

Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Plaque

The Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association is pleased to provide commemorative plaques for installation in publicly accessible venues. The plaques are provided free of charge, subject to the conditions in point 3 of “Responsibilities” below. The purpose of this document is to assist in the location selection, ordering and planning of the unveiling event which should be held for each plaque. We suggest you print it for handy reference.

Step 1- Choose a Venue

As our mission is one of education, venues supporting public access will offer the widest exposure. Royal Canadian Legion branches are a good choice, as many Hong Kong Veterans were Legion members. Other possible venues include:

- Community Centres,
- Museums / Interpretive Centres,
- Retirement Homes,
- Sports Centres (look for "Memorial" in the name),
- High Schools.

Discuss the proposed installation with the responsible representatives of the venue, and ensure they understand the responsibilities outlined below.

Step 2 – Order a Plaque

Contact your Regional Director to request a plaque or email webmaster@hkvc.ca .

Specify the orientation of the plaque you need (vertical or horizontal).

Advise the planned date of installation. Please allow at least 3 weeks for production and delivery of the plaque.

Step 3 – Plan the Plaque Dedication Event

A dedication event should be arranged, with local media invited to cover it and an opportunity for photographs by friends and family. A suggested checklist of tasks is below.

Although the plaque itself is not intended to commemorate any one particular member of “C” Force, the dedication event may be held in honour of one or more Hong Kong Veterans. A suggested outline of the event would include:

- Brief introduction by host, including introduction of dignitaries and speakers.
- The story of the Battle of Hong Kong (see below for suggested content).

- Unveiling of the plaque and a brief description of it.
- Remarks by venue sponsor.
- Remarks by family of Hong Kong veterans.
- Photographs of family and others with plaque.
- Interviews by media.
- Optionally, the event may conclude with a luncheon or other refreshments.

RESOURCES

1. Planning Checklist

- Approach venue management/executive to propose plaque installation.
- Select appropriate plaque location and appropriate orientation (vertical/horizontal).
- Order the plaque, allowing at least 3 weeks lead time.
- Arrange with official of venue (e.g. Legion branch President) to unveil plaque and say a few words.
- Issue invitations
 - Members of venue (e.g. Legion members and executive).
 - HK veteran's family members and members of HKVCA.
 - Local dignitaries (e.g. mayor, councillor, MPP or MP)
 - Media (local newspaper, CBC or other media outlet)
- Arrange for someone to take photographs of ceremony.
- Send photos and a brief writeup about event to webmaster@hkvca.ca for publication in HKVCA newsletter.

2. Responsibilities of Venue and Event Organizer

- Plaques are provided free of charge, but the cost of installation is the responsibility of the sponsoring organization (e.g. Legion, high school, etc.). This includes any mounting fixtures such as brackets, and labour.
- It must be located indoors, and in a location where it can easily be seen by people using the facility, such as a lobby.
- There should be a dedication service at which the plaque is unveiled or presented. Family and friends of local Hong Kong Veterans should be invited, and should be given the opportunity to speak. The local sponsor is responsible for arranging the ceremony, along with any related costs (e.g. catering, if any).
- Local media should be invited to cover the plaque unveiling.
- A photograph(s) should be taken showing the mounted plaque, and including attendees of the ceremony, if possible. Photographs should be sent to webmaster@hkvca.ca for

possible publication in the HKVCA's newsletter, as well as posted to our [Facebook Hong Kong Veterans Tribute Group](#) and on [Instagram](#).

3. Plaque Mounting Details

- Plaques are available in both vertical (portrait) and horizontal (landscape) versions. Please specify which you require upon ordering.
- Dimensions of the vertical version are: 18" wide by 44" high (46cm wide by 112cm high) x approximately 0.4 inch (1cm). Dimensions of the horizontal version are: 44" wide by 18" high (112cm wide by 46cm high) x approximately 0.4" (1cm).
- It is supplied mounted on a hard board, approximately 0.4" (1cm) in thickness.
- The plaque may be mounted by drilling a hole at each corner and affixing to the wall with screws, or alternatively by using mounting brackets.
- It should be mounted permanently, and not hung by a wire.

4. Questions?

Contact your HKVCA Regional Director or email webmaster@hkvca.ca for help.

5. Suggested Text for Story of the Battle of Hong Kong

Good afternoon and welcome. I'd like to start by thanking our host, XXXXX.

I think I know most everyone, but just in case ... my name is XXXXX of the Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association in Ontario. I am the son/daughter/other relative of a Canadian veteran of the Battle of Hong Kong in World War Two. There are XX other members of our association here: [introduce members].

Many Canadians are unaware that Canadian soldiers fought in Hong Kong in World War Two, so let me briefly tell you that story.

In the fall of 1941, the government of Canada responded to a request from Great Britain to send troops to Hong Kong by dispatching nearly 2,000 soldiers ... mostly from the Royal Rifles of Canada and the Winnipeg Grenadiers ... to Hong Kong. Their mission was to bolster the garrison there, which was expecting an attack at some point by the Japanese Imperial Army. The Japanese had been fighting in China since before 1937, and by 1941 had effectively surrounded the British colony of Hong Kong. The colony was strategically important to Britain as it lay directly on the shipping route for oil and other war materials between Japan and sources in Southeast Asia.

The troops arrived in November of 1941. It was not known when the Japanese would attack, and the troops settled into a routine of garrison duty. But on December 8, simultaneously

with the December 7 attack on Pearl Harbour, the Japanese Army suddenly struck. Their bombers obliterated the British aircraft and airport, and their soldiers began to come overland from China into Hong Kong. The Japanese had over 50,000 troops, well outnumbering the British garrison of about 12,000, including the Canadians. The Japanese were battle-hardened and well-equipped, while the defenders were short of battle experience, and had no means of resupply.

The battle raged for 17 days. Many defenders were killed, including nearly 300 Canadians, during fighting that took place in the mountainous and extremely difficult terrain of Hong Kong. Finally, when it became obvious that the situation was hopeless, the British Governor of Hong Kong surrendered to the Japanese on December 25, 1941, and ordered the troops to lay down arms. The defenders who survived the battle were taken prisoner, and spent the remainder of the war ... until the Japanese surrender in August, 1945 ... as POWs, subjected to brutal and inhuman conditions. Nearly 300 more Canadians died in the POW camps. Many of those who did survive had to live with medical conditions caused by their ill-treatment, lack of food and primitive living conditions during their 3 years and 8 months of captivity.

Our association ... the Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association ... exists to help ensure that this chapter of Canada's military history is never forgotten.

Which brings us to our dedication. We have a program of installing commemorative plaques in Legions and other places where Hong Kong Veterans have gathered. [This text should be customized to the situation, including the names of Hong Kong veterans who have frequented the location] We are very pleased that the XXXXXXXXXX branch of the Legion has consented to having a plaque hung where it will serve as a reminder of the sacrifices made by Canadians during World War II.

I'd like to ask XXXXXXXXX to come forward and unveil the plaque.

PLAQUE UNVEILING

Thank you all for attending