasized the cooperative effort that the project required, particularly in Japan where the Americans loomed large, noting that although the Australians deserved credit for the layout and construction of the site, that the project and the concentration of

²⁹ Dickey Papers, Dickey to Mrs. W.B. Wallace, 7 November 1946.

³⁰ Report on Canadian War Graves, 6.

the remains could not have been possible without the resources and labour capacity of the Americans.

SAI WAN AND STANLEY MILITARY MEMETERIES, HONG KONG

The recovery operation at Hong Kong began almost immediately following the Japanese surrender, and without the use of casualty returns or burial reports, the War Graves teams managed a considerable number of recoveries. Bailie noted in his final report that:

the task of recovery, registration, identification and concentration of war dead in Hong Kong was, to say the least, most difficult. It is the considered opinion of widely experienced war graves experts that Hong Kong rates as one of the most difficult situations encountered in this war.³¹

It had been challenging for the Allies to cope with the initial war dead. In situations where they had been able to follow through with regular burial practices, the Japanese confiscated documents and identity discs at capitulation or later through the *Kempeitai*, which meant that bodies and temporary burial sites were challenging to locate or identify. When POWs later tried to recreate documents and maps from memory, the accuracy was of little help to war graves representatives.

Following capitulation, the Canadian POWs were repeatedly denied requests to go outside the compounds to serve as burial parties to identify and inter Canadian and other Allied remains. On the two occasions when the Japanese gave permission for small groups to go out they were not provided the additional information about missing personnel they requested.³² While serving as a witness at the Hong Kong War Crimes Courts, Hong Kong Volunteer Defence Corps member George Lemay described the state of the bodies that the men found on one of these parties. He noted that they:

³¹ Ibid., 8.

³² Ibid., 7.

went down to the bottom of this wall to bury these people. I am not sure of the exact number of the bodies lying around there, but I have a figure of 18 that seems to stick in my mind, it might have been less or more. We dug a hole quite close to the wall, I forget the exact distance, I think it was probably somewhere within 15 to 20 feet off the wall, and we started collecting these bodies and as we did not have any stretchers we carried them or dragged them to this grave that we had dug.³³

Even in these cases when the POWs had the opportunity to attend to the war dead, they often had to utilize mass graves, and were unable to keep official records about the exact location of the individuals or the sites.

The nature of the Hong Kong landscape and climate also added to the challenge of locating and identifying Canadian casualties. The Japanese troops only cleared areas that were immediately needed for the occupation, which led Bailie to believe that many of the Canadians that fell in those areas may have been disposed of in mass cremations, a practice that the Japanese used on their own war dead. Bailie and his contacts in the War Graves Units were unable to draw clear conclusions as to what the official Japanese policy was on dealing with Allied battle casualties, and suspected that there probably was not one in place.³⁴ As the POW and civilian internment community was rife with rumour and speculation during the war, there was a concern that funeral pyres were a practice in Hong Kong. But without the ability to leave the POW camps, Bailie had no way to confirm the suspicion. This suspicion would go a long way to explain the considerable number of missing Canadian remains at the end of Bailie's assignment in the region.

Building on Bailie's assumption that many of the Canadians had been mass cremated was the regular discovery of surface remains in the more remote areas of Hong Kong, with many of the bodies having lain where they fell nearly four years previous. This suggested that many of the remains elsewhere may have been disposed of promptly, but also provided another set of challenges. The incredible heat of a Hong Kong summer, mixed with the torrential volume of rain meant that many of these surface recoveries were found at extensive states

³³ NA, WO 235/1030, Tanaka Ryosaburo Trial [hereafter *Tanaka Trial*], 81.

³⁴ Report on Canadian War Graves, 7. The only recorded example of the Japanese recovering and reburial of a Canadian casualty was that of Brigadier J.K. Lawson.

of decomposition, further impeding the identification process. The volume of rain and severity of the slopes making up much of the landscape also meant that War Graves officers discovered remains that had collected en masse at the low-points of waterways far from known areas of combat. At these locations and other known burial sites, identification was further complicated by the concern of grave robbery and individuals “attempting to recover gold and amalgam fillings in teeth, and watches, gold rings or other articles of value to be found with remains.”³⁵ While these items offered value on the black market, their value in assisting war graves officers with identification was irreplaceable.

Before Bailie arrived in Hong Kong, Major George Beverly Puddicombe of the Canadian War Crimes Detachment made any of the records that he had accumulated in his investigations available to the British War Graves team. Affidavits from repatriated Canadian POWs provided leads to locations where someone may have died or been killed, and some of the documents led to the identification of remains.³⁶ Lt. Col. Oscar Orr, the overall head of the War Crimes Detachment, wrote to the Secretary at National Defence Headquarters in Ottawa addressing the problem that identification proved to be. He requested a nominal roll and any records created by POWs about when and where their comrades were killed to help the process. The British already had similar files for their own purposes.³⁷ Bailie’s approach benefitted from the documentary records provided by Puddicombe and the War Graves Unit, and he managed over 200 investigations and interrogations in Hong Kong, many generated from radio and newspaper advertisements in English and Chinese.³⁸

If the concentration and eventual interment of Canadian remains went smoothly at Yokohama, the process in Hong Kong was a near disaster. The regional Director of Graves Registration and Concentration from South-East Asia Command in Singapore had assessed the needs of Hong Kong in July 1946 and decided that half of the casualties should be buried at the already established Stanley Military Cemetery. The remaining casualties were to be

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 8.

³⁶ For example, Puddicombe’s investigation for the Tanaka Trial led to the discovery of remains in an abandoned well near Deep Water Bay. *Tanaka Trial*, 121 and Exhibit R1.

³⁷ Puddicombe fonds, Vol. 2-1, Orr to Secretary, DND, 13 May 1946.

³⁸ Report on Canadian War Graves, 12.



HK 45 Exhuming Canadian Remains from Stanley Military Cemetery for reburial in Sai Wan Military Cemetery, Canadian Section, Jun 1947. [Image DHH, 593.009 (D6), "C" Force Cemeteries – Hong Kong & Yokohama (2 Scrapbooks "Japan" & "Hong-Kong.")]

concentrated by occupation troops while a new site was constructed at Sai Wan, overlooking the Lye Mun Pass and Sai Wan Bay, which was approved in August 1946 and set to accommodate 1600 graves. Canadian intentions were to have all remains arranged at Sai Wan. When Bailie arrived in December 1946 he found that construction had not yet begun, nor was it likely to be completed within three months. In the meantime, a number of Canadian war dead had been exhumed from various sites and reinterred at Stanley Cemetery, bringing it to capacity.

While awaiting reburial, any of the remaining Canadian war dead, including those who Bailie had a role in locating and identifying and were temporarily concentrated as the "storage problem was solved by requisitioning 3 car garages in Broome Road, Happy Valley, and here, remains (which included Canadians) were wrapped in hessian [sic] and stacked pending completion of Sai Wan Cemetery."³⁹ Trying to move

³⁹ Ibid., 9

the process along, Bailie advocated for Canadian interests with the Director of Administration at Land Forces, Hong Kong, suggesting that the Canadian reburials be made a priority, that appropriate burial containers and a proper mortuary be made available, and that the occupation force make a commitment to the prompt completion of Sai Wan and concentration of all Canadian remains at the site. Bailie found the Director to be “generally unsympathetic,” although he made commitments about the concentration of Canadians and the construction of the cemetery. Bailie pared down his list and made another request to the Deputy Acting Director of Graves Registration and Concentration for proper containers for the Canadian war dead, which was denied citing a lack of funds.⁴⁰ Eventually Bailie secured funds from the Canadian Army Headquarters in Ottawa to purchase 300 locally made containers.

Bailie ensured all recovered Canadian war dead were placed in wooden crates stenciled with an identifying number. Although he could not secure a proper mortuary, he did have all the containers moved to the Lye Mun barracks where they could be stored under guard.⁴¹ As for preparations at Sai Wan, Bailie met with some of the senior members of the occupation force to discuss the delays and the repeated design alterations. He suggested moving the proposed cemetery from Sai Wan to Mount Nicholson to save construction requirements and cost and gained the ear of the Royal Engineers, the Deputy Assistant Quartermaster General, the Public Works Department and, unofficially, the Governor of Hong Kong. Although the Commander of the Corps of Royal Engineers agreed with Bailie after visiting Mount Nicholson, nothing could be done to secure the site.⁴²

Despite his best intentions and pursuit of less formal channels, Bailie does not appear to have been well aligned to influence military and civilian decision makers in Hong Kong. His meagre requests appear to have been routinely denied, either a result of a lack of funding or administrative will, while his more grandiose suggestions were not fruitful. Although he served his primary role to the best of his abilities, Canada’s comparatively paltry standing in the region meant he was a single voice among many.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 9



HK 47 Sorting coffins by serial number prior to reburial. Canadian mortuary; Lye Mun Bks. Hong Kong June 47. [DHH, 593.009 (D6), "C" Force Cemeteries – Hong Kong & Yokohama (2 Scrapbooks "Japan" & "Hong-Kong.")]

Work at the Sai Wan site recommenced with a third set of plans in January 1947. Construction was slow based on the lack of machinery available (one bulldozer) as well as a combination of inconsistent labour and inclement weather. As the site engineers continued to pass extensions for completion, Bailie approached the General Officer Commanding for personal help in prodding the project along. On 23 May 1946, the A/GOC toured the site and confirmed many of Bailie's complaints, including the collapse of an 80-foot section of a retaining wall. Following the site visit, the A/GOC committed to weekly site visits to hasten construction.⁴³ Complications continued as the site was excavated. In some areas blasting was required to open up burial spots as dense rock formations jutted up into the soil, and in other areas veins of decomposed granite caused instability.

The Canadian section of Sai Wan Cemetery was prepared for remains by 15 June 1947 and was completed in the span of one week.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 10.

Chinese labourers transferred the containers from Lye Mun Barracks to Sai Wan, where members of the War Graves Unit placed them in the ground, mounded the soil, and erected the crosses which had been prepared by Chinese sign painters.⁴⁴ Bailie had been able to account for a total of 293 out of an estimated 419 war dead at Hong Kong, and could only provide verified identifications for 191. This was largely because items like boots, buttons, badges and other identifying markers had decomposed or were missing, soldier's identity discs were either gone or had disintegrated, and in cases where dental records had been secured, identifications were rarely successful still. In total, 268 Canadians were interred at Sai Wan Military Cemetery, near where the Imperial Japanese Army's 229th Infantry Regiment crossed from near Devil's Peak on 18 December 1941. Twenty-five other registered Canadian deaths could not be exhumed and separated because of the nature of their original burial in mass graves. The nineteen Canadians concentrated at Stanley remained there because they were originally buried alongside a number of British personnel in a mass grave and could not be separated. Two other Canadians remained in the burial grounds at the Queen Mary Hospital along with a considerable number of civilian casualties.⁴⁵

As before, Bailie prepared a dual-denominational service that took place in the pouring rain. Over three inches fell during the ceremony which took place on Dominion Day in 1947 in front of about 300 people.⁴⁶ The Canadian congregation at the Sai Wan ceremony was smaller than that of Yokohama. This is partially because there were never more than a handful of Canadian officials in Hong Kong. Present at the ceremony were the two-member Hong Kong sub-Detachment of the Canadian War Crimes Liaison Detachment, one judge from the Hong Kong War Crimes Courts, and a handful of witnesses that travelled from Tokyo to Hong Kong and back for trials. Major Puddicombe, the Canadian prosecutor, had completed his responsibilities by May 1947 and had returned to Canada. Mrs.

⁴⁴ DHH, 593.009 (D6), "C" Force Cemeteries – Hong Kong & Yokohama (2 Scrapbooks "Japan" & "Hong Kong") and DHH, 593.009 (D2) Hong Kong – Illustrated Article on Sai Wan Cemetery.

⁴⁵ Report on Canadian War Graves, 10-11.

⁴⁶ Bailie noted in a scrapbook that the rain on the day of the ceremony broke a 26-year record for 24-hour rainfall levels at six inches in 24 hours). DHH, 593.009 (D6), "C" Force Cemeteries – Hong Kong & Yokohama (2 Scrapbooks "Japan" & "Hong Kong").



HK 53 Placing coffins in graves at Sai Wan Cemetery. 16 Jun 47. [DHH, 593.009 (D6), "C" Force Cemeteries – Hong Kong & Yokohama (2 Scrapbooks "Japan" & "Hong-Kong")]

K.F. Noble, the wife of the Canadian Trade Commissioner, laid a wreath on behalf of the Canadian people. His Excellency, the Officer Administering the Government, Mr. D.M. MacDougall laid another on behalf of the government and people of Hong Kong. The service also included the Last Post played by the Buglers of the Buffs, and a rifle volley provided by the Hong Kong Volunteer Defence Corps "who fought shoulder to shoulder with the Canadians and shared the trials of internment."⁴⁷

The remains of four other Winnipeg Grenadiers were later located, concentrated and reinterred at Sai Wan alongside their comrades. The escape and execution of four Winnipeg Grenadiers from the North Point POW Camp in August 1942 was a well-known story among the Canadian POWs, but the details once the men exited the camp were mainly based on conjecture. Through the extensive investigative work of Major Puddicombe, the details of the escape,

⁴⁷ DHH, 593.009 (D6), "C" Force Cemeteries – Hong Kong & Yokohama (2 Scrapbooks "Japan" & "Hong Kong").



HK 76 Canadian reburial service, Sai Wan Military Cemetery, Hong Kong, 1 Jul 47. General view of the congregation at the salute during the sounding of last post. [DHH, 593.009 (D6), "C" Force Cemeteries – Hong Kong & Yokohama (2 Scrapbooks "Japan" & "Hong-Kong)"]

execution and burial of the four men came to light in the build-up to the war crimes trial of POW Camp Commandant Tokunaga Isao and his staff.⁴⁸ The four POWs, Sergeant John Oliver Payne, Lance Corporal George Berzenski, and Privates John Adams and Percy Ellis escaped the camp under the cover of a monsoon, but were eventually picked up by the Japanese in Victoria Harbour when the sampan they had tried to escape in capsized. The Grenadiers were taken in by the POW camp authorities and executed.

Tokunaga had repeatedly denied having the men executed and offered a falsified report to the POW Information Bureau in Tokyo that suggested the men were shot exiting through a hole in the fence. Investigators picked the story apart: several POWs had assisted the men in their escape *over* the fence and no gun shots had been heard in camp that night. A second story pinned the execution on a Lieutenant Wada (who had died before the end of hostilities), claiming

⁴⁸ The specific charge about the execution of the four Canadians was only levied at Tokunaga. He faced ten charges overall and was found guilty of the execution charge (7) and eight other charges and sentenced to death. His death sentence was later commuted to life imprisonment. *Tokunaga et al Trial*, 2, 803, Brigadier (*illegible*), DJAG, SEALF, Singapore, to AG3, 14 July 1947.

he had transported the men to the mainland for further investigation and summarily executed them for “causing a disturbance.”⁴⁹ The bodies were supposedly buried nearby on Argyle Street. Tokunaga had allegedly scolded Wada over the issue and passed the incident along to the Japanese Chief-of-Staff in Hong Kong, Eguchi. This version was contradicted by an eyewitness who had seen the four men at the Forfar Street POW HQ *after* the execution was alleged to have taken place.

The Graves Registration Unit had been unable to locate the bodies and the War Crimes Investigation Team believed that the Argyle Street alibi was untrue. Major Puddicombe interrogated Tokunaga, the camp doctor Saito Shunkichi, as well as camp interpreter Niimori Genichiro and information officer Lieutenant Tanaka Hitochi multiple times. In June 1946 he took them, with picks and shovels, to the Argyle Street cemetery. Puddicombe suggested that no one believed their story and gave them five minutes to point out the graves or they would be taken to King’s Park Football Field and made to dig until the four Canadians were found.

According to Puddicombe, the bluff worked and Saito spoke up, admitting that he had been present at the execution and would show the investigators where the bodies were buried. After the confession, Tokunaga claimed he gave the command, but was under orders to do so and sent a false report to Tokyo “to escape a big investigation.”⁵⁰ Upon later reflection, Puddicombe suggested that Saito confessed after having accused him of being a coward a few days prior, “which seemed to startle him.” When Saito asked why, Puddicombe responded “[b]ecause you are afraid to tell the truth.’ That may have rankled. I don’t know. At any rate, all now confessed the details.”⁵¹

King’s Park was regularly used by the Japanese for executions—the site was riddled with machine gun pockmarks and bodies—and evidence produced at the war crimes trial of Tokunaga Isao *et al* confirmed that the bodies of Payne, Berzenski, Adams, and Ellis were at King’s Park. Puddicombe spoke solemnly about the marker that was left in memory of the four Grenadiers:

⁴⁹ Puddicombe fonds, Vol. 2-30, “War Crimes Trials Hong Kong Style,” 22, and *Tokunaga et al Trial*, Exhibit B(2), Report on Prisoners of War Shot, Hong Kong P.O.W. Camps.

⁵⁰ Puddicombe fonds, Vol. 2-30, “War Crimes Trials Hong Kong Style,” 26.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

The Book of Words says that it is the duty of a Prisoner of War to effect escape. High on the hill to the west of King's Park Football Field planted in cement, is a small, wooden cross, painted white, bearing a plaque on which, in block letters, an inscription to the following effect appears:

'Near this site were executed

H 6016 Sgt J.O. Payne

H 6700 L/Cpl G. Berzenski

H 6294 Pte J.H. Adams

H 6771 Pte P.J. Ellis

of the Winnipeg Grenadiers

who died

having done their duty

1942⁵²

According to Commonwealth War Graves Commission documents, the four men were reburied in Sai Wan Military Cemetery on 4 November 1947.⁵³

During the extensive delays that took place while he was in Hong Kong, Bailie served as a witness in the war crimes trial of Major General Shoji Toshishige, the commander of the 230th Infantry Regiment in March and the POW Camp Case Trial of Colonel Tokunaga Isao and his staff in December 1946.⁵⁴ In the execution of his orders he carried out over 200 investigations and interrogations, inserted Chinese and English-language advertisements in local papers, secured broadcasts over local radio stations requesting particulars relative to Canadian war graves, and oversaw the concentration, burial, and final ceremony for the "C" Force Canadians in Hong Kong.⁵⁵ The entire financial cost of Bailie's effort on behalf of the Department of National Defence and the Canadian war dead was \$3800. Of this cost, \$2800 was allocated for the purchase of containers for burial. The remainder of the costs

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Commonwealth War Graves Commission, Graves Concentration Report, Hong Kong, Sai Wan Mil. Cem, 19 February 1948. Database: <http://www.cwgc.org/find-war-dead> (accessed 20 April 2017).

⁵⁴ Bailie's time on the stand begins in *Shoji Trial*, 67 and *Tokunaga et al Trial*, 238.

⁵⁵ Report on Canadian War Graves, 12.



Progress shot, SAI WAN MILITARY CEMETERY. View showing Canadian sections completed with crosses erected. Lt Col J A Bailie in left foreground. [DHH, 593.009 (D6), “C” Force Cemeteries – Hong Kong & Yokohama (2 Scrapbooks “Japan” & “Hong-Kong”)]

were connected to Bailie’s transportation and administrative work, as well as advertising costs, labour services, and informers’ fees.⁵⁶

John A. Bailie and his work in Hong Kong and Japan represents another stage in a process of the federal government neglecting or at best only paying pittance to the Pacific theatre, mainly with a focus on helping to protect, maintain, or rebuild British colonial prestige in the region. Much in line with the experience of “C” Force more broadly, Bailie’s solo assignment, including his arrival late in the process, provides another example of Canadian servicemen understaffed, lacking resources, and being asked to do a job that, although very committed to carry through, was a struggle to complete. Bailie’s experience connects with that of his contemporaries in the Canadian War Crimes Liaison Detachment – Far East. These military lawyers operated under American purview in Japan and that of the British

⁵⁶ Ibid.

in Hong Kong to ensure Canadian interests were represented at the “minor” war crimes trials.⁵⁷

With the European theatre taking precedence for military and political leaders in Canada during the war and in the early postwar period, it is no surprise that Bailie in his role working on the reburials of Canadian war dead was not a priority. To Allied representatives in the Pacific, Bailie was an individual representing a minor portion of Allied troops in the region, lacking the influence of nations that had played a more sizable role. To Canadian military leaders, Bailie was a minor commitment to a region where Canada had little stake in the conflict as resources were focused squarely with Europe during and after the war.

Politically, very little would have made decision makers in Ottawa turn more attention to Hong Kong. The prompt military defeat generated controversy and probing questions about Canada’s intelligence gathering capacity and decision making. Dispatching troops to bolster the garrison required a Royal Commission. Decisions to deny the “C” Force POWs the Pacific Star and pay allocated to other Canadian personnel who served in the region after 1941 drew the ire of the Hong Kong veterans and their supporters.⁵⁸ The returning POWs were facing long-term health concerns. Federal officials lacked the clout to elicit a full explanation for the commutation of death sentences awarded to the camp commander and doctor deemed responsible for visiting abuses and neglect upon the Canadian POWs. The Departments of National Defence and External Affairs were also willing to allow British colonial courts to administer the aftermath of Inoue Kanao’s failed war crimes trial, subsequent treason trial and execution to avoid the likely domestic political discord that handling the matter in Canada would have generated.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ For comments related to “C” Force see historiographies noted in footnotes 2 and 3 above. For the Canadian war crimes effort see Mark Sweeney, “The Canadian War Crimes Liaison Detachment – Far East and the Prosecution of Japanese “Minor” War Crimes,” (PhD Dissertation, University of Waterloo, 2013).

⁵⁸ Kenneth Taylor, “The Challenge of the Eighties: World War II from a New Perspective: The Hong Kong Case,” in *Men at War: Politics, Technology and Innovation in the Twentieth Century*, eds. Timothy Travers and Christon Archer (Chicago: Precedent Publishing, 1982), 209.

⁵⁹ For the sentence commutation see Sweeney, “The Canadian War Crimes Liaison Detachment,” 147-53, and for Inouye, see Mark Sweeney “A ‘guest of the Dominion of Canada’: Nationality and the War Crimes and Treason Trials of Inouye Kanao, 1946-1947,” *Journal of Historical Biography* 14 (Autumn 2013), 1-46.

To fulfill his mandate of “all matters relative to Canadian war dead,” Bailie required important relationships with Canada’s allies in the Pacific. The first portion of his work in Japan alongside the Australians and Americans was relatively straightforward. The concentration of casualties was well underway, centered under a well-organized American occupation in a Commonwealth space with the capital and human resources to organize the remains. Draft rolls made it clear which POWs had been sent to Japan as labour, and information about what camps they ended up in, their deaths, burials, and locations was readily available. However, in Hong Kong, the project was more haphazard and required extensive information gathering, lead-following and identification work. The battlefields, the POW camp conditions, the climate, the theft, confiscation and disintegration of identifiers made the job more challenging, and the lack of progress at the Sai Wan Cemetery frustrated Bailie’s efforts to carry out his orders under the British in Hong Kong.

From his eagerness to become involved in the war graves project on behalf of Canada to the collection of data in Hong Kong POW camps, Bailie’s efforts were immense. Through his attention to detail, drive to locate and inter as many Canadian war dead as possible, and his commitment to ensure a respectful and solemn burial for his fallen comrades, it is clear that this was a very personal project borne of his shared experience with these men. Although his documents related to the assignment, held at DHH, do not offer the most candid and personal reflection on his experience, his willingness to return so quickly to the site of his internment, the way he doggedly carried out his work, and the way he spoke with such passion and precision about the military action and POW experience in Hong Kong as well as his fellow Grenadiers and Royal Rifles during the war crimes trials, suggests how much he believed in the value of his work—securing a final resting place for his fallen brethren, and ensuring the task was not solely left up to Canada’s allies in the region.



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