



# WASURERU-NAI

## "Never Forget"



### National Newsletter of the Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association

### Summer 2019 Edition

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### President's Message

Mike Babin

#### The "Homecoming" Project

My dictionary defines the word "homecoming" as "a return to one's home; arrival at home". It seems like a very mundane definition, doesn't it?

But imagine the elation felt by the surviving members of 'C' Force as they caught sight of their homeland from their ship on their return to Canada in the fall of 1945! Finally, after their long ordeal, they were returning to their homeland and their loved ones. As their train travelled across Canada, dropping soldiers at towns and cities large and small along the way, the jubilation of their families must have been incredible to experience. But there was sorrow as well, for those who did not return and who lay buried in Hong Kong and Japan.

Next year, 2020, marks the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation and homecoming of 'C' Force, and it's an anniversary that the HKVCA plans to commemorate in a big way. We hope that all our members, along with your families and friends, will participate in the events that we are planning.

The culmination will be our national convention on the weekend of August 14 to 16, 2020 in Ottawa. Our convention committee is planning a memorable event, with speakers, commemoration and activities for everyone. It's not too early to start talking it up with your families and making your 2020 summer plans!

Over the next several months in our newsletter and on our web site [www.hkvca.ca](http://www.hkvca.ca), we will be telling you more about the events that will be taking place leading up to the convention. Keep watching!

And we can always use volunteers. If you're interested in helping with this momentous event please contact me at [president@hkvca.ca](mailto:president@hkvca.ca).

You'll be interested to hear that there are two documentary films in production about the Battle of Hong Kong. I can't say more at the moment, but hopefully soon!

On a different note, you may have noted the recent visit of the Prime Minister of Japan, Mr. Abe, to Ottawa. Our Prime Minister made some remarks at a news conference referencing "90 years of diplomatic relations between Canada and Japan". I wanted to be sure that Mr. Trudeau was aware that this has not always been a harmonious relationship, so I sent him a letter, a copy of which can be found as an insert to this newsletter.

Sadly, since our last newsletter, two Hong Kong Veterans have passed away: Doug Rees and Gerry Gerrard. This means that now only seven Hong Kong Veterans remain alive: six Royal Rifles and one Winnipeg Grenadier.

#### We will remember them.

I welcome hearing from you at [president@hkvca.ca](mailto:president@hkvca.ca) with any comments or suggestions you may have about the HKVCA

## HKVA Report



*Phil Doddridge*

Greetings from sunny Gaspé. We have beaten Old Man Winter one more time.

Because of the dwindling number of HK Vets, there remains little to write about. We now number only seven:

George Peterson, Bob Barter, Ed Bolton, Hormidas Fredette, George MacDonell, Ralph MacLean, and yours truly. Hormidas is the champ, having just turned one hundred and two.

On a personal note, my daughter Nancy is now retired from a long career in education and is living near me. We

plan to put together some of the scribblings I have done over the years and hopefully publish something. It will not be “deathless prose”, but it will give me a sense of achievement, perhaps. If it materializes, please don’t be too critical.

That will be all for this time. Be good to each other and may God Bless.

Philip

(Read [Phil's memoirs](#) on our website)



## In Remembrance

### Last Post

Horace (Gerry) Gerrard, RCCS, on May 22, 2019

Douglas Rees, RRC, on March 18, 2019

### In Memoriam

Dorothy Ann Soper, widow of George Soper, RRC on May 16, 2019

Hilda Irene Grimshaw, widow of George Grimshaw, RRC on July 12, 2018

Joan Gillis, widow of Malcolm Gillis RRC E30041 on November 18, 2018



## From the Editor

*Jim Trick* (editor@hkvca.ca)

As you can see, “Homecoming” will be the theme of our 2020 convention. We look forward to publishing your stories in future issues as we approach the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II. Please send them to [editor@hkvca.ca](mailto:editor@hkvca.ca).

As you’ll read elsewhere in this issue, plaque presentations are continuing across Canada, and there are more scheduled. Make sure that your ceremony is publicized by sending me or your

newsletter rep a photo and caption of the event, so I can include the information in the next newsletter. Details are available on our [Commemorative Plaque](#) page.

Note that due to space limitations in this printed copy, some detail that appears in the online version has been omitted.

**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.

## Niagara Military Museum Exhibit



*Eugene Labiuk*

The Niagara Military Museum, in Niagara Falls Ontario, will be hosting an exhibit on ‘C’ Force, Hong Kong. The exhibit is to feature information on the volunteers who came from

the Niagara Peninsula, and then will get into the story of the troops going to Hong Kong, the battle, POW camps, liberation and the trip home. The exhibit will be up for about 9 months. The opening was originally planned for May but has now been delayed to September.

The Museum is looking for material for this exhibit from our members, which would be on loan and returned when the exhibit is over. Material such as a Winnipeg Grenadiers and Royal Rifles of Canada uniform with the HK patch, any type of Japanese memorabilia which was brought home, and personal photos. It need not be from Niagara-area members. The Museum will pay for shipping if needed.

The Niagara Military Museum opened November 2012, in the old Victoria Avenue Armouries in Niagara Falls, Ontario. The

Museum's purpose is to preserve the military heritage from the Niagara Peninsula, from the War of 1812 to the present date. You can read more about the museum, including address and hours, by clicking here.

[<http://www.niagaramilitarymuseum.ca/>]

If you are willing to lend any memorabilia to this worthy display, please contact [Eugene Labiuk](mailto:Eugene.Labiuk@tagscanada@gmail.com) (tagscanada@gmail.com)

## The Sgt. Gander Project

*JP Bear*

Well for those of you who don't know me, I am JP Bear, a US Army Vietnam Veteran, and I wrote a screenplay about Sgt. Gander and the Battle of Hong Kong. The film title is "Sgt. Gander: A Soldier's Soldier".

I have met with Sergeant Major George MacDonell, his co-author Sue Beard, and many of the family members of the Veterans.



*Standing with Gander's Statue in the Gander Heritage Memorial Park*

I am writing, to inform you of the project and also to ask if anyone would happen to have any information about Gander that would help me with his story.

Originally I wrote a script for a full-length feature film, but after speaking with various entertainment professionals, I adapted the story when it was suggested to change the genre of the film. I took the original idea and moved on to a documentary format, then to a narrated documentary format and most recently a draft for a TV mini-series.

My journey has been long over the last few years, but very rewarding. I have located information that I thought I would never find, such as Gander's birthdate. I learned he fathered 10 pups in 1938, and currently am trying to locate information

about his off-spring produced, to see if I could locate a "family member of Gander."

I had the opportunity to visit Gander and stand in the Hayden Family house, the original owners of Pal/Gander. I interviewed Eileen Elms, the girl in the photo of Pal, pulling the sled with Jack Hayden and Mike Ratchliffe. My time with her and all those who knew Pal/Gander has been truly remarkable.

December 8th in Ottawa, I had the Honour to lay a wreath at the Remembrance Wall, along with the Veterans' family members and other HKVCA members who were at the ceremony. I am working extremely hard to get this project onto the Big Screen.

My passion for this story has been growing ever since I learned Sgt. Gander and his plight at the Battle of Hong Kong. When I was in Ottawa back in 2017 visiting the Canadian War Museum, I was given the opportunity to see and hold Gander's PDSA Dickin Medal. I was disappointed to not be able to see a display, not only of the medal, but also about Gander's Story and more about the Battle.

Throughout my journey, one fact which was most surprising is the lack of the Battle of Hong Kong being taught in the Canadian Schools. When I was on my tour of the Ottawa Valley, I was in the village of Renfrew, and while taking photos of the Cenotaph in the center of town, I spoke with some high school students. I told them of research for a film I was writing about Sgt. Gander, the Newfoundland Dog, WWII War Hero and the Battle of Hong Kong. My wife said, "Dear, you have to talk to people, even in Canada, as if they don't know the story, because, they probably don't."

That hit me like a brick. I had assumed that this was a famous story that most Canadians would know. Finding this out, I realize the importance of my passion statement:

"This Is A Story That Needs To Be Told!"

At the HKVCA General Meeting, I introduced myself to the membership present and showed them my display when I give presentations. I also had with me T-shirts, which I sell to help defer my pre-production costs. The shirt is produced by the Labusch Skywear Company, located in Kitchener, Ontario, and

having them being the producer of the shirts allows me to have them delivered directly to you, saving on shipping costs and time.



This is the Silver Gander shirt:  
The cost of the shirts is \$30 CAD if ordered through my website.

Sizing of shirts are: Small to 2XL - for sizes 3XL the shirts are Sand Color

\*\* There is also a Ladies T, which run a size small,so order 1 size

larger

\*\*\* Youth sizes are available

For more information about my project and about the story go to:<https://www.sgtgander-film.com>

You can email me directly any information you might have for me. I would really like to receive any photos of the Veterans

## BC Region Report



*Gerry Tuppert*

Our BC contribution to this summer newsletter contains some sad news and the promise of happy and optimistic

content as well.

In August of 2020, it will be the 75th anniversary of VJ Day and the glorious return of our soldiers from their long and horrendous captivity. The executive has chosen this memorable “Homecoming”, as the theme for the national convention. It is an excellent opportunity to explore the different facets of the return voyage right up until their individual arrivals at home.

Everyone has a story about the hometown preparations, the telegrams, and the trains pulling into the various stops across the nation. Imagining the family reunions, mom's food and the sweethearts left behind were the things that had kept them going during dark times and now they were on the very train that was going to make that a reality. This was the happiest and also the best-documented part of the Hong Kong story.

We all have significant pictures of these events sitting in family albums and it's

time to share them with the membership.

It can be as simple as digitizing them and sending them to the webmaster (webmaster@hkvca.ca) for inclusion in the “Homecoming“ section of the gallery. An accompanying background story would be even better. Our hope is that the whole of our membership across Canada can get involved in some fashion or another, to celebrate and remember this unforgettable event. Let's all get on board the Homecoming train.



On May 22nd we were all saddened to the core to hear of the passing of our only BC resident Hong Kong veteran Horace (Gerry) Gerrard at the age of 97.

Gerry, as we knew him, was an exceptionally active individual, who until a few months ago was attending functions and contributing in any way possible to the history of the Battle of Hong Kong. He had written and recorded many articles and had been interviewed hundreds of times. He left a body of documents and material that the

with Gander. I am also trying to find photos of the "Super Dog House" that was built for Gander.

Also, I would like to speak with any and all of you about what your fathers had to say about Gander. I would also like a photo of your Father, without Gander, for a collage at the end of the film, if you wouldn't mind.

I am working very hard to get the film produced before the remaining Veterans pass.

God Bless You All and I promise... "THEY WILL ALL BE REMEMBERED!"

JP Bear

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family hopes may someday develop into a book.

Next Remembrance day at the Victoria cenotaph, it will certainly look and feel very different without his presence.

Read more about Gerry by viewing [his report](#).

### We Will Remember Them

### Submission from our BC Secretary-Treasurer Mr. Murray Doull:

Mr. Edmund Wu is a long time member of the BC region of the HKVCA. A good friend of Edmund's is Dr. Potin Chak, who is in his late nineties and currently resides in Vancouver, BC.

In 1941 Dr. Chak was an ambulance attendant when the Japanese attacked Hong Kong. He witnessed first hand the aftermath of the massacre at St Stephens where so many of our HK vets lost their lives along with the medical staff attending them. Shortly afterward, Dr. Chak was captured by the Japanese and became a POW at Sham Shui Po along with many other Chinese Nationals and of course our HK vets.



*Mr. Edmund Wu left and Dr. Potin Chak*

When Dr. Chak and his comrades were liberated, they signed a white handkerchief (99 signatures) and Dr. Chak kept and preserved this piece of history. With Edmund's help, Dr. Chak donated this handkerchief enclosed in a shadow box to the HKVCA. With the help of Phil Doddridge, this piece is now part of the display at the Bay De Chaleur Military Museum in New Richmond, QC.

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Thank you, Murray. Sounds like a good place to visit this summer.

Wishing everyone safe travels and happy trails.

Gerry Tuppert  
BC Regional Director

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## Prairie Prose



*Carol Hadley*

Greetings from the Prairie Region. As I write this article, we are enjoying some warmer weather with the trees in leaf and green shoots poking out of the ground. What a wonderful time of renewal. I hope you are all enjoying the fine weather and

the time outdoors.

We send best wishes to our veterans – Ralph MacLean and George Peterson and our 26 widows. We appreciate all that you have done.

We were able to arrange to have the HKV flag flying at the Cenotaph on Memorial Boulevard near our Legislation Building for the month of August. I hope to have a picture of it flying for the September newsletter.

We are continuing to research requests for plaques from different Legions, Anavets and other areas in Winnipeg and Manitoba. So far, we have Sunday, June 9 for Pilot Mound in Pilot Mound, Manitoba; September 14 in Portage La Prairie, Manitoba and September 19 at St. James Legion, Winnipeg. As soon as we have the other dates confirmed we will inform our members so that they may attend and if possible, participate in the dedication. We are grateful for our members who have searched out the venues and initiated the arrangements for these plaques. We have submitted summaries of these events with pictures that are located on our website. A big THANK YOU to our Colour Party and Region executive who have supported these events and often participated in the ceremony.

We have been fortunate to have about 50 people attend our plaque events and the political dignitaries from the area have been included. We send out letters of invite to them as well as a press release to local community newspapers and the social media. Often the communities have a website that we can post an announcement so that local people are aware of the event. It

all helps promote the plaque, the HK Vets and new memberships.

We were involved in the Red River Heritage Fair 2019 at the University of Winnipeg on May 2, 2019, as a sponsor for an award for students whose dioramas are war-related. We share this award with the Royal Winnipeg Rifles who also assisted in the judging of the student projects. Stan Lopata and Alex Taylor manned our display and participated in the scavenger hunt that includes the students looking for clues in the displays for prizes. They also answer questions from teachers, parents and students on our display and hand out information.

### Plaque Presentation - Stonewall, MB

Sunday, April 14, 2019, in Stonewall MB, there were about 50 – 60 people present as we dedicated a plaque in the Veterans Memorial Sportsplex. This event was coordinated with the assistance of Doug Oakford and Jim Trick's family as both men's fathers were in Hong Kong as part of 'C' Force and Catherine Precourt, who works for the town, helped also. Here is the list of the men from the area.

George PATERSON, Jack WILLIAMS, Albert OAKFORD, Charles TRICK, George NOBISS, Alexander MORRISSETTE, David WALLACE, Albert ELLIOTT

Stonewall Legion President, Teresa Taplin and the Stonewall Legion Colour Party with the HKVCA Colour Party and Piper Jimm Simon began the ceremony.

Our guest of honour, Helen Trick, widow of Charles Trick and 100 years young was present with her family. She is a wonderful lady.

Jim Trick, son of Charles Trick and Kirsty Oakford Morrison, Dad Doug Oakford and granddaughter of Albert Oakford removed the chairs and Jim Trick read the Honour Roll. Jim Trick's niece Leah Sullivan removed the drape on the plaque.



*L to R: Helen Trick (widow of Charles Richard Trick, WG) with her family: Lily (4th generation), Leah (Lily's mother), Jim Trick (son), Margaret Sullivan (daughter). Photo by Lana Meier (Stonewall-Teulon Tribune)*

We were honoured to have Mayor Clive Hines, MLA Ralph Eichler of Lakeside and Minister of Agriculture, and James Bezan, MP for Selkirk, Interlake who spoke to the audience about the Battle of Hong Kong and Canada's role.



*Stonewall and HKVCA Colour Party with piper Jimm Simon*

We had many members present - National Membership, Website Administration Chair Jim Trick; – our Prairie executive – Carol Hadley, Prairie Regional Director; Barry Mitchell, Treasurer/Membership; Marilyn, Pro Tem Secretary; the HKV Colour Party (Stan Lopata, Alex Taylor).

### **Plaque Presentation - Fisher Branch, MB**

On April 18 a plaque dedication was done in Fisher Branch, Manitoba. The Zone Commander, Joyce Sewell (also HKVCA member) chaired the dedication with Reeve Shannon Pyziak reading the list of names. Mike Barton RCMP removing the chair.

This is a list of names that were honoured in Fisher Branch. Unfortunately there were no family members present.

George STODGELL, Stanley STODGELL, Frederick GARD, Herbert MABB, Reginald SMITH, Garnett STODGELL, James GARD, Francois HAMELIN

### **Plaque Presentation - Prince Edward Legion #81**

A plaque dedication was attended by members of the Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association (HKVCA) and the family members of the 31 men who came from the Elmwood/East Kildonan/North Kildonan area, joining the Winnipeg Grenadiers and were sent to Hong Kong in 1941 to help the British defend Hong Kong. Next year marks the 75th Anniversary of the end of World War II on August 15, 1945.

Thank you to the Atkinson family, who coordinated the event. Thank you to Prince Edward Legion #81 with President - Brent Vall, the Colour Party and the branch ladies who made and served the lunch following the ceremony.

We were pleased to have Councillor Jason Schreyer attend and the Honourable Bill Blaikie (representing his son, Daniel Blaikie who was in Ottawa and unable to come). These men spoke about the Canadians who went to Hong Kong in support of the British defending Hong Kong and their sacrifice.



*L-R Pat Atkinson, Bill Atkinson, James Cox, Dennis Atkinson, Gary Arsenaault, Angie Atkinson, Chris Atkinson, Michael Brandon and Denise Cox*

Thank you to our members and executive of Prairie Region of the Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association who attended and support this program: our Colour Party, Vince Lopata, Stan Lopata and Alex Taylor; our Membership/Treasurer Barry Mitchell; Secretaries Marleen Bell/Marilyn Gelinas.

The plaque was unveiled by the Atkinson family and the Cox family.

## Plaque Presentation - St Laurent Métis Branch #250



*L to R - Pres. Randy Smith, Laureen Carriere, James Bezan MP, Reeve Cheryl Smith, Derek Johnson MLA, and Yvette Carriere*

## Ontario Offerings



*Shelagh Purcell*

The musical “Come From Away” has drawn attention to the overwhelming kindness of the people from Gander, Newfoundland, and how they hosted 7,000 passengers diverted from American airspace after 9/ 11. It’s a remarkable story.

But another Gander from another time and place also has a story to tell — part of the history of the Canadian veterans in Hong Kong. I was surprised and delighted when the pictorial newspaper Snapd, Northumberland (eastern Ontario) chose Gander’s story during November for Remembrance Day. Fred Gouvela, (GM/Publisher), said he was looking for a dog with a military background to include in their regular feature “Dogs in the hood”, and Gander’s was the name that came up. He googled it and learned the background of Gander’s life.

When members of the Royal Rifles of Canada had been stationed in Newfoundland prior to the outbreak of war, they befriended a big Newfoundland puppy and when the call came to be shipped out in 1941 — destination unknown — it was decided the dog would also go. So by train and then on board the Awatea, the dog now named Gander set off for what turned out to be Hong Kong.

As the mascot, Gander went everywhere with his RRC comrades, including into battle when Hong Kong was invaded by the Japanese. During the fighting, Gander was known to rush at the Japanese lines of soldiers, who really didn’t know

We were pleased to welcome about 50 members of St. Laurent Métis Branch 250 to witness the unveiling of the Commemorative plaque on May 11.

We had Yvette Carriere, daughter to Albert Boyer WG, HK to remove one chair and Laureen Carriere, granddaughter to Albert Boyer, to remove the other in the Protocol service. The ladies also unveiled the plaque.

We were addressed by Reeve Cheryl Smith, Derek Johnson MLA, and James Bezan MP who spoke about the brave men from this area who fought for our freedom.

We thanked President Randy Smith and the Branch members for the lovely refreshments and hospitality.

Thank you also to our Prairie Executive Barry Mitchell, Marilyn Gelinias, Marleen Bell, Stan Lopata and Alex Taylor and my chauffeur Allan Hadley.

what this big black monster was. They called it the Black Devil. But Gander paid the ultimate price with his life when he picked up a grenade thrown by the enemy and carried it in his mouth away from the Canadians. He saved the lives of his own troops.

Sergeant Major George S. MacDonell and Sue Beard created a book entitled “A Dog Named Gander”, which tells the complete story of this brave Newfoundland dog and how Gander was awarded the British Dickin Medal For Gallantry in 2000. His name is also inscribed in our Hong Kong Memorial Wall in Ottawa, dedicated to the members of ‘C’ Force.

### **From Lori Atkinson Smith, our membership representative:**

#### **MIA**

The following are members that we are unable to contact. Any help in helping the HKVCA reconnect with them is greatly appreciated.

1. Connie Darling last known to be living in Trenton Ontario. Daughter of Edward Phillips, RRC

2. Mary McGregor last known to be living in Scarborough Ontario. Widow of Herman McGregor, RRC

## Quebec Report



*Lucette Mailloux Muir*

Greetings everyone,

It is with pleasure that we all welcome summer, great sunny days.

Here in Quebec, we are preparing for a great number of Plaque Presentations in the next few weeks and throughout the summer. Our HKVCA commemorative plaques are well received in the area.

We continue with our contacts with our members and try to keep everyone informed on happenings, some joyful, and sometimes even very sad.

We wish each and every one of you a wonderful and safe summer.

Till next time,

Lucette Mailloux Muir  
Director, QC Region

## Atlantic Report

Plaque presentation at Legion Branch #26, Truro, NS on May 22. (photos available online only)

## Notices

### Can You Help?

Tim Hodkinson. ON Region, is looking for our help.

Do you know the names of the couple in this photo? It was taken on December 20th, 1945 at The Cave supper club in Winnipeg, Manitoba. They are friends of Maj. Ernie Hodkinson (WG) and his wife, Irene. Please respond to [t.hodkinson@gmail.com](mailto:t.hodkinson@gmail.com) if you can help.



### Own Your Own HKVCA Flag!



**BANNER**

With 2" fringe & pole sleeve  
36" X 45"

**\$130.00 each**



### FLAG

Nylon with rope & toggle

27" x 54" \$110.00 each

36" x 72" \$130.00 each

Please include \$12.00 for shipping

Cheque made out to HKVCA and send to PO Box 381

Winnipeg, MB R3C 2H6

Questions?? Call Barry Mitchell  
204-269-1497

## Membership

Just a reminder that if you haven't yet paid your dues for this year, you have two choices - by letter or online. Visit our [membership page](#) for more details.

As of this month, our membership stats are as follows:

Rgn	R	V	W	Rgn Total
Atl*	52	2	4	58
BC	42		13	55
ON	141	1	25	167
Pr	163	2	26	191
QC	58	2	27	87
<b>Totals</b>	<b>456</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>558</b>

\* no updates since 2018

Legend:

R - Regular Member

V - Veteran

W - Widow