

The Town of Richmond Hill Recognizes Hong Kong Veterans

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the Battle of Hong Kong. The Council of Richmond Hill, Ontario, passed a motion with an amendment unanimously on October 22, 2012 to formally recognize Hong Kong veterans who fought courageously during WWII.

Councillor Godwin Chan hopes that such a motion for recognition of the veterans helps strengthen the connection and goodwill between Canadians and people in Hong Kong and Asia Pacific.

Chan says that the story of Hong Kong Battle needs to be better known in Canada and the Remembrance Day would be a good time to do so, particularly in Richmond Hill where significant number of residents has connections with Hong Kong.

The motion reads:

WHEREAS the first battle engaging Canadian soldiers in the Second World War (WW II) was the Battle of Hong Kong in December 1941, and the Veterans Affairs Canada acknowledges that “the defence of Hong Kong was a brutal chapter in Canada's military history”;

WHEREAS the Battle of Hong Kong claimed 290 Canadian lives and wounded 493 others, and another 267 Canadians died as prisoners of war in Hong Kong and Japan; and that of the 1,975 Canadians who went to Hong Kong, more than 1,050 were either killed or wounded;

WHEREAS the Canadian soldiers’ sacrifices and courageous contribution to peace in the Asia Pacific are generally not well known in Canada, as remarked by Honourable Stockwell Day in 2009 that “[T]hese veterans have sort of felt like the forgotten heroes of the Second World War”;

WHEREAS one of the Canadian soldiers defending Hong Kong, John Robert Osborn, received the highest and most prestigious award, the Victoria Cross, for his heroic military efforts;

WHEREAS numerous residents in the Town of Richmond Hill emigrated to Canada from Hong Kong and contributed to the vitality and well-being of the Town that takes pride as a Character Community that values inclusiveness and courage; AND

WHEREAS it is the tradition to honour and remember our Canadian soldiers and veterans at the annual Remembrance Day ceremony;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

COUNCIL FORMALLY RECOGNIZE HONG KONG VETERANS WHO FOUGHT COURAGEOUSLY DURING WW II, AS PART OF THE ANNUAL REMEMBRANCE DAY CEREMONY BEING HELD AT THE CENOTAPH AT THE MCCONAGHY CENTRE ON ON SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2012; AND FURTHER INCLUDE A PLAQUE ON THE CENOTAPH TO HONOUR THE HONG KONG VETERANS.

(Source: Correspondence of Councillor Godwin Chan with Thekla Lit)