

THE HONG - KONG GARRISON

On October 21st 1941 1973 men and officers sailed from Canada bound for the Far East,. The brigade was made up of the Winnipeg Grenadier Guards of Western Canada and the Quebec Royal Rifles of the east. The Quebec Royal Rifles were made up of men from Quebec City, Eastern Townships, Matapedia, Gaspé Coast, and the Maritime Provinces. 100 men were added from Ontario at sailing time to make up the full Regiment.

The Command Officers:

Brigadier General E.L. Lawson of Montreal - in command of brigade.

Lieutenant Colonel W. J. Holmes of Montreal chief Officer of the Quebec Royal Rifles.

Lieutenant Colonel of Montreal.

Chief Officer of the Winnipeg Grenadier Guards.

The brigade landed at Loowoon on November 16th, 1941. Japan declared war December 7th and battle began the following day. On December 18th the Japs landed on the Island and on Christmas night the Canadians were finally forced to surrender.

For seventeen days the Canadians had fought a bitter and losing battle against enormous odds. Brigadier General Lawson was killed on December 20th by a hand grenade. Seven other officers and 175 men were killed in battle. On December 30th the men entered prison camps.

During their first thirteen months in prison camps the men worked on the Tick Tack air port. That was used by the Americans when they captured Hong-Kong four years later. In February 1943, 700 men were taken to Japan 500 of them were put to work in the ships yards just outside of Khabahama. The other 200 men were broken up into small gangs and put to work in salt and coal mines. Later in 1943 more men were taken to Japan to work in the mines leaving only the officers and the men that were too sick to work in Hong Kong. 375 men died in prison camps.

Their daily diet was 8 ounces of raw rice per man.

On August 7th 1945 the Americans dropped the Atomic bomb on Japan which brought her surrender and ended the Canadian's hardships, in August 1945, after 1355 days of starvation 1,415 prisoners were set free. The happy group sailed for home, leaving behind them a fate that will rest in their memories the rest of their lives.

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