



WASURERU-NAI "Never Forget"



National Newsletter of the Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association

Autumn 2025 - Legacy of Remembrance Edition

Editor: Jim Trick

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Ottawa - A True Family Reunion

**80th Anniversary of V-J Day Reunion
"Legacy of Remembrance"
August 14th to 17th, 2025**



Kathie Carlson

Greetings from the HKVCA 80th Reunion Committee, following up with you on the Ottawa reunion.

Where do we begin! - We were so pleased that 208 people from across Canada registered for the reunion, and we were joined by an additional 20 people at the Gala event Saturday August 16th.

For those unable to attend, we are sorry you couldn't make it, but please go to the website - hkvca.ca where you will find hundreds of pictures taken at the August 15th National War Memorial, the August 16th HKVCA Memorial Wall visit, the National War Museum lunch and special exhibit tours, and the August 16th Gala evening. Carol's videos of the Norman Chief Memorial Dancers and more are all available on the [HKVCA website](http://hkvca.ca), thanks to our webmaster Jim Trick.

The reunion atmosphere was electric, filled with joy, warmth and the satisfaction of sharing stories and renewing friendships with so many people. For some families, it was their first opportunity to learn about the involvement of their fathers, grandfathers and family members in the war in the Pacific from 1941 to 1945 and their experiences as POWs in Japan and Hong Kong.

People attending said they felt they were part of a big weekend with family.

Riel Drury and Ryan Jim, through their company "Our Storytellers", recorded podcast interviews with families and individuals, capturing stories and history of their Hong Kong veteran. Please refer to YouTube, Spotify and Apple podcasts of "Our Storytellers" on November 8th to hear these interviews.

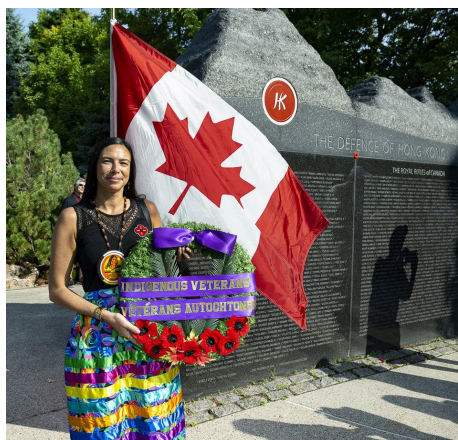


Delia Carver-Kronick and Mary Tang recite the Commitment to Remember at the National War Memorial (Richard Lawrence photo)

A highlight of the Reunion was the Friday 11:00 a.m. commemorative service at the National War Memorial honouring our

Hong Kong Veterans, with about 400 people attending. It was well planned by Veterans Affairs in partnership with our President, Mike Babin and Reunion Committee member Ian Englehart. Our committee member from Winnipeg, Stephanie Mitchell, being bilingual, was an incredible MC, filling our hearts with pride.

Following lunch back at the Westin, the afternoon was filled with five well-attended breakout sessions between 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. We received excellent feedback on the quality of the presentations. A guest at the Gander presentation was the 9-year-old Newfoundland dog, “Margaree”, who stole all our hearts. Thanks to Brad St. Croix, JP Bear, Tamara Favel, Sharon Parenteau, and Jonathon Reid for their excellent and informative presentations.



Julie Carver, great niece of Private Robert Blanchard of the Winnipeg Grenadiers, at the Memorial Wall (Richard Lawrence photo)

The Saturday visit to the HKVCA Memorial Wall, on a beautiful, warm day, was very special, providing an opportunity for families and special guests to share a private moment and shade their Veterans’ names on paper for a keepsake. More than forty wreaths and red carnations were laid in tribute to the Veterans.

After the Memorial Wall visit, we were served a delicious “box lunch” at the National War Museum theatre.

An incredible presentation by Tony Banham followed. Tony impressed everyone with his humour and knowledge of the Battle of Hong Kong. People then toured the special exhibits, designed to acknowledge the 80th Anniversary of the War in the Pacific.

Saturday evening got underway with a reception at 6:00 p.m. with canapes and a cash bar. Enjoyable music was provided by Alan Sandeman on guitar and Carrie Clermont on piano, singing a variety of songs from the past. The Gala Dinner started at 7:00 p.m. with MC Mike Babin, introducing sponsors and dignitaries.



A very special “HKVCA Leadership Award” was presented to Derrill Henderson for his dedication and commitment to HKVCA over many decades. Congratulations Derrill!

Our guest speaker, Mark Sakamoto, spoke with compassion about his grandfather Ralph MacLean, a Royal Rifle who was a POW in Japan, and how Ralph’s values and strengths have been

guiding principles all of Mark’s life. The audience was very moved emotionally. As Mark was just about finished his moving presentation, the Parliamentary fireworks flashed across the windows behind him, making this an extraordinary magical moment. We could not have choreographed it any better if we tried.



Throughout the reunion weekend, people had opportunities to walk through the Memorabilia room, which displayed pictures and artifacts collected and shared by so many families, to honour their family members.

The Chinese-Canadian community was well represented on the weekend, which was very gratifying to see. One member, Corinne Cook, presented a lovely handmade tribute to ‘C’ Force. A large group of Hong Kong ex-servicemen and members of the RHKR (The Volunteers) and their families travelled to Ottawa especially to attend and lay a wreath at Friday’s ceremony.

A big thanks to Randy Wing for doing a wonderful job in coordinating with families to bring their keepsakes, for all of us to share the history of our Veterans and the Battle of Hong Kong.

For this 80th Reunion, as a tribute to the Winnipeg Grenadier Elmer McKnight, a video was developed in August 2025 by well known Canadian trumpeter Kevin Turcotte, (grandson of Leonard Corrigan, WG), who with a couple of his colleagues, recorded a rendition of the song “I will Never Say Goodbye Again” a song Elmer composed while a POW. You can view this video on YouTube.

Edmund Wu and Glenn Miller, with displays, represented The Last Post Program which provides missing headstones free of charge for Veterans through Veterans Affairs.

Commemorative reunion merchandise was a big hit. We have a few items left, and we will provide information on how to access these items once all inventory is itemized.

The entire weekend proved to be a success because of the tireless and dedicated work done over a year and a half by the 80th Reunion Committee, representing regions right across Canada. Reunion committee members and helpers to be recognized include:

- HKVCA President Mike Babin,
- Rita Flanagan Kuhn,
- Ian Englehart,
- Judi Denison,
- Gail Angel,
- Mitzi Ross,

- Randy Wing, and Emma-Lee Wing, all from the Ontario Region;
- Emmie Flanagan from the Atlantic Region;
- Lucette Mailloux from the Quebec Region;
- Carol Hadley, Stephanie Mitchell, Pam Heinrichs, Kathie and John Carlson from the Prairie Region;
- Jim Trick from the B.C. Region.

Ex-officio members of the team were John Carlson, Mark Purcell and Julie Carver.

A special thank you to the many resource people who provided us with information and guidance along the way. The enthusiasm expressed by all gave the committee the momentum to make it a very special weekend for everyone.

To our HKVCA National Treasurer, Mark Purcell, our thanks for your assistance and financial accountability to our

President's Report



Mike Babin

Wow! What an experience! Our 80th Anniversary of V-J Day event in Ottawa was simply wonderful.

Over 200 people registered to attend three action-packed days full of learning, story exchanges and commemoration, a number well beyond our expectations.

For those of you who could not attend, you'll find excellent descriptions of the event in this newsletter. But here are the highlights:

- 228 attendees.
- 5 educational presentations.
- 2 superb keynote speakers.
- 2 commemorative ceremonies, one of them livestreamed.
- Spotlight on Indigenous veterans of the Battle of Hong Kong.
- A gala evening featuring an exceptional Métis dance performance.
- Extensive opportunities for exchanges of stories and experiences.
- National press coverage (articles in Globe & Mail, Winnipeg Free Press and other dailies, Yahoo News, MSN News and more).

Planning and executing the event was a mammoth undertaking, and I want to give special thanks to the

committee. Mark worked tirelessly on managing all the donations, registrations receipts, and expenses continuously received since our committee's inception on October 5th, 2023.

A very special thank-you to our supporters, and our many member donors and sponsors, as without your generous support this reunion would not have been possible.

Highlights of the reunion were also covered with [the well written summary](#) provided by Richard Lawrence, with pictures highlighting the many events.

To conclude, it's been a pleasure sharing with you through this newsletter, the activities of our 80th Anniversary Legacy of Remembrance Reunion weekend in Ottawa from August 14 to 17, 2025, which is now part of the Legacy of Remembrance in the history of HKVCA.

Take care and all the best to everyone!

members of our 80th Anniversary Organizing Committee (listed above) who spent over a year on it.

The theme of the weekend was "Legacy of Remembrance", and our goal was to honour the sacrifices and stories of those who served in Hong Kong, to preserve their legacy for future generations and to strengthen the bonds of family, friendship and remembrance that unite us.

I believe we accomplished all of this, and more.

We could not have presented such an extensive program without the generous help of our sponsors:

Silver	Gold	Platinum
Belledune Village (NB)	Belledune Port (NB)	Hong Kong Economic & Trade Office
Cochrane-Sinclair Law	Lethbridge United Services Institute	Legion National Foundation
Lundar, MB Legion		Métis Veterans Legacy Program
Yorkton, SK Legion		Veterans Affairs Canada
		Vivienne Poy

Thank you to these organizations and individuals, and to all of you who sent donations!

King Charles

After his visit to Canada I wrote to King Charles to make him aware of our event. I received the following letter in reply, but too late to read out in Ottawa: His Majesty also recorded this video, which recognizes the entire conflict in Southeast Asia: [Address by King Charles \(video\)](#)

A Japanese-American woman, Kinue Tokudome, has been pursuing the goal of creating in Japan a permanent memorial to POWs who died during their internment in Japan. She organized a [commemoration ceremony](#) at the Yokohama Commonwealth War Cemetery on September 2. There are 137 Canadian members of 'C' Force buried there who would be recognized were a memorial to be built.

HKVCA Leadership Award

I was especially pleased to make a very special presentation at the Gala dinner in Ottawa (photo in lead article). Derrill Henderson was awarded the HKVCA Leadership Award for his very long and continuing involvement, first in the HKVA, and subsequently with the formation and operations of the HKVCA. He continues to be a very valuable counsellor to the Board and is eminently deserving of this recognition.

This was truly a weekend that will not be forgotten. The legacy of the Veterans of the Battle of Hong Kong lives on!

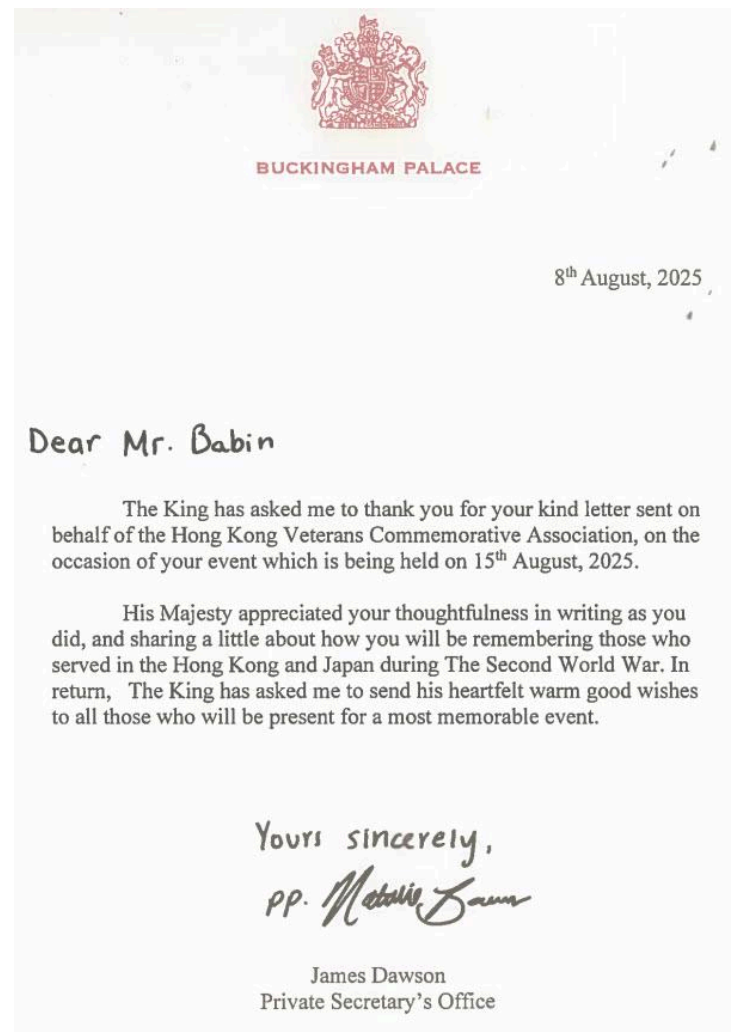
From the Editor



Jim Trick

So much happened during our Commemorative Weekend! As the editor, how do I shoehorn the descriptions, memories and emotions into this edition of our newsletter? I've been overwhelmed with content, and so the challenge is to produce an edition that acts as an aide-memoire for both those who were fortunate enough to attend, and for those who want to get a true feeling for the experience.

First off, my apologies to those who contributed their reflections that were not used. All received were from the heart, but we have limited space in this print edition. We may have more in our online version, so I urge our readers to [check it out](#).

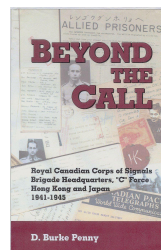


We will remember them.

Photos!

Thanks to our photographer, Richard Lawrence, we have photos! And videos! I've added links to various sources on our [HKVCA home page](#) and used some of the hundreds in this edition. Grab a coffee and browse. If you attended, you'll find at least one photo featuring you.

Richard also wrote a [heart-felt account](#) of the Commemorative weekend, along with selected photos. Check it out.



Beyond the Call - Digital

Thanks to the generosity of author Burke Penny, we can now offer his book [Beyond the Call](#) in digital format, suitable for reading on all electronic devices. While this book is focused

on the 33 members of the Royal Canadian Signals, it provides a detailed description of the battle and POW years, as well. Highly recommended!

Unbroken

From Marleen: I just watched a movie on Netflix called "[Unbroken](#)". A true story. WW2 and the cruelty of the Japanese.

It just reiterates the unspeakable hardships our prisoner-of-war soldiers must have endured.

From Mike: I saw this movie (and read the book it's based on) several years ago. The scenes of loading coal are exactly how my Dad described his slave labour in Camp 5B in Niigata, Japan.

Recognition, Connection and Sharing



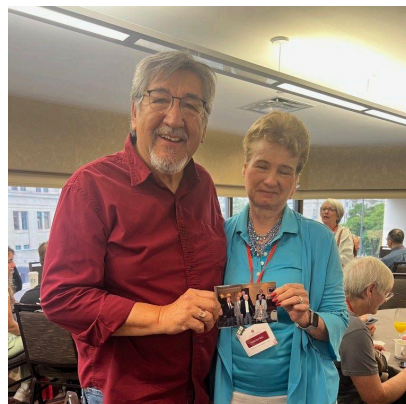
Pam Heinrichs

Well, both the Indigenous Veterans Project and the "Legacy of Remembrance" 80th Anniversary Commemoration have ended, and they are intertwined, as are many things in this world.

After a few years and much work by a relatively small group of people, the Indigenous Veterans Project has concluded. The research shows that one tenth of 'C' Force members were Indigenous – 131 men to be exact. The majority were Red River Métis with the others being Cree, Anishinaabe, Dakota, Ojibway, or Mi'gmaq. There are 61 men whose ancestry we are unsure of, but hope to look into. This research project has had a far greater outcome than anticipated. Not only did it allow the HKVCA to recognize the Indigenous soldiers that took part in the Battle of Hong Kong, it has provided space in the HKVCA for their families to proudly claim their ancestry, helping to write these veterans back into a history that Indigenous peoples or their indigeneity were often erased from. The project assisted in renewing lost family and kinship ties, helping to strengthen community. I think all who attended the 80th Anniversary saw evidence of this.

The Anniversary provided for a gathering of family members of the Indigenous veterans that really brought the Project full circle. Many had never had an opportunity to honour their veteran(s) in this way. No event previously hosted by HKVCA has seen such a proud display of Indigenous identity, at both the commemorative services and at the Gala.

The weekend was filled with serendipitous moments. I like to think that our ancestors had a part in this. The Métis families that hadn't seen each other for 30 years, and the ones who just met but felt like old friends – perhaps they were renewing kinship ties from long, long ago or renewing friendships that existed between the veterans. That was certainly done in one instance, where after reading about the friendship that existed between two Winnipeg Grenadiers,



William Boulette and William Bell, Oliver Boulette (great nephew of William Boulette), met and shook hands with Marleen Bell (daughter in law of William Bell), saying "there, the guys are touching again through us". (see photo)

There was the sharing of stories and medicine, such as the homemade wreath made of sage and cedar, with a note saying, "medicines from home" (see photo below). And sharing



stories, whether through individual conversations or through workshops, is medicine for the heart and spirit. More than one of us had a moment that felt like a message from a loved one in the spirit world. Words brought to us from Shawn Nault, Manitoba Métis Federation Minister of

Red River Métis Veterans, and from Justin Woodcock, Veterans Program Manager at Southern Chiefs Organization, honoured our veterans and families and touched our hearts. Wearing our ribbon skirts, Métis sashes, and beadwork at the commemorative ceremonies honoured our veterans and our Nations.

Nowhere was that pride more evident than at the Gala! We honoured and celebrated our veterans, our ancestors, our families, our friends (old and new), and our Nations and culture. And celebrate we did! The Norman Chief Memorial Dancers and musicians Oliver Boulette and Jerry McIvor

showed us a Red River Métis good time – toe tapping, hand clapping, whooping, and cheering! And a beautiful tune written and played by Oliver for the veterans. This celebration felt like home for many of us and our hearts were bursting with pride and happiness to share our culture, music and dance. Heartfelt thanks to the musicians and dancers who did this for us. It was a new experience for many non-Indigenous people in attendance who we were happy and proud to share with.

The above is only a small bit of the special times. The best way to end this is with comments made by some of those who attended. My heart is full, and I will hold warm memories of the time together. With many thanks to the Métis Veterans Legacy Program and the Southern Chiefs Organization for providing funds allowing family members, workshop presenters, dancers, and musicians to attend.

"I can't even describe how blessed I feel to have been a part of this. To honour my grandfather and all other veterans in such a beautiful way that I can't even put into words. Not to mention all the learning experiences and friendships. To be Métis and feel like I fit in, where I could be myself and have fun, was amazing. This has made a huge impact in my life

and has left me feeling so much honour and pride for my heritage, my grandfather and all our Veterans. Being in the room and seeing the dancing and hearing the music warmed my heart. It brought me back to my childhood, remembering my grandparents and family members who have passed."

"Having the opportunity to connect with others whose ancestors experienced the horror of war and to survive to leave a legacy in all of us! I met so many wonderful people, and some relatives too. For me the relationships made were my highlight. I have not learned any more about my father, but I am comforted to know he had good people around him pushing him to get home, even if it were not in the best circumstances. We are testament to his courage, strength, and perseverance to survive."

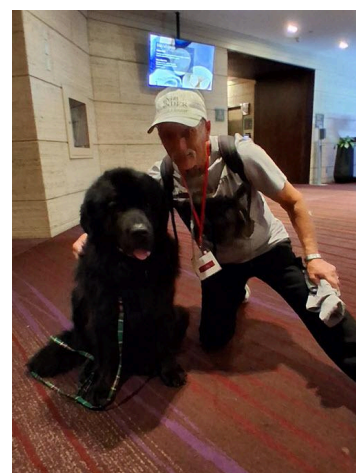
"Knowledge of history, language, culture, and origin stories of those we live together with on Turtle Island, are important for a joyous, respectful, and honourable life. I have been to many HKVCA conventions. The Métis attendees contributed in so many ways to the weekend. I learned much, and I appreciate the Métis story more than I did, because now I know more about it. My deepest thanks.

Gander (Margaree)

J.P. Bear

THE 80th ANNIVERSARY EXPERIENCE

WOW!!! I was so humbled to attend the numerous events, and to have the opportunity to meet all the Veterans' family members, and to be given the honour to show them the film about Sgt Gander. A special treat was having Joan Fisher bring her 9 year old Newfoundland dog, Margaree, to stand in for Gander at the presentation telling Gander's Story. Margaree was quite the photo-op for everyone wanting their picture taken with her.



Another treat was having two of the sons of the girl in the photo of Pal pulling the sled with three kids, Eileen Elms, in attendance to view the film along with telling tales about their Mother's stories of Pal/Gander that she would tell them when they were growing up.

I was so pleased to be given the opportunity to show the film of Gander's entire story.

I have been asked to visit Calgary, to give my presentation to schools and to the Royal Canadian Legion. I also have the opportunity to visit Gander Newfoundland to give my presentation for their community this coming Remembrance Day.

My main purpose of my work over all these years is to tell Gander's story, for people to learn the plight of him and 'C' Force at the Battle of Hong Kong and to keep their story alive.

I want to thank Kathie Carlson, her committee and the entire HKVCA Board for inviting me to the convention, it was such an honour!!!

I hope to see you all again and if anyone is interested in me giving a presentation in your local area, please feel free to call me at 623-879-9027, or to ask any questions!

Legacy of Remembrance - Some Reflections

Legacy of Remembrance proved to be an emotional experience, more so than we realized. Here are some comments and impressions from selected attendees. We are constrained by space in this paper version; we'll include more online.

The Hon. Jane MacAdam

My father, George Palmer, was a member of the Royal Rifles. He was sent to defend Hong Kong in 1941. Following the battle, my father was one of many soldiers taken prisoner. He faced more than three-and-a-half years of unimaginable suffering. He was sent to camps in Hong Kong before being transferred to Japan to Omine Camp – a grueling camp for Canadian prisoners of war. The Battle of Hong Kong, and what the veterans endured, remain some of the darkest chapters in Canadian military history.

I am very grateful to the Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association (HKVCA) for organizing the 80th Anniversary Commemorations, and for providing an opportunity to honour the memory of our loved ones who sacrificed so much for our freedom. My thanks also to Veterans Affairs Canada for their part in helping to arrange some of the events. As I laid the wreath at the National War Memorial on behalf of the Senate of Canada and at the Hong Kong Memorial Wall, I know that my father would have been deeply honoured to know that his memory, and the memory of his comrades, live on. The events have been an incredible opportunity for me to connect with the families of other veterans - I have not had the opportunity to do that until now. It was profoundly moving to hear that for many, the legacy of the war and internment carries on, even today. The bonds that have been strengthened through these events will ensure that the stories and sacrifices of our loved ones will not be forgotten. We can draw hope from their stories, as they compel us to remember not only the battles fought, but also the strength of those who survived.

Margaret Sullivan, daughter of Charles Trick, Winnipeg Grenadiers

This was my first HKVCA conference, and it's hard to see how it could have been any better. All events were beautifully planned and managed to be personally meaningful as well as publicly appropriate. There was time for private sorrow, shared reflection, and outward pride in the lives of 'C' Force members.

I feel that a major strength of the HKVCA has been the attention paid to not only those who did not return, but to the survivors of the Battle and their imprisonment, and the impact those experiences had upon them and their families as they returned home. This focus seemed very evident in the ceremonies, the speakers, and the breakout sessions, as well as in the purposefully unscheduled time that allowed amazing conversations, connections and fellowship amongst those family members to take place. The presence of a number of Indigenous and Métis delegates added an important dimension to the event - as well as a lot of fun at the banquet!

Many thanks are owed to the HKVCA Board of Directors, the Planning Committee, and other volunteers who created a wonderful environment for education, appreciation, commemoration, and support to flourish.

Susan Johnston Armstrong (daughter of Douglas Johnston, Royal Rifles of Canada)

The celebration from start to finish was magical, moving, very memorable and uplifting. Even the sun was 'au rendez-vous', a factor beyond our control. Thanks to the entire Committee, and any others for 2 years of such dedication and hard work to honour and remember the two Canadian regiments sent by Churchill to defend Hong Kong - which was an impossible task to begin with. Very special mention to the following people whom I had the pleasure to meet, even if briefly. Mike Babin, Kathie Carlson, Randy Wing, Mark Purcell, Judi Denison (whose parents from Quebec City my family knew well) and Stephanie Mitchell - who was a star emcee at the National Monument ceremony and on many other occasions.

Stephen McGregor, former Chief Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg

Oh wow! Where do I begin? The event in Ottawa was amazing from start to finish! Beginning with the opening ceremony at the National War Memorial on August 15, followed by the breakout sessions where I learned so much more about the Hong Kong experience. The whole day Saturday was also amazing. And of course the banquet which was highlighted by the Metis traditional dancers and Oliver Boulette's great fiddling. Hats off to the organizing committee for a truly enjoyable and memorable event.

Jim and Gillian Burns (Peter C. Burns, Royal Rifles)

Both Jim and I really enjoyed the 80th commemoration events put on by the HKVCA this past weekend. It was well organized, a great mixture of remembering, talking with new friends, learning, looking at the events of history with fresh eyes, camaraderie, seeing other people's memorabilia, good food, seeing our relatives in various publications, displays, great music and entertainment. We really appreciated talking with people who have spent many years investigating and telling the stories, learning new information from them, sharing their experiences with us and because we all had a common link it felt like meeting distant family members.

Thank you again for a fabulous event and for all the work put into it by the organization and committee.

Richard Buchanan, Nova Scotia

The HKVCA's 80th Anniversary Conference was exceptionally well done, KUDO's to the organizers!! The Westin Hotel was an excellent choice, plenty of space for all of the activities; break out rooms, the display of Hong Kong memorabilia, meals and the Gala. The Westin provided great meals and rooms to conference participants as well.

I especially enjoyed the various break out sessions. They provided an alternative to down time and provided a multitude of great information with very knowledgeable presenters.

The ceremony at the war museum and the HKVCA Memorial Wall were not only emotional but very well done.

Personally, I tried to make connections with many of the attendees, searching and listening to their stories that they were comfortable sharing. I found the people at the conference were open to meeting and talking to new friends.

The guest speaker for the GALA, Mark Sakamoto, was fantastic. I was honored to speak with him later in the evening. This had special meaning to me as his grandfather was a great friend of my father.

The entertainment was also a highlight of the weekend.

The 80th anniversary conference was a 10 out of 10, very well organized...a big shout out to all who made this event happen. Thank you.

Anne Okaley (Drury)

I have always known that to forget is to forget the sacrifices made of the Winnipeg Grenadiers and Royal Rifles for our freedoms that many take for granted today. Those who know of this battle and have some connection know the sacrifices made by the POWs and families thereafter.

My father, Harry Drury, fought with the Winnipeg Grenadiers and I believe he survived because of his comrades that became life long friends and his belief to never give up hope. I plan to do a documentary about my father but knowing so little of his action during the battle and so much has been told of their horrible treatment and survival to live wasn't where I wanted to start. I keep putting my life goal on mute but realize after attending the 80th Commemoration Anniversary of VJ, that the children of POWs are also getting on. With no HK veterans on this side anymore and their children are also getting older. I want to focus on their lives who they were before joining the army. They deserve to know who they were before horror changed them.

I am very humbled and happy by the large gathering of families of the veterans attending the Legacy of Remembrance and their children carrying the torch to remember forward 🙏. I made great connections and friendships that left heartfelt impressions and will last for my lifetime.

I look forward to attending another great event held by the HKCVA.

Miigwech!

Jessica Davis (Leonard Corrigan's granddaughter)

This commemorative ceremony for the 80th anniversary was very well thought out, organized and meaningful.

We heard heartfelt and personal tributes to our veterans that has had a lasting impact for me.

I learned a lot, or rather I learned more with the inclusion of our indigenous representatives at the war memorial, our Métis families that participated and shared their family experiences, and the truths that were spoken from presenters. It was powerful.

A very emotional weekend that I was thankful to be part of.

Phil Mondor (son of Paul Emile, WG)

Wow! What a weekend! So glad I came to this. I was preceded by some of my brothers and sisters who attended previous HKVCA events and reunions, and I am very happy I stepped up to the plate for this landmark commemoration to honour our dad and represent his family. I am grateful to have met, heard and shared stories with many veterans' children, nieces and nephews, and grandchildren, including several Métis, some father-son and mother-daughter teams, and Leonard Corrigan's four inimitable daughters. Our fathers, uncles, and grandfathers are enthusiastically remembered!

Tom Bergersen

The whole experience was wonderful... The conference itself was very well organized, great attention to detail, sessions were interesting and worth attending, and access to site sessions was well thought out.

We were particularly impressed with the recognition of indigenous soldiers. The evening gala brought the conference to a spirited end.

Overall, it was well worth the travel and expense... Air Canada be damned!

A Family Legacy of Service: Celebrating Barry Mitchell



Stephanie Mitchell

If you've been part of our HKVCA community for a while, you know that Barry Mitchell isn't just any board member—he's a long-time contributor and champion of our organization. For over 30 years, Barry's dedication has touched countless lives, and his influence goes far beyond board meetings. Today, I'd like to thank him for his service (he recently retired from the board of directors & will continue as a prairie region treasurer and member at large

extraordinaire) and I'm excited to share not only his story but also how his legacy continues with the next generation.

Barry's connection to the HKVCA is deeply personal. As the son of a Hong Kong veteran, (William Vaughan Mitchell, lieutenant with the Winnipeg Grenadiers), Barry has carried his father's legacy with pride and passion. His life's work has been about honouring that history and ensuring that stories of courage, sacrifice, and resilience are always remembered. As

the son of a soldier who died in battle, the HKVCA has always been a source of community and camaraderie that has helped him navigate this part of his own story. From quietly supporting events to rolling up his sleeves for big initiatives, Barry has always been there, making sure our mission shines bright.

His many contributions speak for themselves. Barry's most recent achievements include being honored with the King Charles Medal of Coronation—a testament to his long-standing service and dedication. He was also instrumental in raising funds for the Hong Kong veterans memorial wall, a landmark tribute that stands as a heartfelt reminder of our heritage. Not only has he served as our national treasurer and prairie region treasurer, but he's also the friendly face behind Barry's Emporium, the go-to vendor for authentic HK goods and merchandise. And whether it's laying a wreath at our Remembrance Day ceremonies, or diligently working through membership dues collection and reminders - the big stuff and the small stuff is always handled with intention, pride, and commitment.

And here's a touching family twist to the story: I, his daughter, now proudly serve on the board and consider the HKVCA one of the many gifts my Dad has given me. Our family's legacy is alive through every board meeting and community event. Barry's sons and grandchildren often join in, attending events and supporting the work he has championed for years. His son Grant helped with the stamp design we made a few years back, and his eldest son Vaughan (named after our grandfather) has even been a memorable speaker at one of our local VJ Day events. For us, it's a tradition of service, community, and love that continues to inspire us all.

In sharing this with you, I genuinely hope that this inspires you to reach out to your family members and extend the invitation to participate in the ongoing legacy of the HKVCA. Because we all have something to contribute. And let it be known that the memories we make, and the effect we have are not only priceless, but have a ripple effect that goes far beyond the immediate impact.



As we look back on Barry's amazing journey and the many lives and projects that he's touched, we can't help but feel grateful. His quiet leadership, unwavering commitment, and personal touch have made HKVCA a better community. Thank you, Dad, for showing us that legacy is built one kind act at a time. Here's to the past, present, and future of our HK family!

A personal note from Barry:

Hello to all my HKVCA friends across Canada!

I'm so sorry that I was unable to join you in Ottawa to celebrate the 80th anniversary of VJ day. However, I have heard nothing but glowing reports on how smoothly the program went, and how rewarding it was to all those who attended.

Attendees such as Marleen Bell, Carol Hadley, and of course my daughter and organizer Stephanie - all brought me up to date on the success of this venture.

A special treat for me was the visit of Jim and Anne Trick on their trip back home to BC. Needless to say, we discussed all aspects of the convention and of course I heard just how efficient the staging of this convention was. I was most gratified to learn that the essence of our organization was maintained and that throughout the event the message of love and respect for those who fought in Hong Kong was center stage.

My 87 years don't allow me to travel anymore, but I hope that we can keep in touch.

BC Region Report



Gerry Tuppert

ANAVETS 26

There has been a spurt of activity to report about here on the west coast. I suspect the willingness to commemorate the milestone 80th Anniversary of VJ Day coming up had a bit to do with this.

The very fine ANAVETS Unit 26 facility located in Vancouver south is the first unit of their large organization to install an HKVCA plaque in British Columbia.

Whatever the impetus, their unit President Cris Da Silva stepped up and organized an afternoon to remember. After careful consideration of the wall location, colour scheme and

maximum exposure to their patrons, Cris chose to mount our horizontal version of the plaque.



From left to right: P Mondor J Laidlaw G Tuppert Cris Da Silva (photo by permission)

Our own HKVCA member Edmund Wu, who was already familiar with ANAVETS protocol, took on the MC role and introduced their executive and guest speakers. Some thirty or so patrons showed up in uniform and witnessed the very formal unveiling of the plaque and lent their hearty applause to the moment.

I was pleased to finally meet in person Vancouver HKVCA members Jim Laidlaw and Phil Mondor who were also in attendance. The following week I was interviewed about this installation by the editor of the ANAVETS' well circulated national publication "Shoulder to Shoulder". I will post a link to that when it's published in early September.

Again we thank Cris Da Silva and the executive council for their genuine heartfelt support and making it a truly memorable commemorative event.

RCL Br 88

Kathy Gallagher, Branch Administrator for Royal Canadian Legion 88 in Maple Ridge, has requested an HKVCA plaque for their location. The plaque installation is in remembrance of the four HK Veterans who resided close by and are buried in their local cemetery. Lillian Randall, our researcher, has indicated that the following HK veterans are buried there: Ernest Whitfield (1921-1987), Claude Corbett (1919-2011), Ernest McFarland (1917-1993), Woodburn Burton (1921-1992). **We Will Remember Them.**

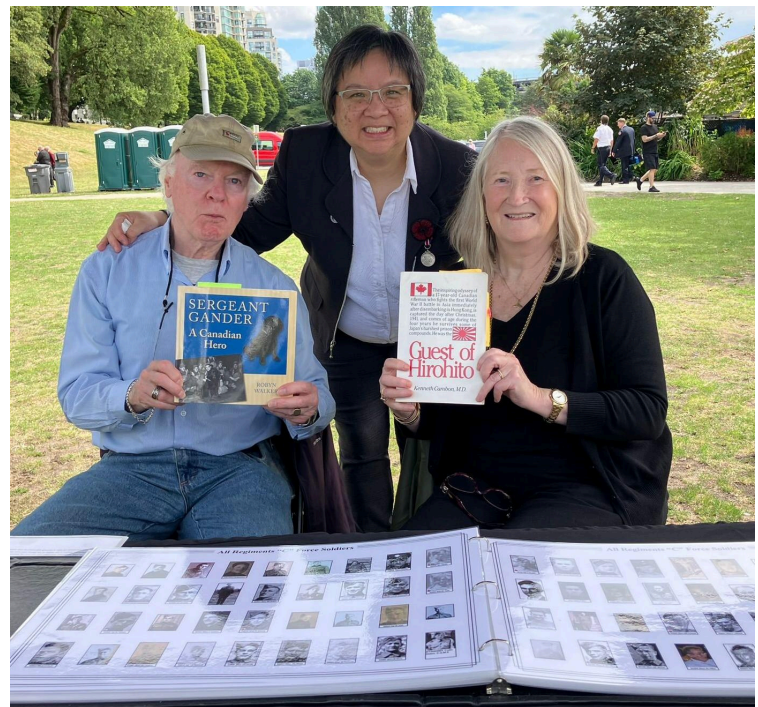
Fortunately for us, Beverly Campbell, daughter of HK Veteran Horace Gerry Gerrard, lives in beautiful Maple Ridge. Beverly has volunteered to make an appearance at the handover and thank the Legion executive personally.

Family of these men and HKVCA members are invited to drop in and say hello on Sunday October 19th, 11:00am, 12101 – 224th Street, Maple Ridge, BC.

Kites for Peace

In true BC fashion Donna Twemlow, events co-ordinator for Veterans Affairs Canada, organized an 80th VJ Day Anniversary event on the beach promoted and advertised as "Kites for Peace".

BC Region HKVCA was invited to host a display tent and provide speakers to represent our association and our veterans.



Cameron Wood Debbie Jiang and Noreen Cambon (photo by permission)

Vancouver resident member Debbie Jiang along with Cameron Wood, son of HK veteran Leonard Wood, and Noreen Cambon, daughter of HK veteran Kenneth Cambon, answered the invitation. As I was still attending the Ottawa convention at the time I was beyond grateful. They stepped up and made themselves available to represent our organization and of course speak about our veterans and what the 80th anniversary means to them.

The following is an excerpt from Cameron's report and what the day's theme meant to him, in his words:

The 80th VJ Day event that took place on 08/17/25 at Sunset Beach was well attended by not only dignitaries from Vancouver and Ottawa but also by current members of the armed forces, and retired veterans and family members of those whose fathers served in Hong Kong. I was fortunate to have had the opportunity to present my speech in memory of my father, Sgt. Leonard Wood with the Royal Rifles of Canada and in the memory of the other veterans with the Royal Rifles and the Winnipeg Grenadiers. The HKVCA booth certainly earned five stars with its colourful and informative display of media. Throughout the day I had the pleasure of sharing the booth and informing passers by alongside the well-informed and engaging Noreen Cambon, daughter of HK veteran Kenneth Cambon, the author of *Guest of Hirohito*. It's imperative that we keep these memories alive and we continue to do so in order that we not only honour those who have sacrificed so much, but also be ever vigilant and prepared for tyranny.

Well said indeed Cameron. Many thanks again to Debbie and Noreen as well for bringing your own family stories to this notable west coast event.

Connections

I must say the Ottawa convention exceeded all expectations and it will be remembered fondly for many reasons by all who were fortunate to attend given the impending strike notice by Air Canada employees.

It was gratifying to see familiar BC names like Jim and Anne Trick from Victoria and Vancouver residents Phil Mondor and Edmund Wu also in attendance. Edmund took the opportunity to host a table and display of the Last Post Fund organization.

Ontario Offerings



Shelagh Purcell

Barbara Drew- Winston Cunningham CDC- was pleased with how the 80th gathering turned out in Ottawa. Like a big family reunion meeting with people, you have come to know over the years that it was very special. And then lots of memories.

Donna Drimmie- Victor Oliver Fehr RRC- is concerned about a possible mail strike. She keeps a list of family members that she sends cards to on special occasions. Her two sisters attended the Ottawa gathering.

Barry Fair- John Grey Fair RRC- has heard reports of the audio library of veterans' voices and their families available at the Canadian War Museum and wants us to know this is available.

My own personal recollection of that special weekend was connecting with people whose family names I had seen in my dad's photo albums.

An unforgettable connection started in Vancouver and continued to surprise in Ottawa. When I contacted the aforementioned Cameron about hosting the Vancouver beach tent we chatted about our fathers and where they were 80 plus years ago. When Cameron said his father was in Sendai 2, I quickly sent him the POW group photo. Turns out his dad, Sgt Leonard Wood, was seated next to my own dad! I'd like to think that was a special 80th anniversary message from beyond. So, carry forward to the convention and a similar happening when I recognized a surname on a gentleman's name tag next to me. This was Brent Ladds, the son of William Ladds, who was seated in the front row below my dad in that well known [Royal Rifles Sendai 2 group photo](#). (my dad is the one with an X on his chest)

I'm confident in saying that many folks who attended the convention made similar family to veteran connections that will stay with them for a long time to come.

Whether it's a new introduction or a renewed connection to the Hong Kong Veteran family from long ago the result is always the same. Joy and pride that our veterans are not forgotten and that people delight in exchanging memories of their loved ones.

To all I wish you great reminiscences and epic story telling of the past 80 years and the very best for a beautiful fall season.

Gloria Fortune- Herbert Fortune WG- Vicky Hedelius, daughter, says Gloria is doing very well at 97. She has improved since spring and is anxious to get out in the good weather.

Esther Jane Geraghty- Donald Geraghty RRC- doing well after her 90th birthday party. Looking forward to the newsletter with 80th anniversary and memory of Hong Kong information.

Cara Worthington- Bert Worthington- had a trip to California for her grandson's graduation but wants her next excursion to celebrate her 90 ???th birthday



Grace Thornton-Howard E Thornton WG- home from hospital after her fall and walking around again. She reminds everyone she is Scottish and doesn't give up.

80th Anniversary of VJ Day, 2025 London Ontario - Deborah Legg. (Photo used with permission)

On Sunday, August 17th, 2025, the Remember November 11th Association held their VJ Day Celebration in Remembrance Gardens, London. Regardless of the extreme heat that day, it was well attended with representatives from the 1st CAV, Peacekeepers, 1st Hassars and speakers, Debbie Legg and Sean Wilson. We will never forget the sacrifices they made for our Freedom. In remembrance of my Father, RRC Private Lawrence Ross, his 2 Brothers and all Canadians who fought in Japan, the "Ross" family donated this stone in Remembrance of their Valour. We will never forget.

Susan Ewing- Ken Ewing RRC- was at the Hong Kong Wall during the reunion and was glad to see so many people there. She is feeling well apart from the usual aches and pains.

Announcements



There is still time!
Purchase or Donate a gravestone marker for your favorite C Force veterans.
See this link for everything you need to know:

<https://www.hkvca.ca/projects/gravestone/index.php>



Leisa installed her dad's (E30726 Roger Cyr) gravestone marker.
(Photo by Derrill Henderson)

Due to space limitations in this printed copy, some detail that appears in the online version has been omitted, and some photos cropped and resized.

Please note: underlined words in articles refer to links that are active in our online version or are active if you view our PDF copy on screen.

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