“C” Force - The Hong Kong Story

The Battle

With the arrival of the Canadians in Hong Kong on November 16, 1941, the strength of the defenders were brought up to approximately 14,000 military personnel which included soldiers from the United Kingdom, Singapore, China, India as well as the Hong Kong Defence Force.
The Japanese army had been gathering strength across the border in China and on December 7 the entire garrison on Hong Kong was ordered to war stations, the Canadian force was ferried from Kowloon to the island and were in position in the event of a Japanese attack. At 8 a.m., on December 8, Japanese aircraft attacked the Kai Tak airport and destroyed the few out dated aircraft which the RAF had.

Canadians in training at Hong Kong.

“D” Company of the Winnipeg Grenadiers were dispatched to the mainland on December 10 to strengthen the defenders. The following day this company exchanged gun fire with the Japanese and became the first Canadian Army unit to be engaged in combat in WWII. Mid-day on December 11, the defenders on the mainland were withdrawn to the Island, as the Japanese forces were too strong.

On December 13, the Japanese had asked for a surrender which was denied, this was followed on December 17 with another request, which again was refused.

On December 18 the Japanese launched four amphibious attacks across the northern beaches of Hong Kong Island. As the beach heads were established they were then able to spread out across the island.

FINAL EDITION — Winnipeg Free Press

PACIFIC WAR STILL FLARES ALONG VERY WIDE OCEAN FRONT

Canadian Unit In Hong Kong Alert in Raid

Japs Suffer Heavy Losses In Raids on Philippines

British Rush More Troops Into Malaya

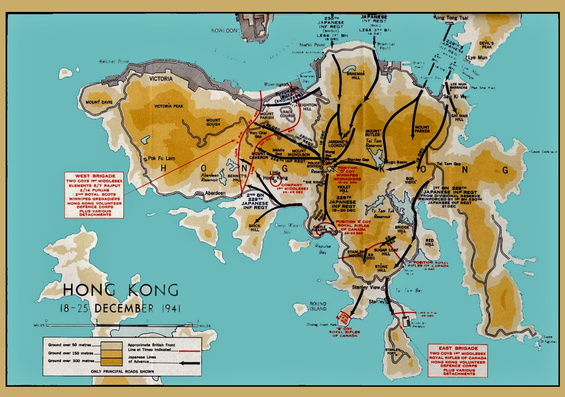
U.S. Official Announcement Says Air Raid Merely Dress Rehearsal

R.C. Bristling With All Out Preparedness

Italy Announces New War Loan For $500,000,000

Eager For Action At Hong Kong

Winnipeg Free Press, December 9, 1941



Battle map of Hong Kong Island.

On Christmas Day at 3:15 p.m. the Governor of Hong Kong was advised by General Maltby that further resistance was futile and the white flag was raised.

FINAL EDITION — Winnipeg Free Press

HONG KONG SURRENDERS

Sombre But Glorious Page, Ralston Declares

Japanese Held For Two Weeks

Great Fight Against Overwhelming Odds

2nd Battalion Makes Offer Of Services

CASUALTY LISTS NOT EXPECTED FOR WEEKS

Winnipeg Free Press, December 26, 1941

FINAL EDITION — The Winnipeg Tribune

Hong Kong's Heroic Defense Ended

More Canadians In Britain Huge Contingent Lands

Commander Asks For Terms; No Details Yet On Casualties

De Gaullist Naval Coup Frees St. Pierre-Miquelon

Churchill Predicts Vast War Power

Reserve Grenadiers Will Offer Services

Winnipeg Tribune, December 26, 1941

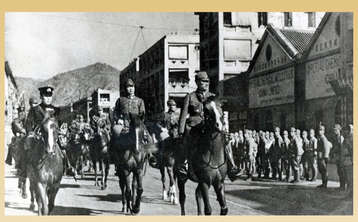
A HONG-KONG

La garnison britannique dépose les armes

Aucune résistance n'était plus possible — Lourdes pertes — Manque d'eau — Sept jours — "Page sombre mais glorieuse" — Le sort des soldats canadiens

Le Devoir, December 26, 1941

Photo of the surrender of Hong Kong to the Japanese.



Photos of Japanese soldiers entering Hong Kong.

Photos of Japanese soldiers entering Hong Kong.

The battle on the Canadians too a great toll with 290 killed or missing and 493 wounded. This however, was not the last of their suffering, life in the POW camps was also deadly. It was sometimes said the lucky ones were the ones who died in battle.