WASURERU-NAI
"Never Forget"



National Newsletter of the Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association

Summer 2026 Edition

Editors: ***Jim/Lori/Barbara***

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President's Message



Mike Babin

Spring has finally arrived in most of our beautiful country. The sunshine, warm weather, flowers and leafy trees are sure welcome, and summer is not far behind!

AGM

We held our Annual General Meeting on May 4. The agenda included a presentation of our financial statement, and the election of Directors for the upcoming year. I'm very pleased to announce that our Board of Directors for 2026/2027 are:

Kathie Carlson	Bernard LeBlanc	Mark Purcell
Judi Denison	Lucette Mailloux Muir	Cameron Wood
Carol Hadley	Stephanie Mitchell	Mike Babin

They will serve until the next AGM in spring of 2027. Open the link from our website, Board of Directors, to find out a little about each of them.

A very warm welcome to Kathie Carlson and Cameron Wood who are joining the Board! Gerry Tuppert has decided not to continue serving as a Director, and I thank him for his outstanding work over many years to preserve our Veterans' legacy. We sincerely appreciate it.

Chinese-Canadians

About 1.7 million people of Chinese ethnic origin live in Canada, and 700,000 of them live in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), making the GTA the home of the second largest Chinese community in North America. Of these, over 240,000 are Cantonese-speakers and close to 100,000 were born in Hong Kong.

This was the target audience for an event in April presented by the University of Toronto's Richard Charles Lee Canada-Hong Kong Library and the HKVCA. It was held in Markham, in the north of the GTA.

Hundreds of curious people attended to hear about "Canada's Forgotten Battle: The Defence of Hong Kong, 1941-1945". They viewed displays describing the history, met "Gander" and heard about his exploits, and saw presentations - some given in Cantonese - about various aspects of the Battle of Hong Kong.

In the articles that follow later in this newsletter you'll find more information about this very successful event.

Virtual Events

A few years ago, we held a series of "virtual events" over Zoom that featured speakers on various topics related to the Battle of Hong Kong. The feedback from these was very positive, and I would like to hold more beginning this fall. I encourage you to provide your suggestions of topics and speakers. Please send them along to me at president@hkvca.ca.

This edition of the newsletter has some fascinating personal accounts, offered from different perspectives than usual. I hope you will find them to be interesting!

Enjoy the rest of spring and the summer months to come!

We Will Remember Them.

In Remembrance

Donna Drimmie, HKVCA member, daughter of RRC Victor Oliver Fehr B68310, February 24 2026.

Gloria Fortune, widow of WG Herbert Fortune H6548, April 22, 2026. Obituary

In This Issue



Editors: Jim Trick/Barbara Andres/Lori Atkinson Smith

Welcome to our Summer ***WASURERU-NAI.*** Our eagle-eyed readers will notice we've expanded our scope for this edition. We are now receiving submissions from folks who, up until now, have not been associated with the 'C' Force story, but have found it interesting and compelling. A good example is the next article submitted by Jane Parry.

A little further on, Jason Au, whose parents lived in Hong Kong, brings his perspective as someone who discovered, almost by accident, the story of the Canadians of 'C' Force in Hong Kong. The amazing video that he produced is well worth your viewing time. You may walk away with a better understanding of how Canada's involvement was part of a much bigger picture. As one commenter stated:

Thank you for producing this highly informative video. How wonderful it would be to have this important time in Canadian History told to students in Schools across the Country. Kindest Regards and keep up the incredible work. From a Very Proud Nephew of Joe and Charlie Fitzpatrick C Force Royal Rifles of Canada.

We are hoping to encourage members of 'C' Force families to share their experiences of a father returning home as a different man, or a relative they never met. Barbara has led things off - check out her story below. Feel free to submit your story to editor@hkvca.ca. We all gain personal insight as we hear of others' challenges in these circumstances.

A Reminder

This newsletter exists with the support of our contributors. Thank you! However, you'll see that some regular submissions are missing in this issue. Please keep your submissions coming and note that submissions may be edited for clarity and brevity.

Spread the Word!

Our association mission is to honour the sacrifices and stories of the Canadian soldiers who served in the Defence of Hong Kong, and to preserve their legacy for future generations. We are committed to achieving this through heart-led actions such as commemorative events, public storytelling via traditional and social media, the placement of commemorative plaques, and the creation and sponsorship of educational materials and initiatives.

Are you interested in speaking to groups at local historical societies? Armed forces groups? A group you are a member of?

These groups often seek speakers for their meetings. If you are interested in doing this on behalf of the HKVCA, we suggest that you contact your local groups. We can help you with the presentation and information to share.

Social Media

Our social media has been pretty active lately. If you haven't yet posted on our Facebook group - PLEASE DO! Consider this your official invitation to post. Hong Kong Veterans of Canada. https://www.facebook.com/groups/HongKongVets

The Facebook group was made private in September 2025 for security reasons - not to have a selective membership.

When using the invite button, please let your friends know there are 2 tasks to complete the joining process - answer ALL the questions PLUS agree with the group rules. If help is needed to complete this process, please contact one of the group Admins through the admin messaging and we will try our best to assist you.

In the Mailbox



UESDAY, OCTOBER 19, 1943

Dented Bugle And Hat Badge Prized Winnipeg Souvenirs Recall Hong Kong Heroism

Bugler Terry Webb and Lt.-Col. S. M. Scott, M.C., officer commanding, 2nd (R) Battalion Winnipeg Grenadiers, examine the battle-scarred bugle found at Hong Kong.

Our good friend Gene Labiuk, from the Niagara Military Museum, shared with us a find from his research.

While doing research for some of my military writing I came across this October 19, 1943 article in the Toronto Evening Telegram and tells the story of a Dutch diplomat who must've been repatriated on the 1st sailing of the SS Gripsholm. It deals with the repatriation of two items which he found on the battlefield while he was a civilian internee in HK.

We've scanned the content for readability.

Winnipeg, Oct. 19 — A dented, battle-scarred bugle and a Royal Winnipeg Rifles hat badge have come back home to Canada, mute symbols of the heroic stand of the 1st Battalion, Winnipeg Grenadiers at Hong Kong in 1941, and holding in trust a tale that will not be fully revealed until the war's end, if then.

The two war souvenirs were found at Hong Kong by D. G. E. Middelburg, former Netherlands Consul General while he was interned in the Crown Colony prior to being repatriated. Substantial evidence indicated the bugle was the property of the Winnipeg Grenadiers. A standard Army instrument, it bears the stamp of a Toronto manufacturer, and is bound with the familiar green tasselled lanyard. It is the color of burnished copper and has a silver mouthpiece. The lower portion contains a score of dents.

The bugle has been forwarded to the 2nd (R) Battalion, Winnipeg Grenadiers. In accepting it, Lieut.-Col. S. M. Scott, M.C., officer commanding the unit, said: "The valor of the 1st Battalion at Hong Kong is a source of pride to Canada as a whole and in particular to the members of the 2nd Battalion.

This bugle will serve as a constant reminder to men of the unit here of that heroic stand."

An honored place has also been found for the R.W.R. hat badge. It is resting to-day among battle souvenirs of the Riel Rebellion of 1869, the South African War and the First Great War. Hung side by side with a painting from Louis Riel's bedroom, a sniper's rifle used by a direct descendant of Riel killed while serving with a World War regiment, the badge is mute evidence that although the "Little Black Devils" didn't take part in the battle for Hong Kong as a unit, some of its former members saw action there with the 1st Battalion Winnipeg Grenadiers.

A score of members of the regiment, oldest infantry regiment in Western Canada, which celebrated its 60th anniversary this year, transferred from the Rifles to the Winnipeg Grenadiers just prior to the departure of the latter unit to the Far East. It is presumed that the badge belonged to one of these men.

Meanwhile, 16-year-old Russell Smith believes the badge might belong to his father, Pte. Frank Smith, 1179 Pritchard avenue, Winnipeg, who was among the R.W.R. 's who made the transfer. Pte. Smith is now in a Japanese prisoner-of-war camp. Lieut.-Col. J. E. Tulloch, officer commanding the Reserve Battalion, Royal Winnipeg Rifles, identified the badge as that of an "other rank."

"It's travelled a long way, hasn't it?" said the boy as he gazed thoughtfully at the badge. "It might be Dad's because he enlisted in 1940 with the Royal Winnipeg Rifles and transferred to the Grenadiers just before they left for Hong Kong. He'll certainly come down to the barracks to see it when he gets home," Russell added.

"We are grateful for the thoughtfulness of Mr. Middelburg in forwarding the badge to Canada," stated Lieut.-Col. Tulloch. "It has been placed among the many souvenirs and trophies of the Regiment and it will serve as evidence that some former members of the Royal Winnipeg Rifles served with the Grenadiers in their gallant fight at Hong Kong."

A Winding Road to HKVCA



Jane Parry

When I contacted Kathie Carlson last summer to see if I could attend the HKVCA gathering in Ottawa, I wasn't sure what she would say. After all, I'm not a family member of a veteran, nor a professional historian. But I needn't have worried; Kathie was just the first of many from the HKVCA to make me feel genuinely welcome.

The journey to Ottawa started in Hong Kong, 15 years ago. My kids were young, and on early school mornings I'd drive them to the station, then sometimes take a detour home along the winding road through Cape Collinson, past Sai Wan War Cemetery. One day I stopped, intrigued by the rows of neat white headstones, and went in, the first of many times. I sat in the early morning quiet, looking out over the melancholy peace of the cemetery, so lovingly cared for, it was clearly an important place. Eventually, I wandered to the bottom of the cemetery and realized that row upon row of headstones were for Canadians, laid to rest alongside British, Punjab, and Rajput regiments.

What struck me most, walking among them, was how young they were. Some were teenagers, many in their 20s. It was notable when one had reached their late 30s or 40s. I wondered who these Canadian men were, and what had brought them to this fate, to be buried so far from home.

A couple of years ago, now living in Canada, I found myself thinking back to Sai Wan and the Battle of Hong Kong. I learned the numbers: 1,975 Canadians in "C" Force. One died at sea; 290 were killed in action; 264 died as prisoners; 1,420 returned home. But I kept wondering: what are the stories behind them?

I stumbled upon the HKVCA website and its collection of veterans' stories, and lost track of time reading them. Here were first-person accounts, not dry history, but recollections full of feeling: bravery, heroism, suffering, pride, sadness, anger, forgiveness. The more I read, the more vivid a picture they painted.

Last summer in Ottawa, the veterans' names and grainy photographs became far less abstract. Their lives became real when I met their children and grandchildren. I'd read about Alfred Babin going off to war, seen photos of him as a young soldier, but then I met his son Mike, there with his own children and grandchildren. I met Leonard Corrigan's four daughters, and heard how their mother had sent one man to war and welcomed back another who never fully recovered from what he had experienced. I met Pamela, daughter of Red River Métis veteran Fred Poitras, who told me how his story had been hidden, his Métis identity absent from official records. It struck me that all those men who never came home had real lives cut short by the fateful decision to send them to Hong Kong.

After Ottawa, together with a group of fellow Hongkongers now living in the Greater Toronto Area, I helped organize an event at a Chinese community centre in Toronto: 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. It was a remarkable success, with more than 1,000

people over two days visiting exhibitions, hearing guest speakers from Canada and Hong Kong, meeting with the HKVCA, and even greeting a Gander lookalike Newfoundland dog.

I was able to put all those hours of reading veterans' stories to good use, delivering an opening presentation based on first person accounts of the journey of "C" Force, from the decision to enlist, through to liberation nearly four years later, and everything that happened in Hong Kong and Japan in between. It was a privilege to share their words, and I felt a deep responsibility to get the story right.

By telling the stories of those who survived, I was, in some way, also honouring those who didn't make it home. When I return to Sai Wan War Cemetery now, the names are more familiar. I go with a sense of sadness for the lives they never got to live, and a profound gratitude for what they did for Hong Kong, the city I call home, that went on to enjoy decades of peace, prosperity, and freedom. They are not forgotten.

Read more about Jane, her career, accomplishments and experiences.

Canada Was Already Here: The Story Behind My Remembrance Day Video



Jason Au

In April 2026, the English and Cantonese versions of my YouTube video, From Canada to Hong Kong: A Remembrance Day Story, were shown in full at the event, Canada's Forgotten Battle: The Defence of Hong Kong, 1941–1945, co-hosted by HKVCA and the University of Toronto Richard Charles Lee Canada-Hong Kong Library at the 105 Gibson Centre in Markham.

A video made in Hong Kong by a Canadian son of Hong Kong immigrants had returned to Canada.

I was born and raised in Scarborough, Ontario, in the multicultural Canada of the 1980s, the son of 1960s immigrants from Hong Kong who had joined relatives who had come earlier. Canada was home. Hong Kong was family. Like many children of immigrants, I grew up inside Canada's cultural mosaic before I understood how rare it is: different histories, languages and family stories, finding their place in one shared country.



Years later, I found myself living in Hong Kong, working in a profession far from filmmaking, and seeing the city through Canadian eyes and family memory. My grandparents and elder aunts and uncles had lived through the Japanese occupation. They did not speak of it. The trauma was there, but mostly unspoken.

Then I encountered another silence.

Jardine's Lookout memorial marker (photos by Jason)

Hong Kong is known for its skyline and density, but much of the city is mountain, forest and trail. Like many people who live here, I took up hiking. On Hong Kong Trail Sections 4 and 5, near Jardine's Lookout and the former Western Brigade Headquarters, I passed signs commemorating Canadian contributions to the defence of Hong Kong. They stood in clear view — on trails I walked, in the city my family had known.



Hong Kong trail landscape near wartime sites

I learned Canadian wartime history in Grade 10 History class: Dieppe, Juno Beach, the liberation of the Netherlands, and familiar chapters of Canada's war memory. But I did not remember learning much about the Battle of Hong Kong, or about the Canadians of 'C' Force who came here in 1941, fought far from home, endured

captivity, and became part of Hong Kong's wartime story. For veterans and families, that absence carries weight.

The video grew out of that realization. It follows the Canadian story of the Battle of Hong Kong through present-day Hong Kong — trails, memorials, cemeteries and wartime sites — while connecting that history to my family's experience of occupation. It placed two silences beside each other: the Battle of Hong Kong missing from my Canadian education, and the inherited trauma carried by my family.



Jason Au at Jardine's Lookout marker

I did not expect much attention on YouTube. But it was noticed by Canadian Consulate staff in Hong Kong, then the Consul General, Jane Perry, and eventually Mike Babin and Lori Atkinson Smith of HKVCA. Some viewers shared that it reawakened memories as children and grandchildren of veterans. That reminded me that people can come to this history from different places and still be united by remembrance.

Remembrance Day is, first and foremost, a day for us to honour service, sacrifice, and the veterans who bore the cost of war. But in a divided world, remembrance can remind us that Canadians have been connected in ways we do not immediately see.

The Battle of Hong Kong is one thread in that wider cultural mosaic. Like a quilt, Canada holds because each piece is recognized, and because the stories of others are not threats to our own.

In this world — fragmented, transactional, tempted by walls and fortresses — that stitching is part of Canada's fabric: a pluralistic country that works not because our stories are the same, but because we keep choosing to recognize them as shared.

Here are links to the videos:

English: From Canada to Hong Kong | A Remembrance Day Story: https://youtu.be/K6jASjJjVY4

Cantonese version: 楓葉飄落維港 https://youtu.be/FZhwmWVhQ5Y

Childhood Passions



Tyson Ng

A common question asked by curious visitors was if he was Gander himself. If this is what a 90 year old dog appears to be, all would be well in the world.

"Wasn't the war somewhere else", along with "Didn't something happen in Singapore", or even "the British were here?" are just some of the responses one would typically receive on the streets when talking about the military history of Hong Kong. I am new to the HKVCA, with the 'Canada's Forgotten Battle' event being my first interaction with the organisation, but I share the same sentiment as most members that more should be done to educate the Canadian, and Hong Kong peoples in the significance of the battle. I attended King George V school (the first, or second place the Union Jack was raised upon liberation in 1945, if I remember correctly) for several years back in Hong Kong, and I remember covering the battle in several history lessons. In hindsight, I reflect on how easy it would be to conduct a simple field trip to the war relic trails of Lion Rock or Wong Nai Chung Gap to enhance learning about what a pivotal time in local and global history December 1941 was. Luckily, we have events such as the April 11-12 conference to keep the memory alive. Whilst manning the HKVCA booth in the display area, I talked with dozens of Hongkongers, some being new immigrants to the GTA, but all with an interest in learning about where we came from. Starting conversations off with a simple 'where in HK are you from?' does surprising wonders in a community so far from the heartland.

As those present at the event know, I am a Naval Cadet in the Royal Military College of Canada (RMC) studying history (obviously), whilst preparing to become an officer in the Canadian Armed Forces. This came in handy when conversing with several veterans of the Royal Hong Kong Regiment (Volunteers), the successors of the famed Hong Kong Volunteer Defence



Corps who fought alongside ‘C’ Force. One of whom was Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Alfred Lai, the former CO of 32 Signals Regt and a member of the RHKR prior to handover. We discussed many topics, but he kept on referring back to telling me how proud he was to see a fellow Hongkonger serving a country a world away, in a similar fashion himself and countless other Hongkongers chose, especially in a time of global unknowns and heightened tensions. Coming at the culmination of my first year at RMC, such appreciation did wonders in solidifying I had made the right choice by following my dreams and donning the uniform.

Dr. Kwong Chi Man, a well known researcher, and me at the event

‘Canada’s Forgotten Battle’ was the first time I had formally interacted with the community involved in commemorating the Battle of Hong Kong. I am very grateful for the chance to participate in such an eye-opening ceremony. I met and dined with professors whose publications I had read and was able to make a successful entry into the world I had always appreciated since childhood. It was also not lost on other participants that my presence, for a lack of better words, injected a tad bit of youth into a scene dominated by older generations.



Dr. Kwong Chi Man, Dr. Brad St. Croix, Judi Denison and I in deep conversation at the HKVCA booth



Years ago, I read Black Watch, Red Dawn by Neil & Jo Craig. A late chapter details an post-handover interaction with a People’s Liberation Army lieutenant and the author, where the latter asks what the officer would like his unit to resemble. The Chinese lieutenant happily responded by gesturing to a photo of Scottish Black Watch squaddies on parade. “Like that”, being the verbal confirmation. RMC prides itself on creating resilient and trustworthy officers through its four pillars curriculum, allowing the Canadian Armed Forces to be the best it can be. Attending Battle of Hong Kong events is one of my ways in helping me prepare for a future career as a commissioned officer representing the King, and also, in a way, is my gesture of paying tribute to the members of ‘C’ Force who arrived on the Awatea so many years ago. If I can gauge a similar response from others through the future enlisted NCMs under my command, I think I can rightly take that as a cue that I’m doing something right.

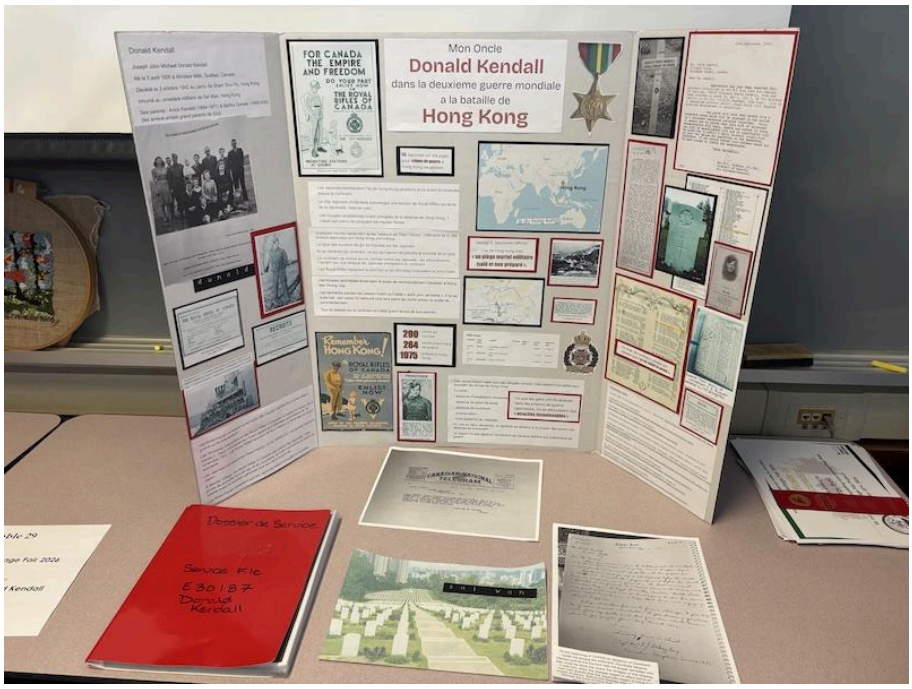
LCol (Ret’d) Lai. It always makes me happy to see I’m not the only Hongkonger in the forces!

I came to the event to feed my longstanding passion for Hong Kong history, which is precisely what I was able to take away. However, I now also see that partaking in my passions through associations such as the HKVCA doesn’t just help in academic pursuit, but can pave the pathway in fully becoming the officer, but more importantly, the person that those in my life know I can be. For my family back in HK, my wonderful friends and future coworkers in RMC, my past teachers, the city I love so well, and the country whose flag I now wear.



Event Volunteers of ‘Canada’s Forgotten Battle’ in Markham, April 11-12

Izzy Frail Regional Heritage Fair Winner





Izzy Frail, a grade 7 French immersion student at Kings County Academy, Kentville NS, completed her heritage fair project on her great-great uncle Donald Kendall, who died in October 1942 in the camps in Hong Kong, and is interred in Sai Wan Cemetery. Izzy completed her project in French and was selected as 1 of 8 students nominated from her school to attend the regional heritage fair on May 22nd. Izzy, as 1 of only 3 French students presenting at the regional fair, was awarded the biography award. Her project generated considerable interest as she presented to the judges in French, and to the community at large in English during open viewing. Her project was also visited by other military and war presenting students, and even one or two community members who also had familial connections to the Hong Kong camps.

One of the most shocking parts of her project, which her genealogist mom had not noted before, was that Donald's parents, Anick and Bertha, were not notified that Donald was in the camp from the fall of Hong Kong in December 1941 until later in 1942, after he had already died.

Many thanks from the Frail family for the support of members of the HKVCA Facebook group, especially Marilyn Puffer Wright, who provided a photo of her dad's diary which recorded Donald's death date, and also to the many family historians who have worked before her in gathering much of the primary source material used.

Izzy was asked what her favourite resources were in her research, and she stated it was the podcasts she had listened to. Thanks to the Juno Beach Centre for their episodes which featured heavily in the information she gathered.

Stories From Home

Barbara Andres (editor)

At our recent HKVCA AGM, one of our members said "I am my Father's hope." That profound statement initiated a conversation between the editors of this newsletter about how our lives growing up differed from those we knew whose fathers weren't Hong Kong veterans.

The physical and psychological ravages our fathers endured during their internment affected them in powerful ways. At a time when PTSD was neither well recognized nor understood, these men were sent home to resume life as "normal." And they tried, some more successfully than others.

We belong to a unique community.

Let's use this newsletter to share our anecdotal stories, both joyful and painful, about growing up with a Hong Kong veteran as your Dad, Grandfather, sibling, uncle, cousin, or friend. You may request to submit your story anonymously if you prefer.

Please send your submissions to editor@hkvca.ca.

Barbara's Story

The creation of the HKVA was crucial to the wellbeing of the surviving Hong Kong veterans. In addition to their fight for ongoing support from the government, it provided them with opportunities to gather and support each other as they tried to re-integrate themselves into some semblance of a normal life. But it wasn't only the men who benefited. Their wives did as well.

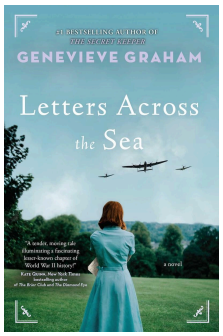
I remember my mother saying how, through attending HKVA events, she was finally able to connect with other women experiencing some of the same struggles as she was, such as the difficulty dealing with a husband who was frequently ill or suffered from night terrors. She certainly didn't have any friends in our small community who had to nurse their husbands through bouts of recurring malaria. Even the local doctors weren't of much help with that. Dad tried, and in very many ways succeeded, in being a loving husband and father but some days he just didn't have the strength left to try anymore. We didn't have any extended family in our community. So Mom was left to look after Dad, the household, the children, and my father's business on her own. Since Dad was self employed, when he was sick there was no income coming in so finances were always a significant issue for her as well. Mom got a lot of comfort from sharing with other women who were also struggling, knowing that she wasn't alone and being reassured that she wasn't a failure as a wife and mother for having those struggles. These women became confidants and trusted friends.

Book Reviews

Have you read any books recently or even long ago that refer to the Battle of Hong Kong or life in China or Japan during WW2?

Give us a sneak peek to what the book is like, what you did or didn't enjoy, and for what age reader it would be suitable.

Send your review to editor@hkvca.ca for inclusion in a future newsletter.



Letters Across the Sea by Genevieve Graham

I think I started reading WW2 historical fiction as I was too young to hear any stories from my grandfather before he passed. In some ways it makes me feel closer to him reading what he may have gone through, but it can also make me feel very sad and angry. My grandfather was a Winnipeg Grenadier and Hong Kong POW. In later years I was told my grandfather didn't really talk about his experiences, other than to those who were there as well.

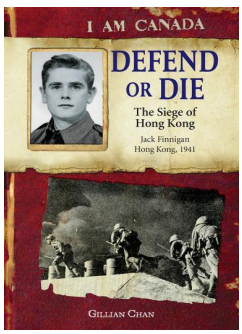
When I came across this book at our library I brought it home to read because I saw on the back cover that part of the book was based on the battle for Hong Kong. I have also read other books by Graham and thoroughly enjoyed them.

The story is told from the view points of Molly (Protestant) and Max (Jewish) and starts off in Toronto, 1933, going through to the end of WW2. It shows how Hitler's influence made its way to Toronto, how families and neighbours were torn apart by antisemitism and includes a forbidden romance between neighbours Molly and Max. The story also includes the Christie Pitts riot, showing the antisemitism of the time right after the depression (one of the deadliest riots in Canadian history). Finally, the story unfolds with WW2 focusing on the Canadians in the Battle for Hong Kong, with Max enlisting to go overseas. Letters trickling over the ocean describe the battle and what the soldiers endured as Japanese POW's as well as a little of life after soldiers returned home.

At the end of the book, Graham gives the historic context of the true events covered in the story as well as her inspiration for writing the book.

I did enjoy the book, however, in my selfishness, I wish the story would have focused more on Max, the battle and his life as a POW.

*Reviewed by **Maureen Morrison**, granddaughter of Ken McCulley H6039*



I Am Canada: Defend or Die by Gillian Chan

This book is suitable for 8 to 12 year olds. It gives basic information about the Battle of Hong Kong through the eyes of a 19-year-old soldier.

I've read it once, and will read it again this summer with my youngest grandchild.

Gillian Chan is a Canadian author.

*Reviewed by **Lori Atkinson Smith***

Gander Update

JP Bear

Wow, it has been an awesome 8 months. I am truly blessed to have so many opportunities to promote Gander's Story. I was honoured to show the film and give my presentation at the 80th Anniversary in Ottawa last August. In November I visited St. John's and Gander Newfoundland to show the film and speak about my research in making it.



Bear giving presentation at Gander Globe Theater, Photo taken by Stephanie Cull.

In April, I was invited to Markham (Toronto) to speak and show the film at the The Forgotten Battle Event. After I returned home, I was privileged to have the film shown in New York City at the AKC Museum of the Dog for 5 days, starting on Gander's birthday, April 15 (1935). I was involved in over 30 showings and presentations during that 8-month period.

For those of you who have not yet had the opportunity to view my film, search Youtube for, "A Tribute to Gander by JP Bear" or click on this link to watch it.

I am honoured to have an article telling Gander's story printed in the US American Legion Magazine, and in the upcoming November/December Edition of the Royal Canadian Legion Magazine.

I will also have articles published in the Newfoundland Dog Club of Canada magazine and the Newfoundland Dog Club of America's magazine "Newf Tides". And I have been invited to present the film at their respective Newfoundland Dog Shows in Canada (September 2026) and the US (May 2027). Talk about spreading the word!

"A Tribute to Sgt Gander", a song telling Gander's story written, produced, and sung by Cameron Wood (Son of RRC CPL Leonard Wood) was recently sent to me. This song is so awesome. I am so proud that the song honours, not just Gander, but all of 'C' Force. To listen to the song, which is also accessible on Youtube, click on this link or email me and I'll send it to you.

I am blessed to have such great support! Thank you all for giving me the opportunity to not only tell Gander's story, but to feel the respect and love that the men of 'C' Force had for this dog. I know that some people might just say, "He was just a dog", but as CSM George MacDonell said toward the end of his and Sue Beard's book:

From the Dickin Medal Ceremony, *"If Gander was watching the ceremony, to fix his place of honour forever in our history and in our hearts, I know he would be grinning his doggy grin as he forgave the poor ignorant souls who, after hearing of the ceremony said: "But after all – he was only a dog." "Some dog, eh, Gander?" A Dog Named Gande*r, page 32.

All I can say is that I honour Gander and the entire 'C' Force with the same respect and love for the men I served with in Vietnam. I was a Company Clerk and I wrote special notes to their families when typing the letters telling them their son or father was not coming home vertically and how much he would never be forgotten. I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to tell Gander's story and to display the love I have for him.

This Is A Story That Needs To Be Told!

God Bless You All – Lest We Forget.

New Brunswick Military History Museum

Help Us Preserve the Legacy of Canada's Hong Kong Veterans

Melynda Jarratt, Curator

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MUSÉE D'HISTOIRE MILITAIRE DU NOUVEAU-BRUNSWICK
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The New Brunswick Military History Museum is proud to announce the development of a new permanent exhibit on 'C' Force and the Defence of Hong Kong at 5th Canadian Division Support Base Gagetown in Oromocto, New Brunswick.

In late 1941,1975 Canadian soldiers sailed overseas to bolster the garrison in Hong Kong against an impending attack by the Japanese Imperial Army. All volunteers, they were comprised of two battalions, the Royal Rifles of Canada and the Winnipeg Grenadiers, of which nearly 200 were from New Brunswick. Their shared experiences of battle, captivity, and eventual liberation form a powerful and deeply human story that continues to resonate with families across Canada.

The Museum currently holds a small collection related to Hong Kong veterans. Most recently, the family of Rifleman Joseph C. Frenette (Royal Rifles of Canada) generously donated his complete collection, including a remarkable archive of prisoner-of-war correspondence. This material has been fully transcribed and will be featured in an upcoming virtual exhibit.

To help us tell the broader national story of 'C' Force, we are seeking donations of artifacts, photographs, letters, and other archival materials from the families of Hong Kong veterans. Your contribution will play a vital role in preserving this important chapter of Canadian military history for future generations.

The New Brunswick Military History Museum, established in 1973, is a Department of National Defence museum dedicated to preserving and sharing Canada's military heritage. With new funding supporting expanded exhibitions, we are committed to creating a meaningful and lasting tribute to the 'C' Force experience.

We invite you to be part of this legacy.

For more information or to discuss a potential donation, please contact:

David Hughes, Museum Manager

Melynda Jarratt, Curator

New Brunswick Military History Museum

Email: nbmhm.mhmnb@gmail.com

Tel: 506-422-1304

We would also like to share the documents with the HKVCA.ca website as the more people who can access the material, the better it will be for understanding this important part of Canada's military heritage.

Museum Website

Prairie Prose



Carol Hadley

Greetings from the Prairies – I believe we have finally got summer. So on with planting and swatting mosquitoes.

Prairie Region continues to have monthly meetings, in person and by Zoom to accommodate out of town members. It is great to 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 and if out of town let me know and I will send you the link.

Thanks to Jim Trick and Mark Purcell for the many hours that they have put into the membership program. Unfortunately this is not happening due to lack of all regions in compliance.

We participated in the Red River Heritage Fair with the Fort Garry Horse on April 30, 2026. Stan Lopata and Alex Taylor manned the display and assisted in the scavenger hunt.

We have been asked by the Board to compile a history of our Region's creation within the development of the HKVCA. Our contribution will be ready soon.

As previously mentioned, I have permission to submit articles about 'C' Force in 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.

We are thrilled to announce that Kathie Carlson has been elected to the Board and are proud to have her input.

Plans are in the works for Remembrance Day. We hope to highlight the 85 Anniversary of John Osborn's VC. Let me know if you wish to contribute to this. More to come in the fall newsletter.

The feelings from the event “Legacy of Remembrance” in August last year are still strong with comments of when the next one will be. Maybe there are some people out there that would like to take this project on? Let us know!

In the meantime, stay cool, stay healthy, and stay safe. God bless.

Ontario Offerings



Shelagh Purcell

Barbara Cunningham Drew, Winston Cunningham, CDC, shared the story of a member of a Scottish regiment, a POW in Hong Kong. The story appeared in Barabara’s hometown newspaper, where 2 of the daughters of this soldier live. The whole story we will keep for the next newsletter.

Barry Fair, John Gray Fair, RRC, to be able to describe a tornado you had to be in it. Barry found that out while in London when he went to get groceries before the storm hit. On the way home, he was totally drenched, wading through ankle deep water to get there. Global Warming!

Susan Ewing, Kenneth Ewing, RRC, was dealing with one of those spring summer colds. She is hoping summer weather will come a little more quickly. Otherwise, she is doing fine.

Grace Thornton, Howard Thornton, WG, has been out walking again now that the weather is good. Memories not back but there are some things best not to remember.

HKVCA Events Calendar

The 81st Anniversary of the end of war in the Pacific



Ian Englehart

The Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association will be hosting a commemorative ceremony on **August 15, 2026 at 11:00 am,** to honour the Veterans of the Defense of Hong Kong and to mark the 81st anniversary of Victory over Japan at the end of the Second World War.

The ceremony will be held at the Hong Kong Veterans Memorial Wall located at the corner of Sussex Dr. and King Edward Ave, Ottawa. Free parking is available at the National Research Council of Canada parking lot across the street on Sussex Drive.

If you would like to lay a family wreath, please inform Ian Englehart at habs1993@rogers.com by August 11 2026.

Please provide the name(s) of the veteran(s) that you are laying a wreath on behalf of, as well as your name, so we can announce it during the family wreath laying portion of the ceremony.

After the ceremony, we will be going to the Lord Elgin Hotel, 100 Elgin Street, Grill 41 for lunch. Hopefully you can join us. Please inform Ian Englehart at habs1993@rogers.com to confirm your attendance and number of people for lunch by August 7, 2026.

The closest underground parking is at Ottawa City Hall, 110 Laurier Ave. W. Weekends: 6 am to 6 pm: $1.00 per hour/$2.00 max. There is also underground parking 3 blocks away at the World Exchange Plaza, 45 O’Conner Street, $10 on weekends.

Looking forward to seeing you on Saturday, August 15, 2026.

Note: Please arrive at the Memorial Wall by 10:45 am.



Remember November 11 Association is honoring the 81st Hong Kong Veterans VJ Day with a Ceremony at Remembrance Gardens, London, ON. It will be held on **Sunday, August 16th at 1pm**, 2315 River Road at Veteran's Memorial Parkway.

Remembrance Gardens is a park that was designed, created and is maintained by the Remember November 11 Association. The park was built for Veteran Ceremonies, educational purposes and as a living Memorial to Canada's Military history.

Please join us as the "Ross" family places 3 pathway stones in honor of 3 brothers from C Force.

We Will Remember Them

Royal Philatelic Society Show

Join us **June 12-14, 2026, 10am to 4pm daily,** (registration open at 4pm on Friday) at the Waterloo Memorial Recreation Complex, 101 Father David Bauer Drive, Waterloo, ON. featuring postal historian Sam Chiu. Admission and parking are free. See the story of Sam's research: 'C' Force Postal History" on our YouTube channel.

Announcements

We're Looking for You!

Like many non-profits, HKVCA depends on volunteers to survive. The Gallery is our online photo album, but it needs some work. If you have library skills, photography interests, or would just like to take on one of HKVCA's online pillars, drop us a line, editor@hkvca.ca, and we'll guide you from there.

Assistance Requested

Dear Membership,

I am researching and writing an article on two members of the Royal Rifles of Canada – one who was killed in the defence of Hong Kong, and the other who died in captivity.

I would be grateful if any members may have further information, or photographs of these two gallant young men and wouldn't mind sharing them with me, with much thanks in advance. They are:

Rifleman Valmont Lebel 'A' Coy. Royal Rifles of Canada, who fell on December 23, 1941, during the final desperate hours of the defense of Hong Kong. And Rifleman Albert George Philippe Clapperton 'B' Coy. Royal Rifles of Canada, a brave defender who later died of disease in captivity on November 5, 1942.

Thank you,

David Bluestein
Thornhill, ON
d_bluestein@yahoo.ca

Want to contact us by mail? Here is our postal address:

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