



勳章及獎章研究學會香港分會

Orders and Medals Research Society

HONG KONG BRANCH

PATRON: H.R.H. THE PRINCE OF WALES, K.G., K.T., G.C.B., O.M., A.K., Q.S.O., C.C.

November 2021 Newsletter

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Current Situation

It is, of course, far too early to assume that normality has returned to life not only in Hong Kong but also around the world in view of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, notwithstanding the Hong Kong Government's zero-Covid policy and having in place one of the strictest quarantine policies in the world, it behoves us all to move towards resuming life as we knew it pre-Covid, whilst still following restrictions and regulations which have been put into effect by the Government.

It is with this in mind that the Committee has decided to resume, cautiously, certain Branch activities whilst still following all legal requirements. Please see below for details.

Future Events

(a) Visit to Sai Wan Military Cemetery

As I am sure nobody will need reminding 2021 marks the 80th anniversary of the outbreak of the Pacific War, so it is fitting that for our first outdoor activity in many

No. 8, Tai Hang Chung Sum Wai,
Tai Hang Village, Tai Po, NT,
Hong Kong

months we will visit a site closely connected to that conflict. We have chosen the Sai Wan War Cemetery for that activity.

The cemetery is a military cemetery located in Chai Wan built in 1946. It was created to provide the resting place of soldiers both of the HK garrison and overseas who died during WW2, in addition to 12 burials from WW1. A total of 1528 soldiers, mainly from the Commonwealth, are buried here.

Notable burials include the Canadian Brigadier John Lawson, the most senior officer killed in HK during the 1941 conflict, who commanded West Brigade during the later stages of the conflict. He was killed on 19th December 1941 at the Wong Nai Chong Gap where he was initially buried, being re-interred in Sai Wan after the war.

The cemetery is also the burial place of two Major Generals who died elsewhere but who again, were later re-interred.

During the course of our visit we will look in detail at some of the notable burials in the cemetery and, depending upon the interest, a lunch in Shek O may be arranged afterwards.

The cemetery, located on Cape Collinson Road, is easy to reach by public transport.

One option is to take the no. 9 bus to Shek O from Shau Kei Wan MTR station; alight near the Shek O roundabout and descend Cape Collinson Road to the cemetery.

Another is to take the no. 18M green minibus from Chai Wan MTR station, (near New Jade Shopping Arcade), and alight outside the cemetery.

Programme

Guide : Martin Heyes

Date : Saturday 27th November 2021

Time : 10:30 hrs

Venue : Sai Wan War Cemetery, Cape Collinson Road, Chai Wan. Meet at the main entrance.

Admission : OMRS Branch members & guests \$100

(b) Branch Christmas Dinner

Yes; after a hiatus of 2 years the popular Branch Christmas Dinner is back on the cards! The format of the event will be as per previous years; venue being the United Services Recreation Club in Jordan; dress lounge suit or similar and the ever-popular lucky draw will be a feature of the evening.

Steve Verralls will shortly circulate a more detailed flyer regarding the event, but at this stage expressions of interest are invited from Branch members.

A traditional Christmas Banquet will be served and a vegetarian option will be made available.

Programme

Date : Thursday 9 December 2021

Time : 19:00 hrs

Place : USRC, Gascogne Road, Jordan, Kowloon

Dress : Lounge Suit or similar, miniatures to be worn.

Cost : \$800-HK (approximately).

Further details, including exact cost and menu, to follow shortly.

(c) Lecture by Les Bird; “Along the Southern Boundary.”

Please visit www.omrs-hk.org and click on “Upcoming Events” for full details of this talk. Les Bird is a former HK Marine Police officer who kept a meticulous diary, including many photographs, of his service with the Police during the 1980s when the Colony was faced with the daily arrival of hundreds, if not thousands, of Vietnamese refugees fleeing their homeland.

We have not yet “gone firm” regarding details of Les’s talk, but we envisage it will be held in January 2022.

Other Items

(d) Branch Shields

Please visit the Branch website at www.omrs-hk.org; click on “Announcements / Matters of Interest” and scroll down to “Branch Shields.” Full details of these attractive items are contained therein. A member recently purchased one; hopefully with the resumption of Branch activities we will be able to sell more to members and of course present them to guest speakers.

If anyone is interested in a purchase, please contact the undersigned.

(e) Medals Awarded to Major Evan Stewart (HKVDC)

Yet another visit to the website, again under the heading of “Announcements / Matters of Interest,” will reveal details of the medals awarded to Major, (later Colonel), Evan Stewart who commanded No.3 (Machine Gun or Eurasian) Coy of the HKVDC during the 1941 Battle for Hong Kong. The story of Major Stewart has recently been the subject of a Branch submission to the Editorial Committee of the OMRS Journal, and I am pleased to say that it has been accepted for publication.

The slight downside is that publication is not likely to happen until late 2022! As soon as the paper has been published in the Journal, it will be reproduced on the Branch website.

(f) Lodge of Sorrow – Mike Broom

Members will recall the sad passing of Branch committee member Mike Broom in Hong Kong in July 2020. In September this year Mike’s Freemasonry Lodge, (Lodge Eastern Scotia No. 923 S.C.), held a “Lodge of Sorrow” memorial service at Zetland Hall. Members of the Committee represented the Branch at this event.

(g) Death of HRH The Duke of Edinburgh

Following the death of Prince Philip in April this year, the Branch Committee forwarded a letter of condolence to Buckingham Palace expressing our sympathy to Her Majesty on the loss of her husband. An acknowledgment of our note has been received from the Palace and can be viewed at the website under “Announcements /

Matters of Interest.”

(h) Branch Membership

A member recently wrote to the Committee with details of 2 acquaintances of his who were interested in joining the Branch. Our heartfelt thanks to him! If any member knows of anyone who may be interested in joining the OMRS, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned or the Branch President, (contact details above).

(i) Membership Subscriptions and AGM

The Committee have received a few queries of late regarding payment of Branch membership subscriptions. Please note that in view of the pandemic and the effect which it has had on the curtailment of Branch activities, the Committee has taken the decision to temporarily suspend subscriptions. The situation will be reviewed in due course.

The Committee will also call for an AGM to be held on a date to be determined early in the New Year.

Martin Heyes

Hon. Secretary

OMRS Hong Kong Branch