



WASURERU-NAI

"Never Forget"



National Newsletter of the Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association

Spring 2026 Edition

Editors: *Jim/Lori/Barbara*

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President's Message



Mike Babin

We are now well into 2026, and I hope it's going well for all of you.

It will certainly be hard for us in the HKVCA to top the excitement of 2025, with our fantastic 80th Anniversary of VJ Day commemoration! But there are lots of interesting activities planned across the country, many of which are described in this newsletter's articles.

We recently conducted an online survey to help us understand how members would like for us to communicate information about the association and its activities. A big "thank you" to those who took the time to complete the survey. You provided a huge amount of very useful information.

Five lucky survey respondents won their choice of an HKVCA mug or baseball cap. They are in the process of being notified and I will publish their names in the next newsletter.

Newsletter

We learned via the survey that the quarterly newsletter is highly valued as a source of information on goings-on in the association, and to hear about what other members are doing. So we will continue to produce the newsletter. But Jim Trick, who has been our long-time editor, would like a well-earned break.

So we are looking for someone (or more than one person) to take over his editing work. Jim will still continue the technical tasks of turning the submitted and edited material into a newsletter. He has some temporary helpers just now, but he and I would like to find a permanent replacement. If you're interested, please contact Jim at webmaster@hkvca.ca or me at president@hkvca.ca.

Small World

It is indeed a small world, and let me give you an example. As I write this, my wife Dawn and I are in the midst of a cruise around South America. Walking in the ship's corridor I saw a fellow I thought I recognized, and he had the same reaction seeing me. It turns out he is Ron Taylor, the Honourary President of the Royal Hong Kong Regiment (The Volunteers) Association in Hong Kong, and still lives there with his wife, Lucy. Ron and his association very graciously hosted groups of our members who visited Hong Kong in 2005 and 2010 at their clubhouse at Happy Valley Race Course.

The regiment was founded in Hong Kong in 1854 as a home defence force, and at the time of the Japanese attack had a strength of about 2,200. The Volunteers fought at the battles of Wong Nei Chong Gap and at Stanley, which means they were fellow soldiers with our 'C' Force in those battles. The Volunteers lost 289 men.

Ron is an unfailing presence at the commemorative ceremony hosted each December by our Consulate in Hong Kong. It was a pleasure for both of us to meet so far from our homes!

Annual General Meeting & Call for Nominations

On May 4 we will hold our Annual General Meeting. Details are later in the newsletter. Please consider nominating yourself or a family member for one of our open Board of Directors positions. The pay is low (\$0.00, in fact!), but the satisfaction from helping to maintain the legacy of our Hong Kong Veterans is second to none.

Upcoming Events

Our plans for 2026 include the following:

- A commemorative event in April in Markham where the primary audience will be Chinese-Canadians of Hong Kong heritage (see announcements below).

In Remembrance

Passing on Feb 3 of Regular member Bernard Lalime of Pomona Park, Florida. Bernard was the son of Jean-Pierre Lalime, RRC E30691.

- Presentation and unveiling of plaques at Legion branches across Canada (we have already placed about 60 of these).
- Some significant commemorative events in Winnipeg and area, including those involving the Métis community.
- Our annual commemorative ceremony at the Hong Kong Veterans Memorial Wall in Ottawa in mid-August, to coincide with V-J Day.

There may be other, local events as well.

Try to stay warm until spring arrives!

We will remember them.

HKVCA member Bill Calder (ON Region) passed away on November 1, 2025. He was a nephew of B46619, Vincent Calder, and was quite an active member, including submitting newsletter articles. [Obituary](#)

From the Editor



Jim Trick

Those with eagle eyes will have noticed that my editor duties are now being shared with Lori and Barbara. Since they're not sure what the job entails they are trying things out by working with me for this edition. I know that Mike has been searching for new blood also, so if you think editing this fine newsletter

might be right up your alley, drop a note and we'll discuss the compensation package and private jet perks.

From now on my focus will be on producing the online version, and I hope to leave the actual editor dues to other interested parties.

From Lori



Lori Atkinson Smith

Our HKVCA YouTube channel is becoming a great source for videos connected to the Defence of Hong Kong. Search the playlists. And if you have a suggestion let us know.

One of the historians in episode 36, Julien Lehoux, has studied Indigenous Royal Rifles 'C' Force members. I have an article from the 'Quebec Heritage News' spring 2022, received from Jim Hurd. The article mentions 5 members of the RRC as Indigenous. Someday I will follow up on that.

Two interesting podcasts were recently added from Rum Ration:

Episode 14 (June 2025) [Remembering the Canadians at the Battle of Hong Kong](#)

and Episode 36 (January 2026) [Hong Kong: Québec's Forgotten Battle](#)

Check out the *Je Me Souviens* website for this report (available in both French & English)

[The War comes to Hong Kong.](#)

Facebook- Our Facebook group became a private group in September 2025. This is the administrators' way to add a bit of security for the members of a group. This group is open to anyone interested in learning and sharing about the Defence of Hong Kong. Just answer all of the questions and click on submit. The administrators will confirm your inclusion within a few days.

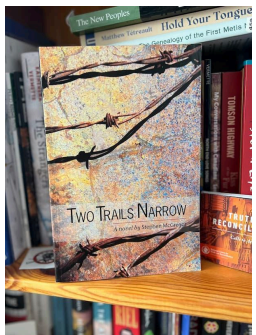
We have been slowly getting active on [Instagram](#). Share us with your IG friends. And if you would like to help out with developing IG posts, contact [us](#).

Two Trails Narrow



Pam Heinrichs

Many good things came out of the 80th Anniversary event in Ottawa, one of which was my meeting Stephen McGregor from Kitigan Zibi, an Algonquin community in Western Quebec. Stephen has a great interest in and champions the contributions and sacrifices of



Canada's Indigenous soldiers. He attended the 80th Anniversary in August, 2025. Stephen, a former Chief of Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg, was the MC at his Nation's Remembrance Day service this past November and made special mention of the Battle of Hong Kong.

Stephen is also a published author and kindly gifted me with a copy of his

book *Two Trails Narrow*, a novel about two young Algonquin boys who escape the horrors of residential school and eventually cross paths again as corporals fighting in one of Canada's best military units in Europe during WWII. Imagine my surprise upon opening the book to find one of the people it is dedicated to is "Lieutenant Kay Christie, a Canadian nursing sister who was at the fall of Hong Kong in 1941 and became a prisoner of war". I was intrigued by the dedication and asked Stephen about it., to which he replied:

"At the time I was writing the manuscript, I found that there was little info about the contributions of Canadian nurses in the world wars overseas. There are tons of books and research materials on the Canadian men who served in the world wars overseas. But I persisted and managed to locate some materials at the Ottawa Public Library, including photos which helped to create the nursing characters in the story. How many Canadians know about Kay Christie? Probably not

February saw me, an introverted public speaker, sharing the HKVCA mission of educating Canadians about the Battle of Hong Kong, with two interested local groups - Port Colborne Historical Society and the RCAF Association #434. If you would like to share the HKVCA mission with your local organizations, we can help you with presentation tips and suggestions. Contact [us](#).

many. So, naming her in the dedication would make readers search and learn more about her story and the role of Canadian nurses in war."

Two Trails Narrow follows two young boys as they become men, intertwining the horrors of residential schools, the warmth and love of their families, and the challenges they face as young Indigenous men in a changing society, ultimately finding their places in the liberation of Holland. As Stephen says "Being Indigenous, they were nobodies in Canada, but in the Netherlands they became Liberators".

The book also follows the story of the young girls as they grow into strong women, becoming nurses on the battlefields. I was pleased to see that Stephen made the women as equally prominent as the men, given their contributions may not have been seen as so during those times. He gifted this recognition to them now.

The book is not only informative, providing information on this chapter of WWII, but it's also a gripping, thought provoking read, providing some perspectives I hadn't previously considered. And in many instances, it felt very familiar. It took a few pages to capture my attention but as I continued the characters were developed and the book became a page turner. Stephen's writing particularly shines in the chapters that take place during the war, by which time I cared deeply about the characters and followed them through, almost unaware of reading and turning the pages. Emotions run deep in this book and it's one of those that you wish didn't end.

Two Trails Narrow by Stephen McGregor is published by Theytus Books.

Field Report: Dispatches from Hong Kong

Jason W. M. Kelly

Since relocating to Hong Kong in 2021, I have continued to view it as both a responsibility and a privilege to represent the HKVCA locally and to seek meaningful ways to keep the Canadian story in Hong Kong visible, understood, and honoured.

When I wrote my original field report for the Summer 2023 edition of *Wasureru-Nai*, I had every intention of submitting at least an annual update, but those good intentions were quickly overtaken by the pace of life and work in Hong Kong. Despite not submitting regular updates, my diligence in commemorating Canada's veterans here in Hong Kong never waned. The past two years were shaped by returning to key moments of remembrance that anchor Canada's story in the city, and by finding opportunities to help carry that story forward to the next generation.

In 2023, I participated in Remembrance Sunday at the Hong Kong Cenotaph in Central on 12



November 2023, laying a wreath on behalf of the HKVCA and attended the Canadian Commemoration Ceremony at Sai Wan War Cemetery (see photo) on 3 December 2023, hosted by the

Consulate General of Canada in Hong Kong, where I again laid a wreath. In 2024, I was grateful for the opportunity to speak at the Canadian International School of Hong Kong on 8 November, sharing why the Canadian connection to Hong Kong's wartime history remains significant and why remembrance



here still matters today. Two days later, I participated in Remembrance Sunday at the Cenotaph where I was joined by my daughter, Avaleigh Kelly, proudly wearing her Hong Kong Girl Guides Association Brownie uniform. (See Photo) To close the year's commemorative calendar, I attended the Canadian Commemoration Ceremony at Sai Wan War Cemetery on 1 December 2024, and had the

honour of accompanying our HKVCA President, Mike Babin, as we participated in that service together.

On Sunday, 9 November 2025, I attended Remembrance Sunday at the Hong Kong Cenotaph in Central, representing the HKVCA. I laid a wreath, and I was joined by my daughter, Arwyn Kelly, who also took part in the wreath

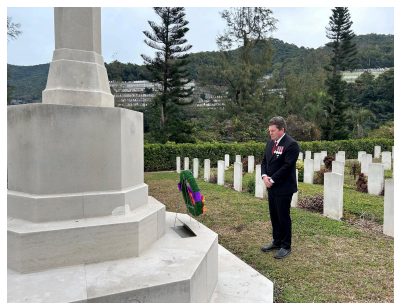


laying while proudly wearing her Hong Kong Girl Guides Association Brownie uniform. (See Photo). Beginning at 10.45 am and culminating in the two-minute silence and laying of wreaths, the service was a solemn and highly visible reminder, in the heart of the city, that remembrance remains a duty we actively

On Sunday, 7 December 2025, I attended the Canadian Commemoration Ceremony at Sai Wan War Cemetery in Chai Wan, hosted by the Consulate General of Canada in Hong Kong and Macao. This marked my fifth time attending this ceremony. Representing the HKVCA, I laid a wreath, joining other members of the Canadian and Hong Kong community in paying tribute in a place where Canada's wartime story is permanently written in stone.

Held annually at Sai Wan since 1947 to coincide with the anniversary of the start of hostilities in Hong Kong on 8 December 1941, it remains one of the most direct and visible acts of Canadian remembrance in the city.

On 1 February 2026, Ottawa City Councillor Steve Desroches (see photo) visited Sai Wan War Cemetery to lay a wreath on



behalf of the No Stone Left Alone Memorial Foundation. I had the honour of escorting Steve to the cemetery, touring him through the grounds, and sharing stories of the Defence of Hong Kong. After the wreath laying, Councillor Desroches spent considerable time

walking the rows, stopping often to read epitaphs and reflect on the cost of war, especially the many who died so young.

No Stone Left Alone is a Canadian remembrance initiative with a simple but powerful mission: to honour the service and sacrifice of Canada's military by educating and inspiring youth to place poppies on veterans' headstones. In that spirit, Councillor Desroches's visit carried a clear message that remembrance is not limited by geography. Canada's

BC Region Report



Gerry Tuppert

Greetings to all and I hope you are enjoying an early spring wherever you are. We have a little bit of activity to report on.

Lillian Randall's stellar and diligent 'C' Force research has resulted in two additional HKVCA plaque installations.

As you may be aware from previous newsletters Lillian contacts Municipal Offices and Legions in towns and cities where we know that our HK veterans have resided or are buried in their cemeteries.



The first to respond was the Chilliwack Municipal Office who in turn sent the inquiry to the Royal Canadian Legion 295 of the same town.

RCL 295 Past President Krista Smith and President Bill Higdon, Photo: Dave Shavalier

The Legion executives, favourably impressed with the effort and the message of our plaque, set a date and put a plan in motion. Mr. Dave Shavalier, Sgt. at Arms for RCL 295 was tasked with organizing the ceremony and invited the guests, some of whom had a personal connection to 'C' Force.

Dave did a wonderful job taking care of all the details.

Prairie Prose



Carol Hadley

Greetings from the Prairies - where it can be almost spring one day and a miserably cold day the next. However, we are Canadians and a hearty lot so we will survive!

Prairie Region continues to have monthly meetings, in person or by Zoom due to weather conditions. It is great to

responsibility to remember extends to places like Hong Kong, where so many Commonwealth graves, including those connected to Canada's wartime story, remain a permanent witness to sacrifice.

A bagpiper led the color party, much to the delight of the assembled. Next, a speaker introduced the guests and officiates and read an introduction to our plaque and the meaning it conveys. The speaker ended with the following:

Here today on February 21st, in Chilliwack, we remember four of these Hong Kong Veterans who have had a connection with this community. They are:

- Private Frank Brown, Winnipeg Grenadiers
- Private Robert Leslie Blackstock, Winnipeg Grenadiers
- Private Joseph Rafferty, Winnipeg Grenadiers
- Corporal Ernest Dayton, Royal Canadian Corps of Signals

Branch 295 Chilliwack-Vedder President Bill Higdon and Immediate Past President Krista Smith did the unveiling under the watchful eye of Private Joseph Rafferty's daughter Kathy Rafferty.

Once again we thank Legion 295 executives and all those who helped make this a memorable day.

Next door to the Chilliwack area is the sprawling city of Abbotsford. Royal Canadian Legion 15 has accepted our commemorative plaque and are planning their installation ceremony to coincide with their anniversary celebrations later in the year. More on this later when details emerge.

That is it for now. Wishing you all good health and warm spring weather.

meet and discuss activities we are working on. Any member can join us on the second Thursday of the month at Smitty's Restaurant on Pembina and Grant. If you're out of town let me know and I will send you the link. We recently decided to meet on Zoom only for January, February, and March going forward as the weather fluctuates too much.

Presently we are waiting for the new membership program to be rolled out to the members. This will simplify paying dues, donations, and making reports. Thanks to Jim Trick and Mark Purcell for the many hours that they have put into this.

We are participating in the annual Red River Heritage Fair with the Fort Garry Horse. The date for the Fair is April 30, 2026. Stan Lopata and Alex Taylor will set up the display and assist in the scavenger hunt. The Fair is always looking for volunteers to help with judging, especially bilingual people as there are several immersion schools participating.

Barbara Andres has been scanning documents for the website vault or to add to a person's Individual Record. If you have any documents that you would like added please let us know. They will be returned after they have been scanned.

We have been asked by the Board to compile a history of our Region's creation within the development of the HKVCA. Please send me your contribution to be incorporated in the document.

As previously mentioned, I submit information about 'C' Force to the ANAVETS 283 newsletter. I recently got some positive feedback so I will continue until asked to stop. This is a great way to educate our communities. If you don't belong to a Legion or ANAVETS maybe approach a community newsletter or a Historical Society in your area.

Ontario Offerings



Shelagh Purcell

Grace Thornton (Howard Thornton, WG) is back at her residence in a comfortable spot. Her daughter is very good at taking Grace out. She still thinks her memory has not returned after her fall some months ago. At 98 years old she is sounding pretty good.

Susan Ewing (Ken Ewing, RRC) I mentioned to her that my sister Kathie Carlson in Alberta had a conversation with Susan's son David about HKVCA. It is interesting since the convention in August that various connections are being made across the country.

Donna Drimmie (Victor Oliver Fehr, RRC) is doing well. It is a busy time for her when 2 holidays or special days happen together. This year it's St. Patrick's Day and Easter. Donna makes special cards to be sent. Her father used to say if there was still winter on St. Patrick's Day there would be snow on Easter.

Our latest plaque (See Photo) request came from a military museum in Red Deer. The museum is located in Parkland Mall so there is lots of traffic to view the items. Their website is [Veterans Voices of Canada](http://VeteransVoicesofCanada.com). Check out this display if you are in the area. We continue to review the KIA list created by Lillian Randall for future venues for our plaques.



Well, the feelings from the event "Legacy of Remembrance" in August last year are still strong with questions of when the next

one will be. So, maybe there are some people out there who would like to take this project on? We are going to reach out to some of the attendees from August inviting them to our meetings, particularly the Annual General Meeting that all members are eligible to attend on May 4, 2026 by telephone conference call.

Elections will be held this year and information will be available soon. Please consider letting your name stand to assist in preserving this Legacy. In the meantime, stay warm, stay healthy, and stay safe. God bless.

Barry Fair (John Grey Fair, RRC) was slowed down a bit with a bout of pneumonia recently. It stopped plans he had to meet relatives from the USA. Hopefully another time soon. I received Margaret Atwood's *Book of Lives* as a welcome Christmas gift. As I read through her life of literary successes and many friendships, I was stopped by one remembrance. One day Ms. Atwood was talking with her friend Adrienne (Poy) Clarkson about the story of the Poy family having to flee Hong Kong as WW2 was coming closer. They were to be evacuated as it got closer to Hong Kong.

My family (the Corrigan), like others with men in the Canadian force sent to Hong Kong, watched for any item in the newspapers mentioning events in that area. Our scrapbook has a picture of 2 year old Adrienne Poy sitting on a big suitcase - eating an ice cream cone - waiting with her family to leave Hong Kong by ship.

Then came the battle of Hong Kong, the governor surrendering the colony and all the allied soldiers, including

our dad, spending the next 4 years as prisoners of war. At that time, I was 2 years old, Adrienne (Poy) Clarkson was 2 years old and Margaret Atwood was 2 years old.

Some Special Moments/Events in the History of the Ontario Region



Pat Turcotte

Trying to capture the essence of the early years of HKVCA Ontario is a formidable task. This note is a final attempt to add to what already has been written about individuals and events of importance in the early years. Much more could still be written, but time will not allow.

In 2001, the province had been divided into 6 Areas, with each Area Rep. acting as the contact for all the members in their area. The very first Area Reps. were Liana Frenette, Ron McGuire, Randall Ross, Lori Smith, Rickie Edey, and Leon Sokalski. Their efforts made a huge difference. Many thanks!

“The Spirit of the Torch” Newsletter was the bridge which reached all Ontario members four times a year. Readers were kept apprised of activities and projects being undertaken across the province, and nationally. There was always an article by John Stroud, President of the Ontario HKVA, as well as articles about individual veterans. The ladies were not forgotten, as they had their own column for the wives, widows, and family members called “The Ladies Side of the Story”. All issues of “The Spirit of the Torch” are still available in the Archives.

Here are a few of the activities undertaken in those first years.

1. Connecting with Ontario government officials regarding attempts to include a Hong Kong Unit in Ontario Schools.

2. Participating in Conferences where presentations and material displays could assist teachers in ways to use the Hong Kong material in their History classes. We were involved every year for ten years with OHASSTA, the Ontario High School History Teachers’ Association.

3. We commissioned (with HKVA assistance and support) a booklet for High School Students authored by Mr. Nick Brune titled *Canada in Hong Kong: 1941-1945 The Forgotten Heroes*. These “Ten Lessons” have been used in many High Schools across the country.

4. The Spirit of the Torch Fund was initiated to assist members who wished to honour their veteran with a wreath in their own community. In the process, the public became more aware of the Hong Kong story.

5. HKVA Veteran Advisors, John Stroud, J.C. MacMillan, and Fred Mason worked with us on several occasions with good counsel and, in the case of our “Ten Lessons” booklet with funding assistance as well. Their help was invaluable.

There is much more that could be mentioned. Perhaps there will be other opportunities in the future.

(More information is available on our website in our [Region History section](#)) (ed)

Announcements

Notice of Annual General Meeting and Call for Nominations

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association will be held on:

Monday, May 4 at Noon (Eastern Time).

Agenda:

- Approval of Minutes of last AGM, held May 6, 2025 (attached)
- Presentation of 2025 Financial Statement
- Election of Directors
- Brief presentations by Regional Directors
- President's Remarks
- Questions from Members
- Close

To join the meeting:

From any telephone, dial toll-free 1 866-261-6767 and at the prompt enter the access code: 8761249 followed by #. Then follow any further prompts and wait until the meeting begins.

Election of Directors

A key item on the agenda of the AGM is the election of the Board of Directors. We are seeking candidates to serve as Directors and would especially welcome grandchildren of Hong Kong Veterans to volunteer. The role of our directors is to:

- Ensure that the HKVCA's mission and goals are properly executed.
- Ensure the HKVCA's financial resources are managed and utilized correctly and consistently in accordance with our mission.
- Represent the needs and desires of the HKVCA's members, and to maintain communication with the membership.

Event in Markham, ON

The Richard Charles Lee Canada-Hong Kong Library at the University of Toronto is arranging a community event on April 11 and 12, titled "*Canada's Forgotten Battle: The Defence of Hong Kong, 1941-1945. Honouring the Sacrifice and Courage of the Soldiers Who Fought for Peace Far From Home*".

The event will feature several excellent speakers, including JP Bear on the topic of Gander (with a real Newfoundland dog!), Dr Kwong Chi Man on battle history and several

- Ensure that Veterans Affairs Canada continues to manage the welfare of the widows of Hong Kong Veterans in accordance with established programs.

Our Board meetings are held once per month via Zoom, so access to, and ability to use a computer, phone or tablet equipped with a webcam and microphone/speakers or headset are required.

Please consider volunteering for this vital role in the HKVCA or nominate a member you feel can contribute to our association.

Please send your or your nominee's name and telephone number, a brief biography, and a brief summary of skills to nomination@hkvca.ca by deadline April 1, 2026 or mail to our postal address (see end of newsletter).

others, with some talks given in Cantonese. All are welcome. Canadians of Hong Kong heritage will be particularly interested.

Check our website, www.hkvca.ca later in March for more information.

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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