

CANADA'S HONG KONG VETERANS

The Compensation Story

Produced by:
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For:
The War Amps of Canada

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Introduction

H.C. Chadderton:

I am Cliff Chadderton, of The War Amputations of Canada but for this film I am wearing two hats.

I am also the Patron of the Hong Kong Veteran's Association of Canada. Their claim for compensation is a tremendous issue. Tremendous, and if we turn to just one page of the small dictionary, I think we will find all of the words we need to describe this issue.

TRAGEDY – one of the greatest in our military history

TRANSGRESSION – a war like nation ignoring the most sacred protocol of international law – The Geneva Convention

TRAUMA – ordinary Canadian boys scarred for life

TREACHERY – by Japanese Government and maybe by our own

TREATY – one in which the Canadian Government threw away the rights of its own citizens

TREASON – certainly not by our soldiers but by those who were supposed to protect them

TREATMENT – barbaric by their captures and yes, medical treatment to try and heal their wounds for the rest of their lives

TRIALS for WAR CRIMES – some Japanese were found guilty and they lost their lives but where the perpetrators are guilty

What about compensation for the victims?

TRICKERY - Hear how the Canadian Government boycotted the hearings in Geneva

TRAVESTY - Will this go down as one of the greatest travesties of justice in our history or will this sad story end in triumph? Only if Canadians will speak out.

The operative words in the Geneva Convention run something like this:

“That a detaining power (in this case Japan) cannot put prisoners of war to work in their war industries. If they do force them to work, they must pay them at the same rate they pay their own workers. If because of circumstances, they do not pay those workers, when they release them as prisoners, they must give them a statement as to how them.

Now, if the economy of the former enemy country is in tatters, it has a hiatus, but what it must do, is put legislation on its books to provide for the compensation for the PoWs that they put into forced labour. Yes, the Hong Kong Veterans of Canada do receive pensions from the Canadian Government for their war-

incurred disabilities, but we are talking here about a very separate issue. We are talking about back-pay; back to the 1940s for PoWs who were put into slave labour.

For seven long years, we have watched the Japanese Government stonewall this claim before the United Nations and, incidentally, seven years during which the Canadian Government representatives never bothered to attend the hearings. Now we are exercising an option available to us, under international law that is, refer this claim to our own Canadian Government.

Interview with Roger Cyr

H.C. Chadderton: Good Morning Roger, how are you?

Roger Cyr: Well, about as well as can be expected.

H.C. Chadderton: Roger Cyr enlisted with Royal Rifles of Québec when he was 18 years of age.

He was taken prisoner by the Japanese on Christmas Day in 1941, and he spent nearly four years working in Japanese industries under slave labour conditions.

In February of 1993, he was part of our delegation that went to Geneva. At that time, he addressed a press conference and told them the whole story of the Hong Kong Veterans when they were PoWs in Japan, and I would like Roger to repeat that story for us now. Would you do that Roger?

Roger Cyr: Thank you Cliff. Well, as Cliff just mentioned, I was 19 years old when I had already joined the Royal Rifles of Canada, which happened to be one of the two Regiments, along with a Brigade component support group, that were chosen by the Canadian Government to be sent to Hong Kong to bolster up the British Garrison that had been in place for many years.

We arrived there in early November 1941, and our idyllic stay sort of came to an abrupt end on Christmas Day 1941, where after 12 and a half days of pitched battle, the Japanese took us over as prisoners of war.

My actual penance started as it were on the 26th day of December, when I was captured by Japanese patrol and then subsequently put into a tennis court for the next 19 days, where I was of course interrogated and beaten up several times and eventually, I was taken to my first prison camp, which was called North Point, which was on the Island of Hong Kong and subsequently taken across to the island of Kowloon and put into Sham Shoo Prison Camp, where I was immediately put to work as a slave labourer in the building of the Ki Tack Airport.

This work consisted of breaking up mountains of rock into smaller stones that could be loaded into bamboo baskets, which were two baskets slung on a pole which you carried Chinese Coolie style up and down this hill into the water and dumped your load. This went on from dawn to dusk.

Eventually, I got chosen to be one of the lucky ones to be sent to Japan and this took place in January 1943.

They loaded 250 of us, and some of us they put down in the hole with no light, no ventilation, nothing to eat, under the worst possible conditions. It was, I heard and read the word HELL SHIP before in many novels but this would be my particular personal description of what a HELL SHIP would be. Eventually we wound up in Japan and we docked in Nagasaki.

One of first rules is that you will answer role call and you will do this in Japanese. Of course, none of us had ever heard a word of Japanese before or very few words, except the very first days we were captured.

Well they said we will teach you how to count from one to fifty. So they lined us up in fours and then they said "Ok, the way you count Japanese is 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 (in Japanese)," and so on.

And then they broke us off and we got back together and so the guys that were in the front ranks; well you better remember these bloody numbers because they are going to call the role call again tomorrow morning.

They then loaded us on board trains and then we were dispersed throughout Japan. I personally wound up in Yokohama in a shipyard working for NKK (that's Nippon KoKan Kai Sha), which is a world famous company today.

Anyway, they put us to work in the shipyard and I said I worked as a riveter. This was dawn to dusk, as time went on, with very little food. Let me explain a little about the food rations.

The more you worked, the less you were physically able to work, the more you were prone to sickness, the more you became sick, the less you had to eat and then the whole thing started all over again, because by this time you had very little food in order to recoup your energy and be able to get to work so therefore, you were sicker for a longer period. And so much so, that by the time the Americans bombed this particular shipyard facility in early 1945, there were very few of us still left standing.

Notwithstanding, the Japanese decided they would move us to another camp because of the bombing. They moved us close to a city called Taira, which is on the north-eastern coast of the Island of Honshu. I wound up in a very small place called Ona Hana in a coal mine.

This was by far the worst place that I had ever seen in my life. This coal mine had been mined out many, many years before. The Japanese decided, and the reason way it had been closed was it was getting too dangerous because the mine was actually miles under the Pacific Ocean and miles laterally and 6 or 7 thousand feet down under the ground, and as you know Japan is a very volcanic country. Where this particular mine was, it was of course very, very hot. You were working in sulphur water and the temperature of the water was somewhere about 90 to 95° and the further down you went the higher the temperature of the water was.

Our first job consisted of working in this sulphur water up to here, you know, for the whole day. You left a dawn and you came back at dusk. So you can imagine what your bodies after being in water for days and days and days, your skin gets to be more like a sponge, I suppose.

I can tell everybody here that had the war lasted another 3 or 4 months, none of us would have come out alive. It has been subsequently proven and it is a matter of record, that had the Americans invaded Japan, one of the first things that would have happened, is that all of us prisoners would have been shot. This is now part of the record. It is certainly part of the military record and instructions and orders had been given.

Now let me speak a little about what this has done to me, both in terms of physical, psychological and other terms.

When the war ended I could hardly walk. I had gone in as a fit able-bodied person, when I came out, when the war ended I weighed 89 lbs. And I say a good gust of wind and I was gone.

In addition to this, I had suffered from Beriberi. I had suffered from Malaria, pellagra, all kinds of body sores. Sores caused by lice infestation, bed bug infestation; all kinds of other insects because the hygienic conditions were such that you just couldn't clean up. Any kind of sore because of lack of medicine that went untreated just was allowed to fester and wrought away.

In addition to this I had received a bayonet in my back because I suppose I went kind of berserk one day when the Japanese guard started doing things to me that I didn't particularly like so I hit him and of course a slap in the face to a Jap, which is what they used to do 24 hours a day, is something that is unbearable because it is a tremendous loss of face. And if you know the oriental philosophy, vis a vis, saving face or losing face, this is tantamount to losing life. So this guy immediately put his rifle down. He was going to dig me here, so I turned around and he got me in the back. Although the wound

itself was not of the extremely serious variety, since the bayoneted only penetrated an inch and a half, it caused a sore which subsequently festered, which subsequently caused me no end of problems and still causes me problems today.

For 12 years, subsequent to my discharge from the Canadian Army, I was a sick person both physically and mentally. Physically, I suffered from all of the ill effects and the sequela and residual effects of maltreatment, under nourishment or no nourishment at all. The lack of proper medical facilities and medicines when my body required... my ills and my sickness required them.

Also the total deprivation of what makes up human dignity – being beaten, being told that you are worse than a dog. That's absolutely, no way that you are ever going to get out of the situation. You are either going to be a prisoner for the rest of your life or else you will no longer be prisoner because you will be dead.

Let me get back to the post-war period. These are all some of the items that not only caused me some problems but have left an indelible imprint on my mind. So much so, that I am still stuck with some of these today. You know, this is almost 50 years ago.

Well, all of this has left me. All of these imprints have left all of these residual effects, so much so, that from a medical standpoint I have all kinds of problems.

I can barely walk. I walk with; I have constant pain in my legs and ankles. I have several cancers. At least one or maybe two of those are directly attributable to the hardships I have had. For instance, I have stomach cancer. All of this, the lack of food, and some of the things we were forced to eat over there, plus the conditions under which we had to work. I blame, I attribute this to those circumstances. Having worked in the mines – coal dust, sulphur water, etc... I have had throat cancer. I am not a medical doctor, but I firmly believe that experience has certainly caused something in my system that has perhaps created a climate fertile for the development for these cancers.

I am still stuck with having to, of course, be careful what I eat. I have all kinds of pains which I associate with rifle butts, which I received on my back here for not having worked quick enough or correctly.

So it brings me to today. So let me wind this up by looking at my personal rights, for instance, for which I haven't mentioned yet.

Well, I feel that the day I was captured by the Japanese, that my personal rights were hacked to death. I became a non-person. I was

treated worse than a dog. I further believe that when time came for the allied powers to settle with Japan and when they eventually did negotiate a Peace Treaty and when they did sign the Peace Protocol in 1952, my rights were totally ignored. That Peace Treaty was signed, nowhere do I see mention of Prisoner of War in any of these documents and I am today, I'm wondering who was looking after my rights. I still feel that these rights were violated and I don't think that anybody had the right to do so.

H.C. Chadderton: I had to bury some of our guys in Normandy and I have never forgotten that, but the Hong Kong Force, more than 250 died in those prison camps under those slave labour conditions. What was it like to bury those fellows?

Roger Cyr: One of the things they had us do, was pick up our dead bodies and burn them. You know throw petrol over them and burn them. You don't want to know what this is like, it is terrible.

H.C. Chadderton: Did you ever hear the Japanese captors mention the Geneva Convention?

Roger Cyr: Never.

Interview with Brian Forbes

H.C. Chadderton: Brian Forbes, is an Ottawa lawyer who specializes in international affairs. He is also the Association Solicitor for The War Amputations of Canada. It has been Mr. Forbes' responsibility to guide this claim through the United Nations. Brian Forbes....

Brian Forbes: After years of futile negotiations with the Japanese, it became readily apparent to the Hong Kong veterans that they would have to elevate their claim to an international forum in order to maintain pressure against the Japanese government. It was at this time that The War Amputations of Canada and the Hong Kong Veteran's Association, joined forces in order to file a submission with the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.

The Resolution 1503 procedure, which was enacted in the 1970s by the Commission on Human Rights, allows an individual or an organization to take a claim to the United Nations in circumstances where a gross violation of human rights has occurred. This particular procedure allows the Commission in Geneva to consider individual claims where there is a consistent and systematic pattern of human rights violations, which was certainly the case during the World War II period covering the situation which affected the Hong Kong veterans in the PoW camps in Japan for some 44 months.

The original claim, filed in 1987, focussed on a number of elements of international law. The first and foremost was the evidence relevant to the flagrant violations of the Geneva Convention, committed by the Japanese against the Hong Kong veterans in the PoW camps. These were enumerated in comprehensive and detailed lists, when looked upon in the war crimes trials of 1946. Other than that particular focus, we also cited war crimes and crimes against humanity, the concept of gross violations of human rights and also a compensation claim with respect to the concept of slave labour which, in the context of the Japanese PoW camps, was relevant to international labour standards and indeed the Geneva Convention itself.

When we first appeared before the Commission on Human Rights, we worked very closely with other leading non-governmental organizations such as the International Commission of Jurists, the International Commission of Health Professionals and the International Committee of the Red Cross. These organizations had NGO status within the Human Rights Commission process in Geneva, and we quickly learned that it would be very useful to acquire such a status in order to pursue the claim at all levels of the Human Rights process of the UN.

We then proceeded to go to New York and obtain NGO status for The War Amputations of Canada. This was quite an achievement as very, very few national organizations throughout the world have obtained this particular credential.

In subsequent years, through 1988 to 1993, we intervened, on our own behalf, at the Commission and, in effect, represented the Hong Kong veterans and a number of other organizations.

As an example of the principles of law that became sanctioned within this process, were the following:

The first dealt with the question of whether there would be a moratorium or a statute of limitations on this particular type of claim. International law is clear, and the Sub-Commission and Commission agreed that there was no limitation period; that indeed, this type of war crime, or crime against humanity, never had a particular termination date and could be pursued indefinitely.

Secondly, with reference to the only defence the Japanese truly ever raised having to do with the 1951-52 Peace Treaty, it is easily recognized under international law, that the Geneva Convention provisions supersede any peace treaty that can be signed between countries.

Lastly, as a principle of law, the right to compensation has been recognized for many years under international law. More specifically, the Geneva Conventions going back to 1929 and The Hague Convention of 1907 recognized the right to compensation for victims of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

By the summer of 1991, the consolidated claim on behalf of all of the Allied PoW and Civilian Internee groups, had reached the working group of the Sub-Commission on Human Rights in Geneva. Notwithstanding the fact that the Sub-Commission working group held that appalling violations of human rights had occurred during this World War II period, the Sub-Commission concluded by stating, that they did not have appropriate legal jurisdiction to award compensation to these World War II victims.

Following the bringing down of this public pronouncement, we learned from our sources in Geneva, that incredible political pressure had been applied by the Japanese and their representatives within the UN Human Rights process.

It is in this context that we felt extremely disappointed that the Canadian government, when given the opportunity to intervene on behalf of its own citizens, indeed the Hong Kong Veterans of Canada, did nothing to support the claim within the Human Rights process.

This had an extremely damaging or harmful effect on any chance of success we might have within this particular human rights procedure.

It became clear, following the February 1993, Commission on Human Rights hearings that the Japanese, notwithstanding the great pressure that was being brought to bear on them within the Geneva Human Rights process, were going to continue to stonewall the claim. Indeed, the Hong Kong veterans began to recognize that time was of the essence. Many of these veterans were approaching their mid-seventies; many were suffering serious residual disabilities and incapacities as a consequence of their PoW experience.

It was at this time that we began to review the general responsibility of the Canadian Government under international law. Indeed, over the last two-year period, one of the more notable developments within the United Nations process, was the fact that with reference to the Asian Comfort Women issue, both the North Korean and South Korean governments were fully endorsing and supporting the claims in international circles. This has the dramatic effect of forcing the Japanese to deal with another government, and it became readily apparent to us, that the Canadian Government's involvement in the Hong Kong claim was an essential ingredient to success.

Working closely with internationally eminent jurists, such as Dr. John Humphrey, it became clear that under international law, the Canadian Government had actually violated a number of provisions of an international treaty known as The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Under this particular treaty, it is required that a country provide a right to a remedy for a victim of a gross violation of human rights. It is quite clear that a number of provisions of the international covenant have been actually violated by Canada in its acts of omission vis-a-vis the Hong Kong veterans.

Going back to the 1951-52 Peace Treaty, the Canadian Government failed to protect the interests of the PoW in the negotiated peace process. The fact that the Canadian Government actually agreed to release the claims of the veterans was in direct violation of the Geneva Conventions and, more particularly, Article 131 which, in effect, states that fundamental human rights cannot be contracted away, and cannot be waived under a peace treaty instrument. As a direct result, we filed a claim under the Optional Protocol of the international covenant.

The Optional Protocol is an international instrument which is administered by the Human Rights Committee of the UN. This Committee is a different body from the Commission on Human Rights. It is made up of a number of international legal experts and allows the

particular group to rule as to whether a country has violated provisions of the international covenant.

It is of further importance, that in 1990, when Prime Minister Mulroney was visiting with Prime Minister Kaifu of Japan, he accepted the apology of the then Japanese Prime Minister as to the atrocities perpetrated by the Japanese against Allied soldiers. It was unfortunate that our Prime Minister, in accepting this apology, also took advantage of the situation to indicate to Prime Minister Kaifu, that the Canadian Government would not be seeking any compensation on behalf of the Hong Kong veterans. In effect then, Prime Minister Mulroney suggested that if there were to be further reparation paid, the Canadian Government would take care of its own.

PRIME MINISTER BRIAN MULRONEY PRESS CONFERENCE CLIP

“...If the question arises whether we ought to do more, then I think the answer would have to come from the Government of Canada... and if you're going to look for money, look usually to your own government...”

The filing of our claim under the Optional Protocol involved a submission of some 86 pages of material, citing the violations that we felt Canada had committed under the international covenant. We have concluded this particular brief which will be considered by the Human Rights Committee in Geneva with the basic thought that either the Canadian Government can support this claim against the Japanese, or, alternatively, face the impact of a negative ruling from the Human Rights Committee, as to its violations, and indeed be held accountable to its own Hong Kong veterans for indemnification.

Under the procedures of the Human Rights Committee, the filing under the Optional Protocol will trigger a forwarding of the material to the Canadian Government by the Human Rights Centre in Geneva. The Centre will allow the Canadian Government a period not to exceed six months to formally respond to our submission.

Interview with Professor Humphrey

H.C. Chadderton: Professor John Humphrey was for 20 years, the Director of the Human Rights Centre in Geneva. He is the co-author of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. He has had a long term association with McGill University in Montréal. He is by any yardstick, Canada's leading expert on human rights issues. John, why does the claim of the Hong Kong Veterans fit under Resolution 1503 of the Economic and Social Council of the UN, a Resolution which you in fact drafted?

Pr. Humphrey: Because it gives a right of petition to individuals wherever they may live. And partly because I had been Director of the Human Rights Division, I had the job of drawing up a resolution in which I indicated the countries in which there were gross violations of human rights.

So, it was under those proceedings but you could petition the United Nations but that didn't mean to say that you had some mechanism of implementation. What you had to depend upon in the final analysis, was the education of public opinion and of course our position was that finally the Japanese Government would realize that there were black spots in this history and contemporary vision that had to be removed, but it was last year that we decided that probably we had done as much as we could under the 1503 resolution that directed against Japan.

But then we decided, and I think if you took the chief decision, that the thing to do was to go after the Canadian Government because the Canadian Government had not only refused to help us in any way, but they had created an obstacle and one of the main arguments that they were using – and you know they got this from the Japanese – was that there was a Peace Treaty in 1952, a provision of which said that there would be no claim for compensation. So as a lawyer - as an international lawyer - I didn't think that was quite right. It seemed to me that countries could not, by treaty, take away the rights of any individuals and there were conventions on treatment of prisoners during wartime.

But now we are proceeding against the Canadian government and my hope is that we are on our way to success because there, as you have been reading in the media about what the Japanese politicians are saying about the so-called comfort women and so on, and I said to Brian Forbes over and over again - you know, I think we have reached the point where we are going to ride to success on the backs of the women and I think that's what we are.

H.C. Chadderton: If the Japanese are right and the Peace Treaty does extinguish the rights of Canadian Nations against Japan, was the Canadian

Government in violation of international law in signing this Peace Treaty?

PR. HUMPHREY: Well yes, I think so. After all it was denying rights that belonged to its own citizens but I think it goes further than that. I think the result can't stand up in international law, namely the Treaty itself or the article in question.

H.C. Chadderton: I think this next one, to me as a World War II veteran, is of special interest. You stated in Geneva in February of 1993 that World War II was the catalyst of contemporary international law governing human rights. It would be interesting to have your view on this now.

PR. HUMPHREY: I repeat, that it was the Second World War that was the catalyst of the incorporation of respect for human rights in international law. Now in the first instance, the Universal Declaration on Human Rights - the first draft incidentally of which I myself prepared - it was simply a resolution of the general assembly and the resolutions of the general assembly as you probably know are not binding on member states in principle.

But the resolution, the Universal Declaration, has been invoked so many times both within and outside the United Nations as if it were law that it has become part of the customary law of nations and that's one of the ways in which respect for human rights has been incorporated into international law and one of the others, of course, was the adoption by the United Nations of the two covenants. The covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and Canada has ratified both of these treaties.

H.C. Chadderton: Under any other comments would you deal with the organization of shame - what that means?

PR. HUMPHREY: Well yes because I made the point earlier that before the Second World War individuals had no status in international law. So about all you could do was to discuss these matters in the United Nations and so on and educate public opinion and most countries are very sensitive about public opinion. And that's what I mean when I use that language.

The organization of shame, and I think that for a long time to come, this may be the major thing. What will happen, for example, if in our case against the Canadian Government we go ahead and make the cases argument and argue it before the UN and we come out on top. Don't you think there's going to be a hell of a lot, excuse my language, but of shame in Canada. I would think so. I would think so.

H.C. Chadderton: As the Patron of the Hong Kong Veterans of Canada, John, and on their behalf, I should like to thank you.

Interview with Dr. Gingras

H.C. Chadderton:

Dr. Gustave Gingras is one of Canada's best known physicians; in fact he has an international reputation. Many years ago he headed a rehabilitation mission to Morocco, he's also well known for directing rehabilitation missions in countries such as Vietnam, Venezuela, and in fact China. He's authored of a best-selling book called (*Feet was I to the Lamb*) and he's also co-authored another book which deals with the human rights of the disabled of the world.

He was commissioned to produce a medical study for The War Amps first intervention in Geneva on behalf of the Hong Kong veterans.

When we were preparing the information for our claim to the United Nations, we turned to Dr. Gingras and on a voluntary basis he agreed to conduct a study of the sequela or the medical consequences of long term imprisonment of the Hong Kong veterans by the Japanese. He has now produced two reports, they also have become world famous. Here is Dr. Gustave Gingras.

DR. GINGRAS:

The first chapter deals with Avitaminosis.

Well the main problem caused by avitaminosis was of course emaciation - I just described it and the famous symptom called electric feet, which was a new symptom in medicine because we never had people who suffered so much from avitaminosis. The electric feet consisted of fantastic shocks in the legs and the feet and strangely enough, the only palliative was cold water but cold water would scurf the skin and then bad sores would appear. So it was a good or a bad result.

There are other symptoms that I would like to talk about at this point. Vision disturbance, cardiac changes, neuralgia, pain following the trajectory of nerves in both upper and lower extremities and which were quite unendurable if I may use that adjective.

But there was something else that we found. It's sort of an organic brain syndrome. I was quite surprised to discover when I examined 37 cases from the east coast to Vancouver that some showed signs of Parkinsonism.

The third aspect that was very important was the psychiatric aspect. Nobody can be incarcerated for 44 months under the circumstances that had been described and will be described later, again, without suffering from some type of psychological imbalance.

There were other psychiatric problems, for instance, several suicide attempts and strangely enough, what was described as passive suicide where a man who was not well would say to his companion in the place where they were sleeping, "Tomorrow I'll be dead." And strangely enough, strangely enough, it happened many, many times that when they woke up indeed the man was dead and they called it passive suicide.

There were ailments affecting the feet. We counted 30% of the prisoners, the former prisoners, who had such ailments. They were due to post-frostbite and in many cases toes had to be amputated or had been amputated before. There were also eye problems due to avitaminosis and various other problems.

We'd like to say that the first symptoms, again, occurred three or four months after the beginning of the incarceration in 1942. This is important. There were spinal and para-spinal diseases and complications and this struck 33% of our Canadians and these symptoms and diagnosis were all confirmed by x-rays after they were repatriated. The cause of these were accidents mainly in occurred in mines, zinc mines and coal mines, when the man was working with a pick and shovel and when a large piece of stone or rock or coal would fall from the top of the gallery on his back and cause a fracture.

Along with the 13 diagnoses, we have also decided to have a special chapter on the limb problems, 36%, as a matter of fact, suffered from problems affecting the upper or lower limbs, and these problems affected the articulations, the cartilages, particularly of the knees, and there were also a great number of finger amputation due to poor circulation after frostbite.

There were also a number of neuritis of both upper and lower extremities, which were actually bilateral, probably due to the long period of time these cases had to remain outside with very little clothing on.

From 1945 (after the return) to 1970, 67% of all deaths were due to heart diseases.

To finalize, diphtheria and dysentery were responsible for most deaths among the prisoners of the Japanese. The diphtheria epidemic in Sham Shoo P.O. is one that is described by Dr. S.M. Banfel, himself an ex-PoW, and a Canadian physician.

Subsequent events showed that anti-toxin was available in Hong Kong at that time. It had been stolen, of course, from the Hong Kong British Military Hospital, so these deaths must be attributed directly to callousness and carelessness on the part of capturers.

As you know the League of Red Cross Society has always visited PoW camps in Germany, in England, in Canada and all over the world and it was found that they were certainly not very much welcomed in Japan. The prisoners were not allowed to talk to the members of the Geneva group who were visiting and one day a Canadian Padre shouted, "Why don't you visit the sick." Well after the visitors had left the camp he was beaten to an inch of his death.

The medical services in the camp were practically nothing. The sick-bay was staffed by ignorant, non-trained Japanese. There were no medications and no doctors. The toilets were of the septic type. There was no hygienic paper and no place to wash hands, therefore, the horrible thing that happened was the prisoners had to use their hands to wipe themselves and consequently, distribute microbes and infection all over the camp. No wonder there were so much diphtheria and so much infection of the gastrointestinal system.

A number of the prisoners, of the Canadians anyway, demonstrated signs of heart disease shortly after their incarceration and during their incarceration, and after repatriation the greatest number of deaths was due to heart disease. The exact cause was never exactly found, but it is believed that the heart of the incarcerated people, like their brain, didn't receive sufficient food to keep them going. Because, let's not forget that the heart has its own little nervous system that keeps it going, and if you're deprived of food for too long, this slight nervous system will have consequences that are those I just mentioned.

Conclusion

H.C. Chadderton: Well there you have it. You may well ask, why should the Canadian Government be responsible? Well firstly in 1952 the Canadian Government signed a Peace Treaty which at least, in the eyes of the Japanese, waived the rights of the Hong Kong veterans' compensation.

Secondly, in signing that Peace Treaty the Canadian Government failed to give precedence to the Geneva Convention.

Thirdly, several years ago the Canadian Government did settle claims with the Japanese Canadians who were interned in Canada during World War II. Their claims were, no doubt, justified but they were based on Canadian law. The claim of the Hong Kong veterans however, is based on the most sacred set of international laws that exists throughout the world: The Geneva Convention.

Fourthly, in his haste to get Canadians into action in late 1941, the then Prime Minister, MacKenzie King, committed our troops to defend the garrison in Hong Kong. That was against the advice of Winston Churchill. It was against all of the military intelligence of the day when those troops of ours climbed on those ships to go to the Far East. They were condemned to two alternatives. They would either be killed or they would be captured. You see, they were sent to Hong Kong not for military reasons but for political reasons.

Now Canada has two options. They can either support the claim and go after the Japanese, or Canada can pay the claim itself, and incidentally, if Canada pays that claim and the Japanese later come up with the money, then the Canadian tax payers can be reimbursed.

Thank you. I am Cliff Chadderton of The War Amps and a Patron of the Hong Kong Veterans Association of Canada.

ON-SCREEN SUPER

On December 11, 1998, the Canadian government granted compensation of \$24,000 to each surviving Far East PoW or to their widow for the forced labour that the Canadian servicemen endured while prisoners of the Japanese during the Second World War.