

# Orders and Medals Research Society

## Hong Kong Branch

### May 2021 Newsletter

Dear Members and Friends

#### Current Situation

It may be argued that the term “newsletter” is not appropriate here, as perhaps such a document should contain details of past and future events.

I’m afraid that for reasons which are hardly necessary to go into we have nothing to report on that front! Having said that, however, the Branch committee has been active in other areas, and this is therefore considered an opportune moment to update members on the current position.

The situation regarding Covid is, of course, continually evolving and we can expect future changes with regard to the imposition of social gathering regulations by the Government. It is on this optimistic note that the committee has been giving consideration to future events once normality returns.

#### Future Events

One of our members wrote recently to suggest a visit to the Gurkha Cemetery in the old Cassino Lines in the New Territories. Although the location now falls within PLA jurisdiction, public access to the cemetery is permitted and the Committee plan to investigate further the possibility of a visit there once social gathering restrictions are eased sufficiently.

On a separate note, there is a very good chance of the Police Officers Club (POC) in Causeway Bay being opened in the not too distant future. August has been mentioned as a possible date.

Longer serving members of the Branch will be aware that the POC was our first “home,” more years ago than I care to remember! We already have a guest speaker lined up for what I am sure will be viewed as a very welcome return to that facility, but we will leave things there for the time being.

#### Letter of Condolence

HRH The Prince of Wales is the Patron of the OMRS and Steve Verralls, Branch President, wrote to him recently expressing condolences following the death of his father, HRH Prince Phillip, the Duke of Edinburgh. Branch members who watched the Duke of Edinburgh’s funeral on television will probably have noted the astonishing display of his orders and medals in St. George’s Chapel, Windsor. A photograph of some of those will be uploaded to the Branch website soon.

## New Members

The Branch is always on the lookout for new recruits! We welcome our latest new member, Tony Taylor, ex - Royal Corps of Signals. If anybody has someone in mind whom they think would like to join the Branch, please do not hesitate to contact either Steve Verralls or myself and we will follow up.

## Medals of Colonel Evan Stewart, late Hong Kong Volunteer Defence Corps

Branch stalwart Ron Taylor, himself a former Major in the Royal Hong Kong Regiment (the Volunteers), recently sent me a photograph of the medal group of Colonel Evan Stewart of the HKVDC, the forerunners of the Regiment. Colonel Stewart, then a Major, commanded No. 3 Coy of the HKVDC during the 1941 Battle for Hong Kong and in 1953 wrote an account of the unit's activity during the conflict, entitled "A Record of the Hong Kong Volunteer Defence Corps in the Battle for Hong Kong." The Record has been re-printed many times since that time; the most recent edition (revised and produced by Ron Taylor) was published in 2020.

The book is a valuable source of information for anyone interested in the 1941 battle and has served as a source for many other books. Well worth purchasing!

It is hoped that the story behind Colonel Stewart's medals will be the subject of an article in the OMRS Journal in the fullness of time. A photograph of his medals has been uploaded to the Branch website at [www.omrs-hk.org](http://www.omrs-hk.org).

## Alan Russell Powrie - In Memoriam

The Branch notes with sadness the passing of Alan Powrie, who died of acute myeloid leukaemia in London in March this year aged 70. He had been diagnosed with the disease in June last year and although his treatment initially gave cause for optimism, having undergone stem cell transplant donated by family members, sadly he relapsed and passed away peacefully in hospital. Alan was a great character and I have many happy memories of him as an enthusiastic member of the walking group of which we were both members.

He participated in Branch activities to the utmost; as I write these words I am looking at a group photograph of a Branch visit to Humen and the Bogue Forts, scene of the Opium War, conducted in March 2019. Alan is standing at the back next to me, and I have happy memories of that trip. I recall raising a glass (or two!) with Alan and his wife, Christine, on the patio of the USRC during the last Branch Christmas Dinner held there. We have passed on condolences to the family.

Alan will be greatly missed.

## OMRS Branch Plaques

Members will be aware from previous newsletters that we have taken stock of a quantity of shields, or plaques, of the Hong Kong Branch of the OMRS. These are locally made in Yuen Long by a reputable company, and can either be wall-mounted or stand alone Price is \$340-HK each; please visit the website at [www.omrs-hk.org](http://www.omrs-hk.org) and click on "Announcements and Matters of Interest" to view a photograph of one. Please contact the undersigned if you would like to make a purchase.

Stay well and best wishes to all. As always, please do not hesitate to get in touch within suggestions regarding future Branch activities.

Martin Heyes

Hon. Secretary

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