

Prairie Region has 193 regular members, 34 widows and 3 veterans for a total 232 members. We hold regular monthly meetings in Winnipeg and special lunch gatherings in Alberta under the direction of Kathy Carlson and her area reps, with regular quarterly communication with our members through the national newsletter.

Our ladies were invited to the Tea and Tidbits 4 times a year where we gave them information about events and basically reminisced about the early years with the war and their family members. These have been cancelled as it is too difficult for the widows to get out now.

We annually hold VJ Day the closest Sunday to August 15 (however in 2017 it will be delayed), an Annual Reunion in October nearest Sunday to October 25th when the Winnipeg Grenadiers left in 1941 and with the nation on November 11 in various communities in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta.

On August 14, 2016 Manitoba held a service to acknowledge the 71st anniversary of VJ Day with over 65 members, representatives of veteran's associations and dignitaries including guest speaker, Philip Lee, former Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba.

On August 20, 2016 we attended the 100th anniversary of Deer Lodge hospital, as it was a military hospital for several decades before coming under the province. Many of our veterans spent considerable time in this facility after they returned from their service, as well in their later years. John Osborn, VC is recognized in the foyer with a monument as well in the chapel (stain glass window) for his service. So we are definitely part of their history.

On September 29, 2016 in Winnipeg at the Legislature we held a ceremony for the release of the Battle of Hong Kong Coin that was part of the WWII Battlefront series of coins that the Royal Canadian Mint commissioned. We were pleased to have many government dignitaries, 2 Hong Kong veterans (**George Peterson, WG and Ralph MacLean, RRC**); 3 widows (**Ladena Hodgkinson Mabley, Ann Richardson and Myrtle Lytle**) and many HKVCA members attend along with other military and veteran representation. George Peterson, WG, HK vet was part of the ceremony as he is the only Hong Kong veteran to work in the Mint in Winnipeg when he received the coins in the vault to make them currency. A full report was submitted to the BOD for the December 2016 meeting.

October 23, 2016 the 71st Annual Dinner was held at Neil Bardal's Centre in Winnipeg with about 60 people in attendance. We were pleased to have HK vet George Peterson, widows Anne Richardson, Ladena Hodgkinson Mabley, and Alexandra Slovinsky in attendance. (Alexandra passed away a few days following.) We had civic councillors in attendance and several representative of veteran groups. Thank you to Juliet Lafortune for coordinating this event. We are appreciative of the many years of service Juliet has given to the Association and wish her well as she steps down.

In October 28, 2016 Alex Taylor and Stan Lopata took our display and information to the SAGE conference for teachers sponsored by Manitoba Social Science Teachers Association where they interacted with 300+ teachers.

On a wet, snowy December 4, 2016 members of the HKVCA attended the “Wreaths across Canada” at Brookside Cemetery in Winnipeg and commemorated a plaque (delayed in customs) to the 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Hong Kong. Government and military dignitaries were part of the ceremony along with George Peterson (last Winnipeg Grenadier of the Battle of Hong Kong), our Colour Party, and our Padre Paul Lampman of St Luke’s Church.

Kathie Carlson and Carol Hadley attended Round table discussions with the Minister of VAC and his staff in our areas where ideas and concerns were shared to help the veterans.

With the declaration of the elections, Carol Hadley was named as Prairie Regional Director with new Secretary, Marleen Bell; Barry Mitchell continues as Treasurer; John Matthews as public relations broadcasting our events; and Dan James, social media person with postings on Facebook; Kathie Carlson will stay in contact with the area reps, forwarding reports for our meeting keeping all members informed. We greatly appreciate Kathie’s continued support.

Remembrance Day Sunday 2016 held at St. Luke's Anglican Church with Padre Paul Lampman, and HKVCA members and the Winnipeg Grenadier Cadets laying wreaths.

Remembrance Day 2016 at the Winnipeg Convention Centre had Dennis Bell and Barry Mitchell laying the HKV wreath. Our colour party (Alex Taylor, Vince and Stan Lopata) were in attendance as they have been for many, many years. Our members in other communities throughout our Region also laid wreaths recognizing the 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Hong Kong. There are so many that space would be an issue but thank you to everyone for doing this and ensuring the memories are not forgotten.

John Matthews, Public Relations, has sent a communication to the community newspapers looking for the locations of the HK vets in Manitoba cemeteries, to begin and to promote the gravestone marker that we have for sale.

Barry Mitchell and I met with Dennis Bell who had contacted Rabbi Abraham Cooper from the Simon Weisenthal Center in Los Angeles for information on what information they had for the Mitsubishi apology that was issued. He received some information that we reviewed. Most of the information is located on the Mansell site and our own through Vince Lopata. However, these records are not complete. We are not sure how to get more information but Dennis is getting back to him to see what was the process, if they were in touch with the US records or the British records to see if we can fill in the missing lists.

Dennis is still working on this and that the latest info from Councillor Maes is that he sent our information to MP Robert Falcon-Ouelette to follow up with the Feds. We were contacted by Muriel Williams, Strategic Advisor to the Director, Commemoration Operations of VAC, who usaid “My colleagues in VAC's Honours and Awards unit suggested that the UK Archives may be the best place for you to go to next. They provided me with the following link:

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/war-crimes-1939-1945/>

I am sorry that we were not able to help find any documentation that would help in obtaining an apology from the Government of Japan.” We will continue through this link to see if there is any result.

The Red River Heritage Fair was held May 4, 2017, with the theme 150th Anniversary this year. Stan Lopata and Alex Taylor will attend with the display and Carol Hadley judged for the Veteran's Award.

Due to the HKVCA National Convention and AGM to be held in Fredericton, NB and other scheduling difficulties we will be delaying our observing of VJ Day. However, VJ Day will be held in conjunction with a ceremony to dedicate a beautiful *new monument* at Brookside Cemetery, Field of Honour on **Sunday, October 22, 2017 at 11:30 a.m. with a catered Reception to follow at Neil Bardal Centre at 3030 Notre Dame.** The new monument will combine the existing memorial which commemorates the action of the Winnipeg Grenadiers at Jardine's Lookout in the Battle of Hong Kong with the new plaque commemorating the 75th Anniversary of the Battle.

Every year people contact us for information on the Canadian participation in Hong Kong or a person who may have been part of the contingent. We are thankful that there is still an interest in the Battle and the men and women who participated.

We were saddened by the loss of our veterans, widows and members whose names will appear in the Last Post at this meeting and will remember them.

Respectfully submitted

Carol

Carol Hadley,

Board of Directors - Prairie Region

Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association

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