

# WASURERU-NAI

(Wa soo ray roo ny)

“Never Forget”

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## Vets Say It's Time to Pass on the Torch

The average Hong Kong veteran has reached the age whereby the organizational and administrative functions of their Association are beyond the physical capabilities of these individuals, yet the constitution of the HKVA states that the Association will be dissolved only by the death of the second last veteran. At the same time, the HKVCA has been in operation for two years and is quite willing to take care of these functional responsibilities on behalf of the HKVA.

As a result of ongoing discussions between the executives of the HKVA and the HKVCA, a motion was passed which would transfer the functional duties of the HKVA to the HKVCA such that, in effect, the Commemorative Association will take over the functional duties for the Hong Kong Veterans Association. This will be done over the next two years so that the transfer will be completed by the next biennial convention scheduled for Winnipeg in the year 2001.

This agreement is, however, subject to the following caveats, or conditions, which will ensure that the veterans will continue to participate fully in their association and that

their wishes will be reflected in the work performed on their behalf. So,

- the structure of the Regional Councils of the Commemorative Association will be modified to include a Hong Kong veteran (to be selected by his peers) as a Director of the HKVCA regional council;
- the Board of Directors of the HKVCA will be restructured to include the HKVA National Spokesperson (i.e., the President) and the National Treasurer as Directors of the HKVCA National Council;
- the Bank accounts of the HKVA will be transferred to the corporate accounts of the HKVCA but these funds will be kept in separate accounts;
- and the Veteran Directors will maintain a signing authority for funds disbursed from these separate accounts.

Accordingly, the HKVCA Corporate Executive will be increased by two seats to be restricted to Hong Kong veterans, and the regional council structure will be increased by one seat to be restricted to a Hong Kong veteran. In the event that no Hong Kong veteran chooses to occupy any of the above-mentioned seats, the seat(s) will automatically be deleted from the particular body in question.

On the whole, this is a very practical development and uniquely shows just one of the ways in which our Commemorative Association can be of tangible assistance to the Veterans Association. A Turnover Plan will be developed with appropriate milestones to ensure completion by the next biennial convention in August, 2001. We will be providing progress reports through the newsletters.

*All gave a lot.  
A lot gave all.*

## Quebec Region Officially Off the Ground!

At the Quebec Reunion of the Hong Kong veterans held in Sherbrooke, PQ, the newly elected Regional Council for the province of Quebec was presented to the gathered assembly of Commemorative Association members and the Hong Kong veterans and wives attending the Reunion. It was a great encouragement to the new council to have most of the Reunion attendees attend this meeting. It demonstrated the great support that the Commemorative Association will have from the veterans in the area.

The Regional Council is Regional Director Mrs. Lucette Mailloux (widow of Ken Muir), Secretary Mrs. Debbie Everett, Treasurer Mr. Allan Marshall, Eastern Area Representative Miss Nancy Doddridge, Western Area Representative Mr. Ernest Garbutt. It is their intent to choose Chairpersons for the specific projects as they arise.

Twenty-two individuals paid their dues immediately following the meetings adjournment. It was clear to all present, that the desire to promote the mandate of our association, and that any task this council chooses to undertake, will have the volunteers necessary for success.

This reunion was a fine example of cooperation between the Veterans Association and ours. The organizing committee was chaired by HK vet Ossie Clark, and was composed of HK vet Milton MacDonald; Lifetime Associate Member and tireless worker for the Association, Charles Gordon; and Commemorative Association members Lucette Mailloux and Marcel Mondou. It was a great success with fifty Hong Kong veterans attending as well as wives, companions, and members of the Commemorative Association.

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## Election of Executive Council

HKVCA

The election of the new executive council was conducted on August 9, 1999. As a result, Derrill Henderson was elected to a 2<sup>nd</sup> term as the National President, Lora Wachtendorf was elected to a 2<sup>nd</sup> term as National Vice-President, Neil Darrah was elected to a 2<sup>nd</sup> term as 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President, Mitzi Ross was elected to her 1<sup>st</sup> term as National Treasurer, and later the Executive Council appointed Bill Kellas to his 1<sup>st</sup> term as National Secretary. We have included in this Newsletter a short bio submitted by Mitzi Ross and Bill Kellas (See attachment).

This represents a terrific commitment by these volunteers and we, of course, owe them all a vote of thanks. Our thanks also go out to the people stepping down from the executive upon completion of their two years in office: Mrs. Sheila Rattie Sheridan who was our National Treasurer, Mrs. Janice Jennings who was our National Secretary, and April Cole who is taking a hiatus from her task as our Membership Chairperson.

This election vote, however, needs to be ratified by the membership. You will therefore find a vote ratification form attached to this newsletter. It would be appreciated if you could complete it and send it on by whatever means to the corporate office address listed on the form. If there is no reply from any given person(s), this will be taken as an approval "Yes" vote.

## Projects-On-The-Go

### Monument Badges

There have been some 90 monument badges sold to date, give or take a few, and a new stock has been reordered. You should consider honouring your father by ensuring that you can place one of these on his gravestone. Their cost is \$44.00, plus \$6.00 shipping and handling, for a total cost of \$50.00 per badge. You may notice that the cost has risen slightly. The increase is in the shipping and handling cost related to an increase in postal rates. You should send your order to our corporate address as listed on the Contacts page. (Lora Wachtendorf, Winnipeg, has some, too.)



*I decided to give Dad his badge before he passed away, so I had it mounted on a wooden plaque from the trophy store, along with a brass plate stating*

*Battle of Hong Kong  
"C" Force*

*J. Leonard Cotton, E30608*

*"B" Company*

*Royal Rifles of Canada*

*and gave it to him as a gift. He was very happy that a) his son had realized the importance of this event to him, and b) that others in the veterans home could now realize what he had done to deserve recognition, without his having to tell them since not many would ask the appropriate questions. It turned out to be his most prized possession. I'm now keeping the plaque as a keepsake, and have bought another badge to be placed on his urn. However, the badge would be removable and could be transferred to the gravestone or urn. - Ed.*

- HKVCA Member Crests



Here is an image of the HKVCA Association member crest. Mine looks absolutely great on my blazer and has invited several questions regarding what it stands for. They are now available for \$20.00, since we had to buy more crests, via the main address at the top of the contact list (or Lora).

- Plaques in Hong Kong

Through Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, application has been made to the government of China to place plaques at certain sites of significance in Hong Kong. Permission in

principle has been received provided the wording is presented in English French and Chinese. The application requested the mounting of a plaque at 12 sites. Approval has been obtained for three sites. A Veterans Affairs Canada pilgrimage is planned for December, 2000, at which time the official unveiling of the plaques could occur.

The HKVA and the HKCVA have formed a committee to handle the travel arrangements for those who are interested in participating on this pilgrimage. If you are considering taking this trip (probably the last for the veterans), please drop us a note at the corporate address, or send an E-mail to Derrill. (derrill@sympatico.ca)

As of February 15, 2000, the latest word from the Canadian Consulate in Hong Kong is that there was a problem with the places where we wanted to place our 12 plaques. Some of the sites just no longer existed (buildings built over them, etc.), while others are now private land. As a compromise, we agreed to shorten the list in favour of a more elaborate presentation. The revised sites were agreed upon by our veterans in the HKVA Executive: There will be three new sites in Hong Kong.

- 1) The Brigade Headquarters bunker where Brigadier Lawson died. Since the pillbox is still there, it will be renovated. It is planned to place a couple of mannequins dressed in Canadian uniforms along with period weapons, radios, maps, etc., along with the plaques, which will be in three languages. The wording on this plaque is expected to present a bit more history than the other two will.
- 2) The pillbox on the lower side of Jardine's Lookout. The site will be cleaned up and the plaque will probably mention CSM Osborn. This site is to honour the Winnipeg Grenadiers.
- 3) The Lye Yue Mun site is being dressed up and the Canadian contribution, being the main battlegrounds of the Royal Rifles, will be incorporated into the history of the redoubt in general. The specific contribution of the Canadians will be limited to two or three sentences here. (We are trying to make certain that they will be long sentences.)

- Video Interviews

This will be the fourth year for this ongoing project and there have been about 160 interviews completed to date. These interviews will be edited for presentations at schools and will be blended with "Savage Christmas", Part 1 of the documentary "The Valour and the Horror", and "The Hong Kong Story", a film to be shown on CBC. This

tape will be available for purchase and you will be notified when it is ready.

Eventually, excerpts of the video will also be placed on the Association's web page at

<http://members.xoom.com/hkvca/>

(This page name may change shortly) and thereby be available for viewing via the Internet. Each of the veterans will be available on CD-ROM for viewing at the website with the option to download to your own computer. The options for loan or purchase will also be available, although the precise details have not been worked out yet. The feeling is that the veterans could be rotated regularly, one or two at a time, depending on the available file space.

## Veterans' Compensation Claim Resolved

While this item may be considered history given the lateness of this newsletter, it is nevertheless gratifying to be able to write that the claim by the Hong Kong Veterans against the Japanese government for industrial wages as slave labourers has been resolved. The Canadian government stepped in and paid this claim, a claim which a United Nations court had deemed a valid claim. Finally our government has given recognition to our veterans, and through this action, gave it validation to this cause fought by the HKVA for many, many years. The daily wage due these veterans added up to some \$23,892.00 for each Hong Kong veteran or widow. The veterans had been focusing for some years now on getting compensation from the Canadian government for their labour as Japanese prisoners of war after the Battle of Hong Kong in hopes that the Canadian government would then go after the Japanese government for restitution. The payment was received by the identified veterans or widows in January or February of 1999. The Association assisted Veterans Affairs Canada to identify the widows of veterans.

We would be remiss if we did not mention the immense amount of time, energy, and cost that Mr. Cliff Chadderton and his staff at the War Amps put into this claim. Mr. Chadderton spearheaded this action at the United Nations and at the local government level.

*"Some days you're the pigeon,  
and  
some days you're the statue."*

## Change in Membership Dues

There are two important items to bring to your attention with regard to membership dues. As you are aware, these funds pay for the operation of the Association in terms of postal expenses, general mailouts as well as those for the newsletter, certain expenses of the executive members, and so on. Annual work plans are based on the membership total and the subsequent representative dues income. Please note that, as a result of a motion passed at the last Executive meeting, the fiscal year for the HKVCA will be changed to the calendar year, i.e., January-December of each year starting with the year 2000.

So, the first important item is for you to please note that membership dues will increase to \$15.00 per year for the year 2000-2001 membership year. You can understand the importance of the timely submission of dues. So, if your membership card does not show membership to December 31, 2000, please take a moment to send your \$15.00 for your membership for this current year to your Regional Treasurer if known, or to our corporate address. You will notice that the newsletter now includes a page serving as a blank bilingual membership request form. Please try to use this form in renewing your own membership or if someone else would like to start a membership with the Association.

The second important item that requires your attention relates to the discussion at the last biennial convention about the concept of a life membership. This would entail the payment of a one-time dues membership, say, perhaps of something like \$300.00. This would entitle the person to a full lifetime membership in the Association with no further payments of dues.

We need your comments on this proposal, either for or against. Could you please take a few moments, perhaps talk about it with an interested party or two, and send in your comments to our National Secretary, Bill Kellas (crzee@10betrotter.net) at our corporate address as listed on the Contacts page. For the sake of a complete understanding of your view, it would help if you could include the reasoning behind your feelings for or against.

*There are three kinds of men:  
The one that learns by reading.  
The few who learn by observation.  
The rest of them have to pee on the  
electric fence for themselves.*

## Next Eastern Reunion set for Fredericton, NB

Arrangements have been completed for the next reunion to be held in Fredericton, New Brunswick, by the Québec-Maritimes branch of the HKVA and the Québec and Atlantic Regions of the HKVCA.

The dates will be August 10-13, 2000, where accommodations will be at the Fredericton Inn. The "flag" is taken up this time by Reid Pollock, son of Allison Pollock. Reid will be the principal organizer and will be drawing from the experience of the Québec organizers. We'll be presenting developments as we get them.

If you are interested in attending and have not received a Registration kit, give Reid a call -  
(506) 472-8972.

## Hong Kong Pilgrimage

Derrill Henderson and Harry Atkinson met with Larry Murray, the Deputy Minister of Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC), and it's official - the pilgrimage is on for this fall! Veterans Affairs will be covering most of the cost for the veterans, but for others, the trip will cost slightly less than \$5,000.

Please contact Derrill through the corporate mailing address on the Contacts page very soon if you think you would be interested in joining the pilgrimage.

The tentative itinerary is available from Derrill. An updated version will be released by Veterans Affairs this month. Dates: leave Vancouver November 28th and returning December 7th/2000. So far, in addition to the 50 government staff (Military, medical, guests, etc.), 70 (21 veterans and 49 other) have signed up. There are a few seats left but these will have to be released shortly, so make up your mind quickly.

*If at first you don't succeed,  
skydiving isn't for you.*

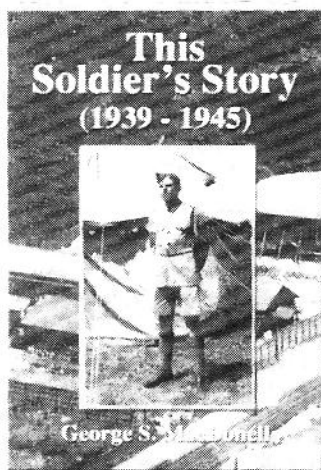
*Two wrongs don't make a right,  
But three lefts do.*



## "This Soldier's Story"

"The desire to live is very strong. The desire not to disgrace your uniform or to let your officers and comrades down through personal weakness is just as strong" - George S. MacDonell

When CSM George MacDonell joined the Royal Rifles as a Sergeant in September 1940 fresh out of NCO training, he never imagined what would befall him and his men only three months later.



Any veteran of the Royal Rifles, specifically "D" Coy, will understand the section on the Battle for Hong Kong.



Any veteran who went to Japan in the Slave Labour drafts and were in Camp "3D", especially those who were moved to Ohasi camp later, will gather comfort from the shared experiences. Even the shock of returning to Canada had an effect on these soldiers.

Live through some of the events and thoughts of these veterans as they faced each day with determination and belief in their ability to survive.

This book may be purchased from the Commemorative Association. Send \$24.00 (\$20 book, \$4 postage) to the 1 Stafford Road address.

**Reader's Comment:**  
If any family had someone in these situations, here is an opportunity to understand how that person felt. I personally was surprised to see my father in the photograph of Ohasi camp, for I never knew he was there.  
- Derrill Henderson"

## Guest of Hirohito

 The inspiring odyssey of a 17-year-old Canadian rifleman who fights the first World War II battle in Asia immediately after disembarking in Hong Kong is captured the day after Christmas, 1941, and comes of age during the four years he survives some of Japan's harshest prison compounds. He was the 

## Guest of Hirohito

Kenneth Cambon, M.D.

*Guest of Hirohito* is the first-person account of Kenneth Cambon M.D., of the Royal Rifles of Canada, of his own experiences during and after the battle of Hong Kong.

To quote the cover of the book:  
*"The inspiring odyssey of a 17-year-old Canadian rifleman who fights the first World War II battle in Asia immediately after disembarking in Hong Kong, is captured the day after Christmas, 1941, and comes of age during the four years he survives some of Japan's harshest prison compounds. He was the Guest of Hirohito."*

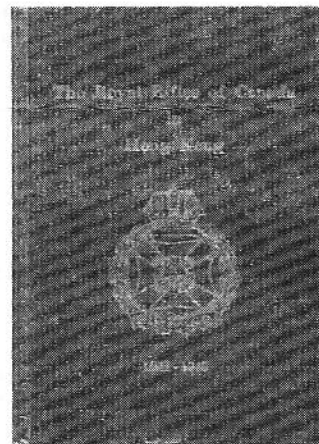
The author, Ken Cambon, has sent Derrill Henderson the last copies he has and they are now available for purchase. The cost is \$20.00 plus \$4.00 shipping. It contains 184 pages, a couple of pictures, and it is only available though us since it is out of print. If the demand is sufficient, he will consider another printing - this time in hard copy.

To receive your own copy, please send payment to Derrill Henderson at the corporate address shown on the Contacts page (last page).

*I have bought and read the book and, although it can be gruesome reading in many spots given the actions of the Japanese military during World War II, I am truly grateful that Dr. Cambon has given us this book to help us understand more of the details of what it was like, and for so many veterans, continued to be. Ed.*

## The Royal Rifles of Canada in Hong Kong, 1941-1945

by  
Captain Grant Garneau, C.D., B.A., M.A., LL.B.  
"The Royal Rifles of Canada in Hong Kong" was written by Grant Garneau and presented as a Master's thesis at Bishop's University.



The book contains accounts by some of the ex-POWs of the battle in the defence of the Colony and the ensuing four years of incarceration.

The author takes the reader through the background history of the Regiment and events leading up to the ill-fated posting in Hong Kong. He explains the political situation in Canada at the time, the pressure by the allies to send troops to Hong Kong, and the acquiescence of the Government of Canada in agreeing to send troops to a certain defeat.

From there, we are taken to the Colony and a description of its defenses and weaknesses. Several of the officers and men of the RRC have provided accounts of the battle and its outcome. Others have explained the difficulties of life in the Japanese prison camps, the abuse, the starvation, the hopelessness of survival, and the mutual strength and support of fellow prisoners.

There is a complete section of photographs and drawings, photos of the Regiment, photos of some of the prisoners, photos of some of the camps and their inmates, and drawings made in the prison camps by some of the more talented prisoners, all of which provide a

graphic explanation of what it was like to exist behind barbed wire.

Garneau has provided a complete nominal roll of the officers and men of the Royal Rifles, noting those who were killed in action, those who died of disease, starvation, and abuse in the camps, and those who survived and made it back home.

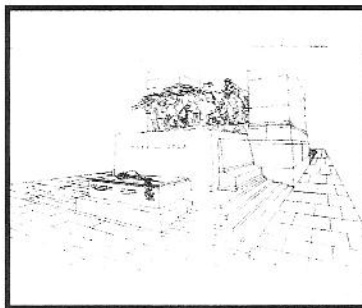
He has included a section naming the ones who received decorations for bravery. There are a total of fourteen who received awards ranging from the Distinguished Service Order to the Military Medal. In addition, he names twenty seven who were Mentioned in Dispatches.

The second edition of the book is now out of print and all existing copies have been sold. We are considering the possibility of having a third edition printed. The more we have printed, the lower per-unit cost, but it is thought that a reprinting of 250 copies might be feasible. That would put the selling price somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$50.00 per copy, and we would have to pre-sell at least 200 copies to make the project viable. If you, or anyone else, wishes to have a copy, and will commit yourself to buying the book, please let us know as soon as possible by contacting us at the corporate address cited on the Contacts page at the back of the newsletter in care of Derrill Henderson. Or you can reach Derrill Henderson by email at <derrill@sympatico.ca >  
- Philip Doddridge, President  
Quebec-Maritimes Branch

## Canada's Tomb Of The Unknown Soldier

More than 27,000 Canadian servicemen and women who gave their lives in the wars of the 20<sup>th</sup> century rest unknown in graves or beneath the seas around the world. Many nations have a 'Tomb of the Unknown Soldier' in which the remains of one of their unknown fallen have been repatriated for public commemoration. Canada did not, but this has changed. The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier has been incorporated into the National War Memorial in Ottawa. The actual

tomb is a granite sarcophagus at the front of the Memorial.



The remains which were repatriated came from the Vimy battlefield as, in many ways, that battle is representative of Canada's maturing as a nation. While the repatriated remains came from Vimy, they are meant to represent all of the unknown fallen sailors, soldiers, airmen, and merchant seamen of all the wars of the 20th century in which Canada has been involved. Selection of the particular remains from Vimy was done independently by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. The remains were handed over to the Government of Canada at a modest ceremony in Vimy on 25 May 2000.

The remains were flown to Ottawa by the Canadian Forces and taken to the Parliament Buildings where they lay in state for public commemoration on 26-27 May 2000. In the afternoon on Sunday, 28 May 2000, the remains were taken from the Parliament Buildings to the National War Memorial.

The tomb of the Unknown Soldier at the National War Memorial will provide a focal point for the commemoration of all the unknown fallen Canadians who made the ultimate sacrifice in the wars of the 20th century.

Eight HK veterans made the trip to Ottawa to honour this soldier. Seven managed to march the 1.3 kilometers of the parade route. Bravo lads!!!  
- Derrill Henderson

*And here is an article from the Ottawa Citizen submitted by Rita Flanagan which fills out the picture we have of Gander a little more.....*

day 24 December 1999

## A place for Canada's canine hero



Dave Brown  
The Ottawa Citizen  
Gander loved children and willingly hauled his master's children and their friends on a sleigh. The dog, who later became a regimental mascot, saved troops by running away with a smoking grenade.

On Christmas Eve, 1941, on the streets of Hong Kong, Canadian soldiers were being killed and wounded in a desperate and hopeless attempt to drive back Japanese invaders, and a dog was becoming a legend. The soldiers' stories became known, but it's the story about the dog that has fascinated Jeremy Swanson. In the confusion of battle it's easy for a myth to become a legend, and there's too much of the historian in Mr. Swanson to accept details without proof. He's the commemorations officer with the Canadian War Museum, currently on recuperation leave for health reasons.

Being on the sick list gave him more time to devote to what has become his quest. Once and for all, he wanted to find out for certain if Canada had in its past a bona fide animal hero.

Over lunch yesterday at the Royal Canadian Air Force Officers Club, he handed over a thick blue file folder. "It's all there," he said. "It happened. The story is real." The file shows much of the research was done by retired McGill University professor Howard Stutt, a war museum volunteer. The two men believe it was an oversight that the hero dog wasn't awarded a

**Dickin Medal.** Instituted by Maria Dickin, founder of Britain's People's Dispensary for Sick Animals, the medal is considered the highest award possible for animals in war. "We also serve," is the inscription. Of the 53 Dickin Medals awarded, 18 were presented to dogs, three to horses, one to a cat, and 31 to pigeons.

The animal heroes go back as far as the Crimean War.

A lifesize bronze statue of a donkey greets visitors to the Australian War Museum in Canberra. Considered by many to be the finest war museum in the world, the Canberra site honours "a man and his donk" for the many lives they saved, carrying wounded Australians off the bloody hills of Gallipoli in the First World War. Both the man and his donkey were killed. Neither Mr. Swanson nor Mr. Stutt make the suggestion, nor do they openly support it, but if Canada eventually gets around to building a suitable new war museum, and if there were to be a lifesize bronze animal greeting visitors, here's the candidate.

His name was Gander.

Gander started life as a Newfoundland puppy named Pal. His owner was Rod Hayden, the Shell Oil agent at the airfield at Gander at the start of the Second World War. Pal the pup became Pal the bear. He just kept growing, and even by Newfoundland dog standards, was a big fellow. An American pilot once reported after landing at Gander that he saw a bear on the landing strip. The pooch was that big. Keeping Gander off the airstrip was one of the problems faced by the Hayden family. The big dog loved children and in winter willingly hauled the Hayden children and their friends on a sleigh.

With the outbreak of war, a detachment of Royal Rifles of Canada was stationed at Gander to patrol and protect that vital link in the air routes to Europe. One day the big playful pooch, jumping to put its paws on a girl's shoulders, missed. A big claw scratched the girl's face. Already much loved by the young soldiers on the base, the dog was offered as a mascot. The offer was accepted, and Pal was renamed Gander.

In a move that was more political than military, Canada sent troops to help defend Hong Kong. Murphy's Law prevailed. Everything that could go wrong, did go wrong. The Royal Rifles arrived ahead of their weapons and transport, and confusion reigned. The regimental mascot arrived just fine, and had adapted well to military life.

For the defenders of Hong Kong, the Japanese invasion was, from the start, a series of retreats, and after days of exhausting battle, the Royal Rifles literally had their backs to the wall. They had been pushed up a hill in a series of street battles.

The last stand started at 11 p.m. Christmas Eve. Japanese troops were advancing, hurling hand grenades up at the defenders, who were scooping them up and throwing them back. Timing killed many engaging in the game of deadly catch.

Among those in that action was Lieut. William B. Bradley, a native of Sherbrooke, Que. He was recently located at his home in Villmette, Illinois. In answer to researchers' questions, he said he was a witness to the last moments of Gander. Rfm. Reg Law of Campbellton, NB, was even closer to the action. The statements of these two individuals give us a good case for the medal being awarded to "Sgt. Gander".

As Mr. Bradley relates: "He was blown to bits."

Yesterday, Mr. Swanson pushed the remains of his fish and chips around his plate, and re-read the Bradley report. It jived with anecdotal evidence that earned Gander a paragraph in the Royal Rifles of Canada official history.

"Was it just a dog playing a dog game? I don't think so. He had seen many grenades explode in the days leading up to that moment. In his dog mind, he saw something dangerous and took it away from his friends." The Canadian War Museum has a small display on the second floor honouring the sacrifices and suffering of the Hong Kong veterans. Many survivors of the years of starvation and slave labour while prisoners of war, feel not enough attention is paid to their story.

The Dickin medal is no longer available but thought is being given to asking the people behind the annual Ralston Purina Animal Hall of Fame award for animal heroes, to consider a special award for Gander. By highlighting the actions of a canine hero, it could come about that Gander this time rescues the memories of his comrades.

Museum officials are taking a wait-and-see attitude. If the Gander story stirs enough interest, they'll consider a special place for a special dog. One way to show interest is to donate to the museum fund, called "Passing the Torch".

*It should be noted that some of these facts stated above are not entirely accurate. In the rush to his deadline,*

*we can forgive Mr. Brown for a few errors of fact in the transcription of his notes. Ed.*

Since this article was written, the War Museum decided that the application for the Dickin medal should come from the HKVA. The application has been submitted, supported by endorsements from both the War Museum and the Royal Canadian Legion.

If you wish to donate, send your cheque to Ken Ewing, Treasurer, HKVA at RR#4, Kemptville, ON K0G 1J0. The HKVA will make a single, hopefully significant, presentation to the museum sometime in the future. It is our hope this will coincide with the presentation of Gander's award should we be successful in this endeavour.

## More on the Story of Gander

*(In our last issue, I asked for any contributions to the story of Gander. The following is the text of a letter I received from association member Rita Flanagan, daughter of Pvt. Andrew J. Flanagan, Royal Rifles of Canada. - Ed.)*

My father, Andrew Flanagan of the Royal Rifles, Company C, was a runner in Hong Kong. I remember as a child the fond story he told of his domestic Hero, Gander, the Black Newfoundland dog. Dad died in 1993 but this is the way we, his children, remember the story.

It was during the first few attacks by the Japanese, they were retreating from the Canadians; the Canadians were winning this battle. Until the Japanese started throwing grenades at the Canadians. The Canadians started to retreat and the Japs (as Dad would say) started to advance. Gander picked up a Grenade and ran into the Japanese group whereupon he met his demise but he also took many of the enemy with him. When the Canadians were captured a few weeks later the Japanese interrogated many of them asking if there were any more "Big Black Devils" with the group as that is what they thought Gander was.

Gander was adopted by The Royal Rifles company C in Gander Newfoundland. My Dad thought so much of him that he would tell the story with both a tear in one eye and a chuckle on his lips. We actually had a St. Bernard whom Dad named Gander.

- Rita Flanagan

*(I have included the two photos graciously provided on loan from association member Linda Brylowski, daughter of Hong Kong veteran Colin Standish.*



For those of you who would have liked to remove what's left of my scalp had I provided these photos in columnar size, I have included the photos on the last page

You'll notice that the group photo has torn corners. Thanks to the wonders of technology, I was able to overlay two exact pictures sent to me by Linda Brylowski - one gave the better picture of the group, the other gave the full caption below the picture. That's why it seems the typing has gone over what seems to be left of the paper. This is what some of our fathers looked like before their hell started.) - Ed.

## The Book Corner

At the suggestion of one of our members, Richard Buchanan from Sable River, N.S., I am inserting here a listing of books that I have heard about which deal with the Hong Kong battle and its aftermath. The initial list was submitted by Mr. Buchanan but you are invited to send me any suggestions for additions.

1. The Royal Rifles of Canada in Hong Kong 1941-1945, first part based on the Thesis of Capt. Grant Garneau, CD, B.A., M.A., LL.B. Progressive Publications, Inc., Sherbrooke, QC, with copyright held by the HKVA. (No ISBN)
2. The Lasting Honour (The Fall of Hong Kong 1941) by Oliver Lindsay, ISBN 0-241-89946-X
3. The Valour and the Horror By Merrily Weisbord and Marilyn Simonds Mohr, ISBN 0-00-215744-6
4. King's War (MacKenzie King and the Politics of War 1939-1945) by Brian Nolan (esp. Ch. 4 - Death in the Orient), ISBN 0-394-22036-6
5. 17 Days Until Christmas by (Sgt.) Léo P. Bérard of the Winnipeg Grenadiers in the Battle of Hong Kong, ISBN 0-9683049-0-7
6. Georges "Blacky" Verreault: Diary of a Prisoner of War in Japan 1941-1945 edited by Michel Verreault. A separate video tape of interviews of Michel Verreault are available in French or English for \$30.00 from him at: Michel Verreault 400, Ste. Eugene, App. 5 Rimouski, QC G5L 8S3
8. Guest of Hirohito by Ken Cambon, M.D., Of the Royal Rifles of Canada, a personal account of the atrocities following the battle of Hong Kong. ISBN 0-9694983-0-6 / out of print. Copies available from HKVCA national office (\$20 + \$4 S&H)
9. No Reason Why: The Canadian Hong Kong Tragedy - an examination by Carl Vincent. ISBN 0-920002-12-9
10. Desperate Siege: The Battle for Hong Kong by Ted Ferguson. Based on interviews with survivors of the battle and the POW cages - a powerful tale of human courage in the face of impossible odds. ISBN 0-38501469409
11. In Enemy Hands by Daniel G. Dancocks. Canadian Prisoners of War 1939-1945. ISBN 0-88830-240-1
12. Banzai You Bastards by Jack Edwards. Allied Prisoners of War on Taiwan. ISBN 962-7290-03-3
13. A Handful of Rice by William Allister. Canadian Prisoners of War somewhere in Malaya. Publishers Martin Secker & Warberg Ltd., London, UK (no ISBN)
14. Hostages to Fortune by Tim Carew. The fall of Hong Kong ... The horrors of Shamshuipo Camp ... The tragedy of the Lisbon Maru ... The last days before the atom bomb. ISBN 241-02001-8



roots going back to 1660 when the first of the Cyr clan settle in what is now Nova Scotia. My memories of my teenage years are those of a young lad living during the tail-end of the depression era with all of its economic drawbacks affecting family livelihood and instilling in me a strong desire to leave the village and seek fame and fortune elsewhere. Then WW 11 happened and afforded me that very opportunity, i.e. getting away. Along with fifty-three other young men from the area, I joined the army (Royal Rifles of Canada) in late 1940. After basic training, I served in Newfoundland and was then shipped overseas arriving in Hong Kong the latter part of November 1941. The rest of my war years are part of Canadian military history.

February 1 1946, the day I was discharged from the Army in Lauzon, Quebec (across the river '.

from Quebec City), was one of those cold snowy winter days in that area of the Province of Quebec. Going through the "demob" office and getting all the paperwork signed off was indeed quite an exhilarating experience in itself. I suppose the one item leading to a sense of euphoria on that day, was the notion that ' at last I'm free of the shackles of the military, and, I now can do what I like, rather than be told what to do.

Blessed ignorance is what it was. After a few beers in the nearest tavern I, along with a few comrades, boarded the train bound for the Gaspé Coast and what we perceived to be a rosy future. After a few weeks home, with money running out, it became a matter of priority to find a job. Other than some jobs in the forest cutting pulp wood, there was nothing available

## The History of the HKVA The Founders Series

From the east: Roger Cyr Ed. The following is as given to me in Roger's own words:

J.N. Roger Cyr  
Ottawa, Ontario  
14 February 2000

I was born in New Richmond, Que. On March 6, 1922. When I was nine months old my parents emigrated to the U.S. where the family resided for seven years before returning to Canada. I was raised in a typical Gaspé area family with Acadian

for a person like me who had little or no education, sickly, of small physique and with a lack of motivation to try and 'fit in'.

This is when I decided to utilize the Veterans Affairs counseling services available to veterans. I will never forget my very first interview with a Mr. Vezina. He began asking what I thought I was qualified to do. My reply, "... work in the woods or on the farm". Digging into my file he noted my medical profile and said "Mr. Cyr, forget about working in the woods or the farm. According to the medical opinions contained in your file, you better opt for some sort of office work." His counsel completely devastated me, since I had barely completed a sixth grade education when I joined the Army in 1940.

I then began a series of further counseling sessions with a number of Veterans Affairs officers which resulted in my being strongly advised to return to school, which I did. Following studies in business administration I found employment with a number of firms, and garnered knowledge and experience in office management. While still in school, I met Loretta who became my wife and the mother of our five children.

Let me say at this point, that without her support, understanding and willingness to put up with a sickly person and turning herself into a care provider, I would have gotten nowhere. I owe Loretta more than I will ever be able to repay.

In 1946 I was offered a cost accountant position with Gaspé Copper Mines in Murdochville, Que. After a few months on the job, I was given the job of Personnel Manager and remained in that position until I was offered the position of Regional Director of Personnel for the Air Services Branch of the then Department of Transport.

After an eight year stay with them, both in Dorval QC and Moncton NB, I was transferred to the Post Office Department (before it became a Crown Corporation) to head the Human Resources program for the Province of Quebec. While with them I was "borrowed" by the federal Treasury Board to do a stint as a "labour negotiator" in connection with the introduction of collective bargaining in the federal public service.

Subsequent to this, I was returned to my home Department (Post Office)

and transferred to Ottawa as Director, Human Resources Management for Canada. This is where I was when I retired on August 3, 1983 after having been told by the medical profession that I had cancer and that my time on this planet was more or less problematic.

Well, this is seventeen years later, and, I still have cancer and have undergone every conceivable form of treatment with the result that I'm still around.

Throughout the years it has been a source of tremendous satisfaction to me that I was able to be of service to my comrades by participating in the formation and management of the affairs of the Hong Kong Veterans' Association of Canada. If I had to do it all over again I would probably work twice as hard because the rewards were so satisfying. I remember very well those years immediately after the end of the war, while holding a part time job with the Canadian Pension Commission in Quebec city, talking to all of our boys coming in for the medical assessments of their war-related disabilities, and, I noted that a common thread ran through their feelings. This was "I wonder if I can get anywhere with Government authorities, after all I'm a rather small fry in the general scheme of things and in their eyes, just another WW II veteran seeking a handout." Among those H.K. veterans coming through the Pensions office, a number of them started talking about forming an Association with the express purpose of going to the Government with Group claims rather than individuals attempting, too often with negative results, to further their own requests up through government bureaucracy.

At that time, very few people in the medical profession had any knowledge of the effects of four years as prisoners of war under the harshest of treatment. Persistence became the operative word among the group heading the many, many briefs presented to Government Authorities. Looking at this with the benefit of 20/20 vision in hindsight, if we H.K. vets finally received what we always believed to be our just due, it all started with the vision this Group had as to what was needed to come to the aid of their comrades, in helping them to get adequate pension and medical care benefits.

The early years, encompassing the spade work associated with the building and putting into place of

those elements necessary to assure continuity, I would be remiss in not mentioning Jack Price, Lionel Hurd, Wells Bishop, Colin Standish, Charlie Brady, Maurice Davignon, Everett Denison, Lloyd Doull, Oswald Clark, Cliff Royea, Lawrence Rattie, Harold Englehart, et al. I will always be grateful for the opportunity of having worked alongside such devoted comrades. A common desire to help surviving Hong Kong veterans and their kin, motivated each and everyone involved with the creation of the Quebec/Maritimes Branch of the Hong Kong Veterans' Association of Canada. Our Branch is still going strong, thanks to the devotion of all members of the Branch's Executive. While this building work was going on in the Quebec/Maritimes area of our Country, a number of our western based H.K. comrades were doing about the same thing. They in fact formed the Manitoba Branch, The BC Branch and the Northern/Southern Alberta Branches. I would also like to mention the yeoman work done by H.K. vets in what became the Ontario Branch. John Stroud, who is still President, Ontario Branch, along with the late Chuck Clarke, literally hounded Ottawa bureaucrats into acknowledging the existence of our newly emerging "Hong Kong Veterans' Association.

In writing this I could not help but recall all those comrades who, after the war found themselves with the "what do I do now" dilemma, sat down, grabbed the 'bull by the horns, and carved a place for themselves and contributed greatly to the development of this society of ours. It has been my great and good fortune, over the years, in having met wives and children of comrades, which reinforced my view as to how really well our 'boys' had done with their lives.

To our children, grandchildren and those who follow, remember that your Dads, Grandfathers or forebearers found ways out of adversity and succeeded. Be proud of their accomplishments. Lastly I would salute the children and grandchildren and kin of H.K. vets who saw fit to form a commemorative association. I cannot think of a better tribute to the memory of all of our departed comrades.

Very sincerely yours,  
J.N. Roger Cyr



And Roger is just one of our heroes for us here in the Commemorative association. We can't help but admire the guts, the determination and the integrity of the HK vets in the initial battle, and then in the ensuing battle to make peace with their PoW experience and break through to their post-war comebacks. The more we get to know about each of them, the more we get to know our own fathers and the meaning of their accomplishments. Ed.

## Appeal Court Decision on Widow's Pension Amount

As early as 1993, the question was raised regarding the level of pension being received by the widows of the Hong Kong Veterans.

In 1993, the War Amps of Canada contended that the VAC were discriminating against the widows. The War Amps believed that the women were being paid a lesser pension than their veteran husbands. The War Amps of Canada took the issue to court for legal decision.

In 1994, Justice Trainor, Ontario Court of Justice ruled that it is, in fact, not discriminatory to award a survivor's pension on a different basis than a veteran's pension. The War Amps appealed this decision, and the Appeal Court recently dismissed the appeal.

As explained by Veterans Affairs Canada, veterans pension amounts are determined based upon the degree of disability, and the effect this disability will have on the veteran's basic ability to earn a living and which will affect the veteran for the rest of his/her life. Survivor pension amounts are based, not upon a veterans level of disability but, rather, upon the idea that due to the veterans disability, he or she would not have been able to make arrangements to provide income for his/ her surviving spouse.

For 2000, the single rate for veteran pensioners in classes 1 to 11 ranges between \$883.38 (class 11- [50%]) and \$1,776.75 (class 1 - [100%]) per month; for married veteran pensioners, it ranges between \$1,110.48 (class 11) and \$2,220.94

(class 1).

All surviving spouses of Hong Kong Prisoners of War are entitled to receive pension benefits equivalent to 75% of the class 1 rate for a single pensioner, which is the highest level of benefits attainable by a surviving spouse.

Gender has no bearing on the amount paid to either the veteran pensioner, or the surviving spouse.

Linda May

→ \*\* To Do \*\* ←

- ◆ Send Len my email address if I can receive the newsletter by email.
- ◆ Send in membership dues right away ... before I forget again!
- ◆ Send comments to Derrill regarding the proposal for a lifetime membership dues amount of possibly \$300.00.

## Did You Know ...

The term "the whole 9 yards" came from W.W.II fighter pilots in the South Pacific. When arming their airplanes on the ground, the .50 caliber machine gun ammo belts measured exactly 27 feet, before being loaded into the fuselage. If the pilots fired all their ammo at a target, it got "the whole 9 yards."

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