

Speech by Senator Vivienne Poy

Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association Monument Dedication

August 15, 2009

Good morning Minister Thompson, Minister Day, Minister Baird, Gen. Natynczyk, Director Siu, Ms. Lemay, Hong Kong veterans and friends :

Je suis heureuse d'être ici aujourd'hui pour prendre part à la cérémonie d'inauguration du monument offert par l'Association commémorative des anciens combattants de la bataille de Hong Kong. C'est une chance pour nous tous de pouvoir saluer publiquement les sacrifices consentis par les 1,976 soldats canadiens et les deux infirmières militaires qui, au nom du Commonwealth, ont participé à la défense de Hong Kong.

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

Facing an enemy with superior arms, outnumbered 10 to one, Canadians soldiers fought for 17 days, from Mount Butler to Bennett's Hill, from Jardine's Lookout to the Wong Nei Chong Gap. Exhausted, they pressed onward, inflicting great casualties on their enemies. But, in the end, their courage could not prevail against the odds. For those who became prisoners of war, their battle continued, and for many, the odds were just too great.

Nous sommes honorés d'avoir parmi nous quelques-unes des personnes que le sort a épargnées et qui peuvent témoigner de leur expérience. Par vos paroles touchantes, vous transmettez le flambeau du souvenir à vos enfants et à tous ceux et celles ici présents, nous permettant ainsi de léguer aux générations futures une histoire vivante. Your acts of courage remain a testament to your character and endurance in the face of the horrors of war.

Hong Kong was where I was born and grew up. Even though I was just a baby in 1941, I have heard many stories about the invasion, and how it

affected my family. We became refugees in mainland China, and I remember what the city was like at the end of the war. My family returned to help rebuild Hong Kong. On behalf of the people of Hong Kong, I thank you for all you did in its defence in its hour of great peril. I am honoured to be in your presence, and to take part in this ceremony.

Sponsored by the generosity of the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office, the beautiful music you hear this morning is played by the Hong Kong Children's Symphony Orchestra which has travelled from Hong Kong, to pay tribute to our Canadian veterans.

I wish to thank everyone for attending this very important event in honour of our veterans, and their families.