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## HONG KONG VETERANS MEMORIAL WALL

**Statement by:**

**The Honourable Vivienne Poy**

**Tuesday, December 8, 2009**

## THE SENATE

Tuesday, December 8, 2009

### HONG KONG VETERANS MEMORIAL WALL

**Hon. Vivienne Poy:** Honourable senators, I rise today to pay tribute to a group of Canadian soldiers who fought bravely in Asia during the Second World War and who have remained, until recently, largely unrecognized by the majority of Canadians.

On December 8, 1941, at approximately 8 a.m., Hong Kong time, the Japanese Imperial Armed Forces invaded Hong Kong. This marked the beginning of the engagement in battle for almost 2,000 Canadian soldiers from the Winnipeg Grenadiers and the Royal Rifles of Canada, who were sent to Hong Kong to help to defend the colony.

Outnumbered and faced with an enemy with superior arms, our Canadian soldiers fought heroically for 17 and one half days. The battle began 68 years ago today, soon after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, and ended on Christmas Day. In that battle, 290 soldiers were lost and, for those who were taken prisoner, their suffering continued in POW camps. By the end of the war, Canada had lost more than one quarter of the soldiers originally deployed to Hong Kong in November 1941.

Through the determination of the Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association, which was formed by the children of the veterans who served in Hong Kong, a monument

was erected recently in Ottawa so that our veterans will be remembered by both our government and our schoolchildren. The National Capital Commission, private donations and the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office all helped realize the association's dream of a magnificent memorial to honour their brave family members.

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On August 15 of this year, I had the honour of participating in a moving ceremony to unveil the Hong Kong Veterans Memorial Wall on Sussex Drive. On the granite wall that resembles the mountains of Hong Kong are the names of 1,976 soldiers, 2 nursing sisters and a dog named Gander.

The Hong Kong Children's Symphony Orchestra, sent by the Hong Kong government to thank our troops for their defence of Hong Kong, held a fundraising event in Toronto, and subsequently performed at the memorial wall and at the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa.

Our Hong Kong Veterans Memorial Wall will tell future generations about those who so bravely served their country. Their names will always remind us of their sacrifices and we will remember them.

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