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The Decision to Reinforce Hong Kong

September 1941

Terry Copp

On 10 September 1941 the British chiefs of staff, meeting in London, reversed their long standing opposition to sending additional troops to defend Hong Kong. They authorized the secretary of state for dominion affairs to invite the government of Canada to provide a "small force of one or two battalions" to reinforce the garrison at Hong Kong. To understand the British request and the Canadian reply we need to review developments in the Far East as they were understood in 1941.

The dynamic factor was unquestionably the expansionist program of the dominant groups in Japanese society. Since we are not asking a question about Japanese imperialism we do not need to examine its origins or debate its legitimacy. By 1937 the Japanese Empire included Formosa (1898), Korea (1910) and Manchuria (1931). After Japan's withdrawal from the League of Nations the military, particularly the army, "came to dominate government to the point where it could effectively veto individual ministerial appointments."¹ In 1936 Japan joined the Anti-Comintern Pact aligning itself with Hitler and Mussolini against the Soviet Union. The next year, after what is known as the Marco Polo bridge incident, Japan began a "special undeclared war" to gain effective control of China.

Despite long standing American and European involvement in

Abstract: In November 1941 the Canadian government, reacting to a British request, despatched "C" Force to reinforce the garrison at Hong Kong. Shortly after the Canadians arrived, the Japanese army attacked and captured the British colony. The entire Canadian contingent of almost 2,000 men was either killed or captured in the battle. Recriminations began immediately as Canadians tried to understand the reasons behind the despatch of the force. This argument was neatly summed up by Carl Vincent in his book titled, *No Reason Why*. Ignoring the simplicity of hindsight, this article re-examines the political and strategic situation of 1941 to better understand the decision-making process which led to the despatch of "C" Force. The article concludes that there were many reasons why the Canadians were sent to Hong Kong.

China the western powers were quite unwilling to intervene and, by the outbreak of war in Europe, Japan had conquered northeastern China and a number of coastal areas including Canton and the territory adjacent to Hong Kong. Neither successful military action nor systematic terrorism such as the Rape of Nanking persuaded the president of China, Chiang Kai-Shek or the communist leader Mao Tse Tung to agree to surrender so the undeclared war against China continued.

From the summer of 1939 to mid-1941 the Japanese navy pressed its case for expansion to secure the resources of southeast Asia,

especially the oil fields of the Dutch East Indies. After June 1940, Japan forced the Vichy government in France to hand over bases in northern Indo-China and persuaded the British to temporarily close the Burma Road, the Chinese nationalist army's supply route. When the Japanese signed the Tripartite Pact linking their future with Germany and Italy and a non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union, the decks were cleared for the navy's program of expansion. This at least was the popular theory in Japan.

The major, perhaps the only, obstacle was the United States which had finally begun to react to Japanese aggression. The occupation of northern Indo-China was met by a series of American trade embargoes including a ban on the export of scrap iron and aviation fuel to Japan. These measures had the opposite effect to the one intended; the decision makers in Japan were increasingly persuaded that only war would provide access to the resources Japan required.

War seemed to be a viable option because of the military weakness of Britain and the United States. Japan could easily win a series of campaigns in the first months of the war, go over to the defensive and negotiate a satisfactory peace, or so the Japanese military argued.

The apparent success of the German invasion of Russia prompted the Japanese Navy to press for immediate action and in July 1941, Japan announced a "protectorate"

Churchill and Roosevelt met at Placentia Bay, Newfoundland in August 1941 to discuss the war. One the topics discussed was how to dissuade the Japanese from further aggression. Ironically, Churchill was transported to the meeting aboard the battleship HMS *Prince of Wales* (below left) which was sunk by the Japanese along with HMS *Repulse* only four months later.



over all of Indo-China. The United States, followed by Britain, the Dominions and the Netherlands froze Japanese assets and imposed a total trade embargo including oil.

The British government sought to link these initiatives with a warning to Japan about the consequences of future expansion. When Churchill met Roosevelt in August 1941, in the waters off Newfoundland, he asked FDR to agree to a joint declaration warning the Japanese of the consequences of further expansion, but strong isolationist sentiment in the US Congress persuaded Roosevelt to deal bilaterally with the Japanese.²

American policy in the Pacific had long been based on the assumption that war with Japan could be avoided or postponed by diplomatic and economic pressure. This view was underwritten by the United States Navy which had continuously reviewed and war-gamed conflict with Japan. These studies demonstrated that, however successful Japan might be in the early stages of a war, it could not win a prolonged conflict with America.

An economy less than one tenth the size of the United States, Japan was already fully committed to war production, could not possibly compete with the industrial potential of the US and American planners believed the Japanese knew this. As indeed they did.

The US Navy had also concluded that in the event of war the Philippines would be lost so there was no point in sending reinforcements, but in July 1941 the US Chiefs of Staff changed their minds. If Japan was to be deterred instead of defeated it was necessary to strengthen American defences and signal the US commitment to the Philippines. The recall of General Douglas MacArthur to active service and his appointment as commander of US (and Philippine) forces in the Far East was announced with great fanfare.³ Reinforcements, and the ultimate deterrent of the era, B-17 "Flying Fortress" bombers, were to be sent to the islands as quickly as possible.

In Ottawa and other Canadian cities these events were reported in front-page stories and debated in

editorials.⁴ More detailed information reached External Affairs and National Defence headquarters through diplomatic channels.⁵ Everything pointed to a renewed US commitment to leadership in the Pacific.

The British government was placed in a very difficult position by the American refusal to agree to a clearly phrased warning to Japan. From the British perspective the US was forcing Japan to choose between war and peace while avoiding responsibility for defending the most likely victims of war: Thailand, Malaya and the Dutch East Indies. But in the summer of 1941 US foreign policy appeared to be working. The Japanese prime minister, Prince Konoye, reorganized his cabinet on 16 July removing the leading pro-German member and replacing him with a moderate. Prince Konoye also proposed a direct meeting with Roosevelt. No such meeting took place but discussions over a general settlement began in September when a new Japanese emissary arrived in Washington and continued until the attack on Pearl Harbor.

We must now look more closely at the British decisions about the Far East. First, let us remember that Winston Churchill and his chiefs of staff were somewhat preoccupied with other matters in mid-1941. The German invasion of the Soviet Union which began on 21 June threatened the very survival of the Soviet state. Britain could do little except expedite the shipment of supplies to Russia, but this meant aircraft and tanks needed in other theatres must be diverted. The Battle of the Atlantic, and the air offensive over Germany also required close attention but above all other issues the War Cabinet focused on preparations for Operation "Crusader," General Claude Auchinleck's desert offensive scheduled for early November 1941.⁶

The situation in the Far East could not be entirely ignored especially because the Australian government was pressing for action. On 31 August 1941 Churchill sent a "Secret and Personal" message to the Australian prime minister noting that "events about Japan seem to have taken a more favourable turn in the last month...I cannot believe that the Japanese will face the encounter now developing around them. We may therefore regard the situation not only as more favourable but less tense. Nevertheless," Churchill continued,

the growth of our battleship strength, ravages made upon the German Navy, which is now reduced apart from *Tirpitz* and U-Boats, to very modest proportions and the measure we now have taken of the Italian Navy make it possible in the near future for us to place heavy ships in the Indian Ocean...before the end of the year.⁷

The Australians, who were pressing Churchill to withdraw their troops from Tobruk and concentrate their Middle Eastern divisions under Australian command, were very

unhappy with this statement and replied, "The strategy of the war insofar as it affected Australian co-operation depended on the presence of capital ships in Singapore."⁸ Unspecified ships in the Indian Ocean were of little value to Australia.

With this background we are able to reconstruct the process of decision making in September 1941. Churchill has just returned from his meeting with Roosevelt which produced the Atlantic Charter and, he believed, an agreement to issue a general warning to Japan against further expansion. He continued to stall on the Australian request for a fleet based in Singapore and rejected proposals for further reinforcement of Malaya although he and his colleagues were well aware that the Royal Air Force, which was supposed

to be the key to defence of the colony, was under-strength and employed obsolete aircraft. Churchill did not believe any priority could be given to what he called "a hypothetical problem when so many immediate issues threatened Britain's survival."⁹ The Australians, concerned with their own survival, did not agree.

It is therefore clear that the question of sending additional reinforcements to Hong Kong would never have been considered if Major-General A.E. Grasett had not suggested that the Canadian government could be persuaded to supply the troops. Grasett, as general officer commanding British Troops in China, had long argued in favour of strengthening the garrison of Hong Kong. Upon his retirement in August 1941 he had returned to England via Canada where he had "long discussions" with his Royal Military College of Canada classmate Major-General Harry Crerar, chief of the general staff (CGS).

The two men had studied the problems of defending Hong Kong at the Imperial Defence College in 1934 so there was a wide ranging and informal discussion of the issues. The minister of national defence, J.L. Ralston, joined the conversations and heard Grasett argue that "two additional battalions" would render the garrison strong enough to withstand, for an extensive period of siege, an attack by such forces as the Japanese could bring to bear against it.¹⁰ Grasett also learned much about the state of the Canadian army and the concern that recruiting was suffering because there were no signs that the Canadians were likely to become involved in action overseas. According to Crerar, Grasett did



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Major-General Arthur Grasett, the previous commander of British Troops in Hong Kong and former classmate of Major-General Harry Crerar, played a major role in facilitating the despatch of Canadian troops to Hong Kong.



Two of the principal actors in the decision to send Canadian troops to Hong Kong were the minister of national defence, J.L. Ralston (left) and Major-General H.D.G. Crerar, chief of the general staff (right). This photograph was taken on the occasion of the sailing of the 3rd Canadian Infantry Division to England on 2 August 1941. Major-General C.B. Price (shaking Ralston's hand) is the commander of the division and to the right is Ernest Lapointe, minister of justice and attorney general.

a very great moral effect in the whole of the Far East and would reassure Chiang Kai-Shek as to reality of our intention to hold the island.

His Majesty's Government in Canada will be well aware of difficulties we are at present experiencing in providing forces which situation in various parts of the world demands, despite very great assistance which is being furnished by the Dominions. We should therefore be most grateful if the Canadian Government would consider whether one or two Canadian battalions could be provided from Canada for this purpose. It is thought that in view of their special position in the north Pacific, Canadian Government would in any case have wish to be informed of need as we see it for reinforcement of Hong Kong and special value of such measure, even though on a very limited scale at the present time. It may also be mentioned that the United States have recently despatched a small reinforcement to the Philippines. It would be of the greatest help if the Canadian Government could co-operate with us in the manner suggested, and we much hope they will feel free to do so.

If the Canadian Government agree in principle to send one or

not raise the question of Canadian participation in the defence of Hong Kong but it is not difficult to see how he developed the idea.

In London, Grasett presented his views on the defence of Hong Kong to the chiefs of staff and suggested that the needed reinforcements might come from Canada.¹¹ This idea put the question in an entirely different light. Up until then any addition to the defences of Hong Kong would have had to come from Malaya and this was clearly impossible. Canadian troops, drawn from those based in Canada not England, would bring a net addition to Allied strength in the area. The Americans and the Chinese would welcome such concrete evidence of commitment to the defence of the Far East which the British themselves were unwilling to provide.

The chiefs of staff quickly agreed and sent a memorandum to Churchill recommending that Canada be asked to provide a "small reinforcement." Churchill still held the view that in

the event of war with Japan, Hong Kong could not be held or relieved, but this proposal added credibility to both deterrence and the prospect of a prolonged resistance. He accepted the recommendation with the provision that "a further decision should be taken before the battalions actually sail."¹²

A cypher telegram was quickly dispatched to Ottawa. It read, in part:

Position in the Far East now, however, changed. Our defences in Malaya have been improved and there have been signs of a certain weakening in Japanese attitudes towards us and the United States. In these circumstances it is thought that a small reinforcement of garrison at Hong Kong e.g. by one or two more battalions, would be very fully justified. It would increase strength of garrison out of all proportion to actual numbers involved, and it would provide a strong stimulus to garrison and Colony; it would further have

two battalions, we should propose to communicate with you again as to best time for their despatch, having regard to general political situation in the Far East.

Signed,
The Secretary of State for
Dominion Affairs

The wording of this telegram has been criticized by C.P. Stacey, the official historian, as wrongly implying "that the outpost policy had been abandoned."¹³ Brereton Greenhous is much harsher implying that "perfidious Albion" was deliberately deceiving the Canadians.¹⁴ There is no evidence to support such an interpretation but the wording is certainly ambiguous. The key question is how did the responsible Canadian decision makers interpret

the request and why did they accept it?

The minister of national defence was absent on 19 September and the telegram was first read by the acting minister, C.G. "Chubby" Power. According to Power his immediate response was positive. "It struck me as being the only thing to do." He contacted the CGS who agreed that Canada had a "political and moral obligation" to assist Britain in the these circumstances. Major-General Crerar then discussed the proposal with his vice chief, Major-General Ken Stuart and deputy chief, Major-General Maurice Pope, who supported Crerar's assessment.¹⁵

The War Cabinet which met on 23 September was also in favour but Prime Minister Mackenzie King insisted that the final decision be

deferred until the defence minister had given his approval. Colonel J.L. Ralston was a man of extraordinary ability, widely recognized as the most powerful figure in the cabinet. Ralston had commanded a battalion on the Western Front in the Great War and was acutely aware of both the sacrifices the army had made and the reputation it had won in that conflict. He had overcome the hesitations of the prime minister and the opposition of some of his colleagues to create a large army and was determined to see that army play a major role in the Allied war effort.¹⁶ Ralston could scarcely refuse an opportunity to employ Canadian forces in any theatre.

The political case for the expeditionary force was summed up by Mr. Justice Duff who formed

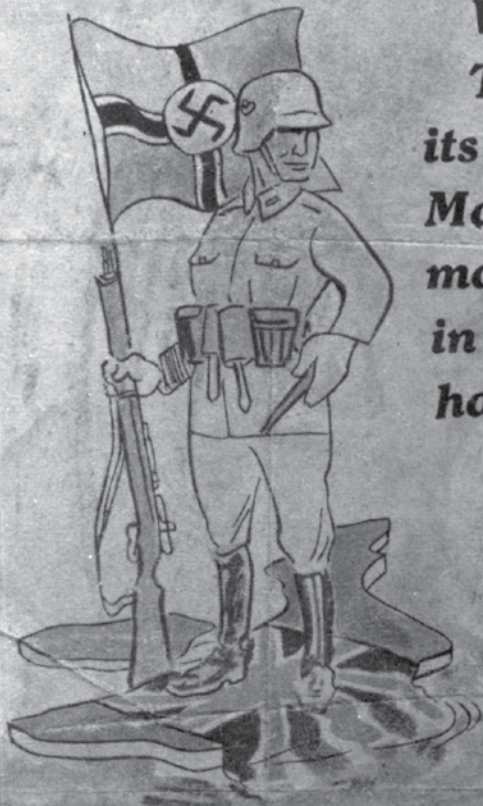
Canadian ambassador to China, Major-General Victor Odlum, with Chiang Kai-Shek and other Chinese officials and dignitaries, 15 March 1944.



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To the British Soldiers:

**We want you to know one thing.
The very day when Japan makes
its furious attacks on Hongkong and
Malay, it is also the day that Ger-
many makes its long planned landing
in British Isles. The end of Britain
has come!**



a one man Royal Commission to investigate the Hong Kong affair.

The evidence discloses various reasons which appear to have actuated the War Committee [of Cabinet]. In view of what the other Dominions had done in Abyssinia and Libya it was Canada's turn to help; Canada ought to share in the responsibility for garrisoning the Pacific area, just as Australia was assisting Malaya, the military value of the reinforcement would be out of all proportion to the numbers involved; the arrival of the contingent in Hong Kong would have a great moral effect in the whole of the Far East and would reassure the Chinese as to the British intention to hold Hong Kong, the moral effect of the expedition might operate as a sensible influence for the preservation of peace there; at that juncture, in September, to gain time was beyond measure important; such an appeal from the predominant partner in the common cause could not be rejected.¹⁷

The political case was clear enough but what of the responsibility of the CGS to offer advice about the military soundness of the decision. Crerar, as we have seen, knew a good deal about the problems of defending Hong Kong from his days at the Imperial Defence College.¹⁸ If he was persuaded that the addition of two battalions to the garrison of Hong Kong would by itself allow the colony to be defended for a prolonged period then his military judgment was certainly wrong. The problem is that no one could predict what would happen in the event of war. Would the Japanese attack Russia? Would they move south avoiding British territory? If they attacked in South

East Asia would Hong Kong be an immediate target? If Hong Kong was attacked what role would the British and American fleets play? If Japan lost the initial battles would Hong Kong be rapidly reinforced? Who knew what might happen. In Manila General Douglas MacArthur was convinced there would be "no attack before spring" and was confident that any Japanese invasion would be easily repulsed.¹⁹ Crerar could not in fact offer advice about the military soundness of a proposal, which was in essence political and strategic.

With the decision made the CGS turned to the question of which units should be selected. Crerar's choice of the Royal Rifles of Canada and the Winnipeg Grenadiers has been subject of much controversy. After the surrender of Hong Kong questions about the training and equipment of Force "C" led to a Royal Commission which examined the question in detail. The procedure followed was that the director of military training was asked to categorize all of the infantry battalions in Canada in terms of their state of training. The ten most advanced battalions included the nine allocated to the 4th Canadian Infantry Division (it had not yet been converted to an armoured division) and another in Newfoundland. A second group were somewhat less advanced and nine more were in a third category "due either to recent employment requiring a period of refresher training" or insufficient training, these Category C battalions were "not recommended for operational employment at present."²⁰

Crerar was unwilling to take battalions from 4th Division and quickly decided that two of the Category C battalions which had recently returned from garrison duty in Newfoundland and Jamaica were the best choice. Ralston's only complaint was that other battalions which had not yet been out of Canada

might see this second assignment overseas as "discrimination against them."²¹

The debate before the Royal Commission revolved around charges that battalions were not fully trained. The Royal Rifles of Canada were mobilized in 1940 after amalgamation with the 7/1 Hussars of the Eastern Townships. A Permanent Force officer, Lieutenant-Colonel William James Home, MC, was selected to command the regiment which included a large number of field officers with First World War experience. Most prominent was Lieutenant-Colonel John H. Price, MC, who reverted to the rank of major and became second-in-command of the battalion. Recruiting was done selectively throughout eastern Quebec and New Brunswick and despite an agreement that only English speaking volunteers would be enlisted nearly 40 percent were bi-lingual Francophones.²²

It was not easy to train for modern war in Canada during 1940-41. The limited modern equipment available had been used to outfit the 1st and 2nd Divisions. The Royal Rifles

had at all times their full share of rifles and bayonets, an adequate supply of light machine guns and pistols and their full scale of transport vehicles. They had one 2" mortar for instructional purposes; but with this exception they had no mortars or anti-tank rifles.²³

Two-inch mortars were made available, two per company, before the battalion left for Hong Kong and two 3-inch mortars, the standard 1941 allotment, were issued to the mortar platoon. Mortar bombs were unavailable and were to be supplied from British resources in Hong Kong.²⁴ The fact that the Canadian government had not created the domestic capacity to manufacture

Opposite: A Japanese propaganda leaflet dropped on British (and Canadian) troops in Hong Kong.

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Top left: Soldiers of the Royal Rifles of Canada wait at the Valcartier train station to begin their journey to Hong Kong, 23 October 1941.

LAC PA 116793



Middle left: Soldiers of the Winnipeg Grenadiers mingle with their families before entraining for the west coast and ultimately Hong Kong, 25 October 1941.

LAC PA 116794



Bottom left: Civilian stevedores load military equipment aboard HMT Awatea prior to its departure from Vancouver for Hong Kong, 27 October 1941.

something as simple as mortar bombs was not commented upon by the Royal Commission.

The Royals had been trained by their own officers and NCOs with little reference to the Directorate of Military Training. Garrison duty in Newfoundland interfered with advanced training but the battalion worked at company level exercises whenever it could. After the battalion was concentrated at St. John's in the spring of 1941 both military training²⁵ and sports programs were intensified. The hockey rink, boxing ring and football field were a crucial testing ground for soldiers and the junior NCOs and the vital combat leaders were usually selected from the playing field.

The Winnipeg Grenadiers mobilized as a machine gun battalion at the outbreak of the war but were sent to the West Indies in June 1940 as an infantry battalion. For a year the Grenadiers garrisoned Jamaica and carried out section and platoon training. Practice ammunition was not available so the men learned the drills but most did not actually fire their weapons until October 1941 after the battalion had returned to Winnipeg.²⁶ Neither the Royals nor the Grenadiers could remotely be considered "an efficient and well trained battalion" except by the standards prevailing in Canada in 1941 and this was precisely the argument put forward by the military before the Royal Commission which concluded:

Another Chief of the General Staff in the same circumstances might perhaps not unreasonably have taken another view. But I think the balance of practical considerations favoured the course actually taken. There is therefore no good ground for imputing to General Crerar, in the matter of selecting battalions to compose the expeditionary force, any error in judgement, much less any dereliction of duty.²⁷

One other matter must be investigated. When Churchill gave his approval he had insisted that "a further decision should be taken before the battalions actually sail." According to the official history, Churchill was asked for his approval on 2 October and gave it. Six days later "the Chiefs of Staff authorized the reinforcement operation to proceed"²⁸ and shortly thereafter requested Ottawa to provide a Brigade Headquarters and specialist detachments before what was officially designated as "C" Force sailed on 22 October.

Neither the British chiefs of staff nor Churchill reconsidered their authorization in the light of the very dramatic changes occurring in Japan. On 16 October Prince Konoye resigned as premier and two days later the army minister General Tojo formed a new Japanese government. We now know that the Tojo Cabinet agreed on a decision to go to war before the end of 1941 unless the United States accepted Japanese terms for peace, but this was not understood in London or Ottawa.

Churchill's reaction to the changed situation was summed up in a "Most Secret" message to John Curtin, pPrime minister of Australia, on 26 October:

I am still inclined to think that Japan will not run into war... unless or until Russia is decisively broken. Perhaps even then they will wait for the promised invasion

of the British Isles in the spring. Russian resistance is still strong especially in front of Moscow and winter is now near.

... in order to further deter Japan, we are sending forthwith our newest battleship *Prince of Wales* to join HMS *Repulse* in the Indian Ocean. This is done in spite of protests of the C in C Home Fleet and is a serious risk to run. The *Prince of Wales* will be noticed at Cape Town quite soon...²⁹

With Churchill now pursuing a policy of deterrence through symbolic acts there could be no question of changing the decision to send Force "C" to Hong Kong. Indeed, Churchill had informed the Australians of the Canadian commitment and this had greatly encouraged the government in Canberra. There was even a suggestion that Canada be invited to send a brigade to Malaya³⁰ but fortunately there was no time to act upon it.

The mood in Washington was somewhat different. On 24 October the Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox told reporters, "the Japanese have no intention of giving up their plans for expansion. If they pursue that course a collision there is inevitable."³¹ The State Department was unhappy with Knox's statement, which was headline news in Ottawa as well as New York and Washington. Evidence from decrypts of Japanese diplomatic cables now indicated that Japan's negotiator in Washington had been told that he had until 25 November to obtain an agreement and efforts to produce a temporary agreement were underway.³² This was the situation when Force "C" arrived in Honolulu on 2 November. There is no indication that the Americans considered intervening to warn the Canadians of the increased likelihood of war. Marine detachments from China were enroute to Manila and other reinforcements in transit to the

Philippines from the United States.³³ On 14 November the "C" Force convoy anchored in Manila Bay to rendezvous with HMS *Danae*, a cruiser which was to escort "C" Force on the final leg to Hong Kong. At that moment Washington was preoccupied with preparations to meet a new Japanese envoy, London was absorbed by Operation "Crusader" which began on 18 November and Ottawa was out of the loop.

It is nevertheless evident that if a re-examination of the decision to send "C" Force to Hong Kong had occurred no responsible Canadian official would have argued for its cancellation. Great publicity had been given to the decision to send a fleet to Singapore³⁴ and preparations were underway to publicize the reinforcement of Hong Kong. On Sunday 16 November, Prime Minister Mackenzie King announced the arrival of a Canadian force at Hong Kong. The text of his statement read:

Defence against aggression actual or threatened, in any part of the world is today a part of the defence of every country which still enjoys freedom. It is in accordance with this view that the Government has deemed it advisable to associate Canadian troops with those of forces from other parts of the British Commonwealth now stationed in the Orient.³⁵

The statement was well received throughout Canada. The *Ottawa Journal*, no friend of the government, was enthusiastic, informing its readers "that in the defence of freedom there can be no such thing as regional responsibility."³⁶ The *Toronto Star*, which had carried detailed reports of the deteriorating situation in the Pacific, suggested Hong Kong "may prove an island Tobruk. And the Canadians are proud to be there to defend it."³⁷ The *Winnipeg Free Press*, with full knowledge that one of the city's regiments was there, reported



Canadian troops disembark in Hong Kong, 16 November 1941.

that the Canadian expeditionary force was regarded as a “diplomatic master stroke.” The editor noted with approval that “more Canadian troops might be sent to Hong Kong or other bases in the Pacific.”³⁸ On 25 November the *Free Press* carried an op-ed piece on the Canadians in Hong Kong which was highly critical of the government for failing to publicize the arrival of the troops “as a declaration before the world of where we stand if it comes to war in the Pacific.” The *Free Press* believed Canadians were starved for news of their national war effort and the arrival of “C” Force was a perfect opportunity to “mobilize all out support for the war.”³⁹ The second guessing would not begin until the announcement of the surrender.

The public now shared the knowledge that Canadians could be involved in a war in the Far East. They were there to deter war if possible and fight if war came. When Carl Vincent wrote his oft-quoted study of the Canadian role at Hong Kong he chose to title his book *No Reason Why*.⁴⁰ In fact there were many reasons why the Canadians

were in Hong Kong. This is clear when the actions of the Canadian government and its military advisors are examined in the context of 1941 without the benefit of hindsight.

Notes

1. H.P. Willmott, *Empires in Balance* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1982), p.51. Willmott provides an excellent introduction to both Japanese and Allied strategies in the Pacific and is the basic source for the following.
2. J.M. Gwyer and J.R.M. Butler, *Grand Strategy Vol.III* (London: HMSO, 1964), p.137.
3. Newspaper coverage of these events was designed to inform the Japanese. See the *New York Times*, 27-28 July 1941.
4. See for example the *Ottawa Citizen*, 18 July 1941.
5. Paul Dickson, “Crerar and the Decision to Reinforce Hong Kong,” *Canadian Military History* 2, no.1 (Spring 1994), p.104.
6. Churchill’s preoccupation with “Crusader” is especially evident in his correspondence with the Australian government. See W.J. Hudson and H.J. Stokes, eds., *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, Vol. V (Canberra, 1982).
7. *Ibid.*, p.92.
8. *Ibid.*, p.108.
9. *Ibid.*, p.108.
10. Dickson, p.102.
11. S.W. Kirby, *The War Against Japan*, Vol.I (London: HMSO, 1957), p.81.
12. C.P. Stacey, *Six Years of War* (Ottawa: Queen’s Printer, 1957), p.440.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 441.
14. Brereton Greenhous, “C” Force to Hong Kong (Toronto: Dundurn, 1997), p.16.
15. *Report of the Royal Commission Relating to the Hong Kong Expedition* (The Duff Report) (Ottawa 1942), p.14-15.
16. There is no published biography of Ralston. See J.R. Campbell, “James Layton

- Ralston and Manpower for the Canadian Army” (MA Thesis, Wilfrid Laurier University, 1983).
17. Duff Report, p.4.
18. Dickson, p.98.
19. G. Bischof and R.L. Dupont, *The Pacific War Revisited*, (New Orleans: Louisiana State University Press, 1997), pp.18-20.
20. Stacey, pp.442-443.
21. Duff Report, p.21.
22. G.S. Garneau, “The 1st Battalion of the Royal Rifles of Canada” (MA Thesis Bishops University). Printed in *The Royal Rifles of Canada in Hong Kong* (Sherbrooke 1970), pp.5-6.
23. Duff Report, pp.26-27.
24. Stacey, p.449.
25. Garneau, p.10.
26. Duff Report, p.28.
27. *Ibid.*, p.146.
28. Stacey, p.441.
29. Hudson, p.154.
30. *Ibid.*, p.146.
31. *New York Times*, 25 October 1941. The same story appears in Canadian newspapers.
32. Gwyer and Butler, pp.256-257.
33. *New York Times*, 28 November 1941.
34. Churchill’s speech on the decision was publicized on 11 November 1941.
35. This brief statement was reported world wide.
36. *Ottawa Journal*, 18 November 1941.
37. *Toronto Star*, 17 November 1941.
38. *Winnipeg Free Press*, 17 November 1941.
39. *Ibid.*, 20 November 1941.
40. Carl Vincent, *No Reason Why* (Stittsville, ON: Canada’s Wings, 1981).

Terry Copp is professor emeritus and director of the Laurier Centre for Military Strategic and Disarmament Studies. He is the author or co-author of many books including *Fields of Fire: The Canadians in Normandy* (2003) and *Cinderella Army: The Canadians in Northwest Europe, 1944-45* (2006). He published a previous article on the defence of Hong Kong in the Autumn 2001 issue of *Canadian Military History*.