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CVSM — CANADIAN VOLUNTEER SERVICE MEDAL

During the Second World War, Canada attempted to raise and field an all-volunteer army. Memories of conscription to fight a “British” war in 1914-18 were not readily forgotten in Quebec. Nonetheless, the demands on manpower, necessary to raise 8 divisions soon required that selective conscription be introduced.

One of the promises of enabling legislation was that conscripts, nicknamed Zombies by those at the front, would not be sent overseas unless they had volunteered for “General Service”. To encourage volunteers for “GS” the Government had initiated a medal, the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal (CVSM) the ribbon of which could be worn by every volunteer to the Canadian military forces after 18 months of honourable service. After six months service **overseas**, the “GS” volunteers could wear a miniature silver maple leaf on the ribbon. This actually led to instances where the maple leaf device was worn on the battledress blouse before the recipient could qualify for the medal itself.

Large-scale issue of the ribbon to Canada's largely volunteer military soon had the CVSM known as the **EBGO (Every bastard's got one!)** After the war ended the government made arrangements for the actual medal to be designed and issued to every qualified recipient. The initial design called for a representative from the three services. Army, the Royal Canadian Navy and the Royal Canadian Airforce and they were all male! The final design however included members of both sexes, members of the three services and also including a Nursing Sister. The design was done by Charles Comfort, a Canadian war artist. He worked from photographs taken at a Drill Hall in Ottawa.

The regulation for the CVSM states; for all voluntary service in and Forces of Canada counts whether the time is continuous or not, except for any absence without leave and service while imprisoned or under sentence of penal servitude. The eighteen month period could be waived for those on Active War Service who had been discharged of retired after having proceeded outside of Canada; for those who served but were discharged as a result of injury or disease. The medal was also presented to the next-of-kin of those who lost their lives in the conflict.

At this point the medal and its issue, and criteria was of little difference for that of most other countries. However in Canada the medal would evolve in the next 67 years.

The CVSM EVOLVES —The problem was the raid-in-force on the French coastal town of **Dieppe**. 1,492 Canadian soldiers were killed or wounded and a further 1,946 soldiers, of whom 568 were wounded, were taken prisoner for the duration of the war. Most of these veterans were only entitled to the CVSM (with overseas bar) and the British War 1939-45 Medal. Nothing noted the horror of Dieppe, the years of captivity and desperate weeks of marching from one POW camp to another as the war closed in on Germany. The veterans could have been mistaken for those that had never been in a war zone or even left England.

In response to these veterans demands, the Government in 1992 began an investigation into the possibility of either striking a separate medal for these veterans or adding a device to the British 1939-45 War Medal. It was quickly decided that a poor precedent would be set if a medal were struck for a single battle and a losing one at that! The British were also hesitant to allow Canada to alter the 1939-45 War Medal in any way. Was then decided that as the CVSM was a Canadian medal, they could do with it as they pleased. The result was a bar that the veteran could attach to his CVSM Medal. This clasp was designed and created in consultation with the Dieppe Veterans and Prisoners of War Association. The result was a bar which featured the Combined Operations symbol. On the undress ribbon a second maple leaf device may be worn. This satisfied the Dieppe Veterans.



Ribbon Bar



Ribbon bar with silver maple leaf, denoting Overseas Service bar



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The next CMHS meeting will be held on
Tuesday, 2020
CANCELLED
At the
Petty Officers' Mess, HCMS Tecumseh

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 CALGARY MILITARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
 The
 CALGARY MILITARY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
 is a non-profit registered society
 which fosters the study of the
 military and the police, and the heritage of
 Canada, the British Empire, and the world
 as well as the preservation of military
 artifacts and records.
 The CMHS meets once every calendar month
 at: Petty Officers' Mess
 HMCS Tecumseh
 1820 - 24th Street SW
 Calgary AB T2T 0G6

Notice of Next Meeting

The next CMHS meeting will be held on
Tuesday 2020 19:00 (7:00 pm)
 At the Petty Officers' Mess, HMCS Tecumseh.

The unofficial agenda of this meeting will be:
 Introduction of guests, Minutes of last meeting Correspondence, Membership report
 Treasurer's report, Old business / New business Break, Show & Tell
 The President, **Dave Love** would like to invite everyone to remain after the meet-
 ing for an informal time of fellowship. A donation of a loonie or two for the Veter-
 an's Food Bank would be appreciated. Please consider this as a unofficial entrance
 fee to our meetings.

The eligibility for the clasp was extended to include members of the Royal Canadian Navy and Royal Canadian Air Force who also took part in the operation as well as the Merchant Navy.



Aftermath at Blue Beach, on the afternoon of the Raid.



Canadian prisoners marched through the town

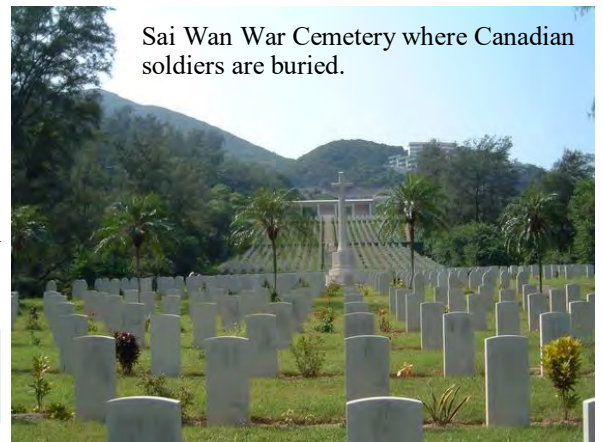
THE CVSM EVOLVES—The door having ben opened a crack for the Dieppe veterans, those who fought on the other side of the world demanded equal consideration. The **Hong Kong veterans** found themselves in much the same situation.

In 1941, at the urging of the British War Office. Canada sent two untrained Infantry battalions to the British Colony of Hong Kong. A total of 1975 men of all ranks were involved. These soldiers were supposed to undergo a length training schedule which would see them prepared to take up established defensive positions. The advancing Japanese army, however, moved too quickly for the training to happen as planned. The two battalions found themselves fighting for their lives just three weeks after arriving. In the 6-week battle, the Canadians helped in inflict over 2,750 casualties on the Japanese side while suffering 290 killed themselves. The garrison surrendered on Christmas Day, 1941. The survivors, including 492 wounded men were taken into captivity by the Japanese invaders. In the next four years they would live a life of hell. While in captivity 318 would die either as a result of wounds, from illness, forced labour or summary execution. Proof, said veterans decades later, that they had resisted fiercely and courageously before surrendering to the enemy. In 1945, 1,418 survivors returned to Canada — many of them deeply bitter at the cruelty of their Japanese captors. These men would suffer debilitating health issues for the rest of their lives.



Canadian POW's liberated

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Sai Wan War Cemetery where Canadian soldiers are buried.

Minutes of last meeting / Calgary Military Historical Society

Minutes of General Meeting held on February 18, 2020 at the Petty Officers Mess HMCS Tecumseh

1. Meeting called to order by President Dave L at 7:10pm, 15 members present and 0 guests
2. January minutes accepted as read, moved by Mike C , seconded by Susan E. Motion carried.
3. Treasurer's report presented by Dave L. Acceptance moved by Marty, seconded by Barry E. Motion carried.
4. Membership report given by Dave L. 32 reg. Members, 3 life and 2 honorary members.
5. Old Business
 - a. Marjorie N. Chosen for a life membership, her recent 97th birthday was mentioned. An AMAZING CLUB MEMBER for many years.
 - b. Feedback given on club Christmas party. Good event, venue was popular with members.
6. New Business
 - a. Mike C. Discusses importance of estate/ wills to protect our collections.
7. Show and Tell
 - a. Gary M. New, Royal Navy sextant.
 - b. Mike C. Handkerchiefs given to wounded soldiers, Tommy spoons, 2 Meer-schaum pipes, Serbian
 - c. medal given to an English doctor during Boer war.
 - d. Alan Mac. Prince Auguste and Britain lead soldiers.
8. Meeting adjourned by Dave L.

Message From Mike C.

"Just found this just in case any of you may be interested."

<http://www.aircrewremembered.com/ParadieArchiveDatabase/>.

Mike

[Paradie RCAF Archive-Aircrew Remembered Site](#)

RCAF Personnel service 1939-1945 and onwards. READ SEARCH TIPS FIRST. Further RCAF information is on our Pages Relating To Canada and out RCAF Notes Database. Check spelling of a name in the Names List Blue Headings = Sort on that column.

To recognize the contributions made by these soldiers the Canadian government introduced a “Hong Kong” clasp to the CVSM on July 27th, 1995. This bar consists of the circular “HK” symbol super-imposed on a pebbled silver bar and bracketed by the words “Hong Kong”. The “HK” device was initially worn on the post-war formation patch by Hong Kong veterans. The design was arrived at the participation of the Hong Kong Veterans Association. Members of the Canadian Army who “served in the Defence of Hong Kong” from December 8th, 1941 to December 25th, 1941 are eligible.

The first presentations of the new bar were made on August 11, 1995 as part of the VJ day 50th anniversary. Fittingly both clasps (Dieppe and Hong Kong) were manufactured at the Royal Canadian Mint where, 50 years earlier, the medal itself was minted.



Reverse of all CVSM medals



A Hong Kong Volunteer Defence Corps ("C" Force) Patch
Soldiers who served in Hong Kong wore no special formation patch, but when the survivors were released from captivity in 1945, they were given this special "HK" badge to wear on their homecoming uniforms.

THE CVSM EVOLVES —Bomber Command Bar— Nearly seven decades after the end of the Second World War, the service and sacrifice of Bomber Command, including that of tens of thousands of Canadians, was recognized.

In June of 2012 the Canadian government announced that a special bar is being created for Canadian Bomber Command veterans to wear on the ribbon of the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal (CVSM). As well, Queen Elizabeth II unveiled the new Bomber Command Memorial in Green Park in London, England, on June 28.

The centrepiece of the stone memorial in London is a sculpture of a seven-man aircrew, protected by a roof made of metal recovered from a Handley Page Halifax III bomber shot down over Belgium. It honours the 55,573 members of Bomber Command, including 9,980 Canadians, who died in missions over Europe, as prisoners of war or in training accidents.

Nearly 50,000 members of the Royal Canadian Air Force served in Bomber Command operations, many of them in the only non-British group in Bomber Command—the RCAF squadrons of No. 6 Bomber Group.



The odds were against them. Although each mission had on average a four per cent chance of being shot down, crews had to complete 30 missions. Of the 125,000 who served in Bomber Command, 55,573 died in action—a death rate of 44 per cent. Nearly 10,000 crew members were taken as prisoners of war. At the end of the war, medals and bars were awarded to veterans, but no special recognition was given those involved in the perilous missions of Bomber Command, at least in part due to a controversy over the civilian death toll in Germany and Austria.

