



NEWSLETTER

THE ROYAL HONG KONG REGIMENT (THE VOLUNTEERS) ASSOCIATION

www.rhkr.org

July 2019

Honorary President's Message

Major (Rtd) Ron Taylor MBE TD ED.

From the Honorary President

The Tyndareus Stone

What is the Tyndareus Stone and why does the Association have an interest in it?

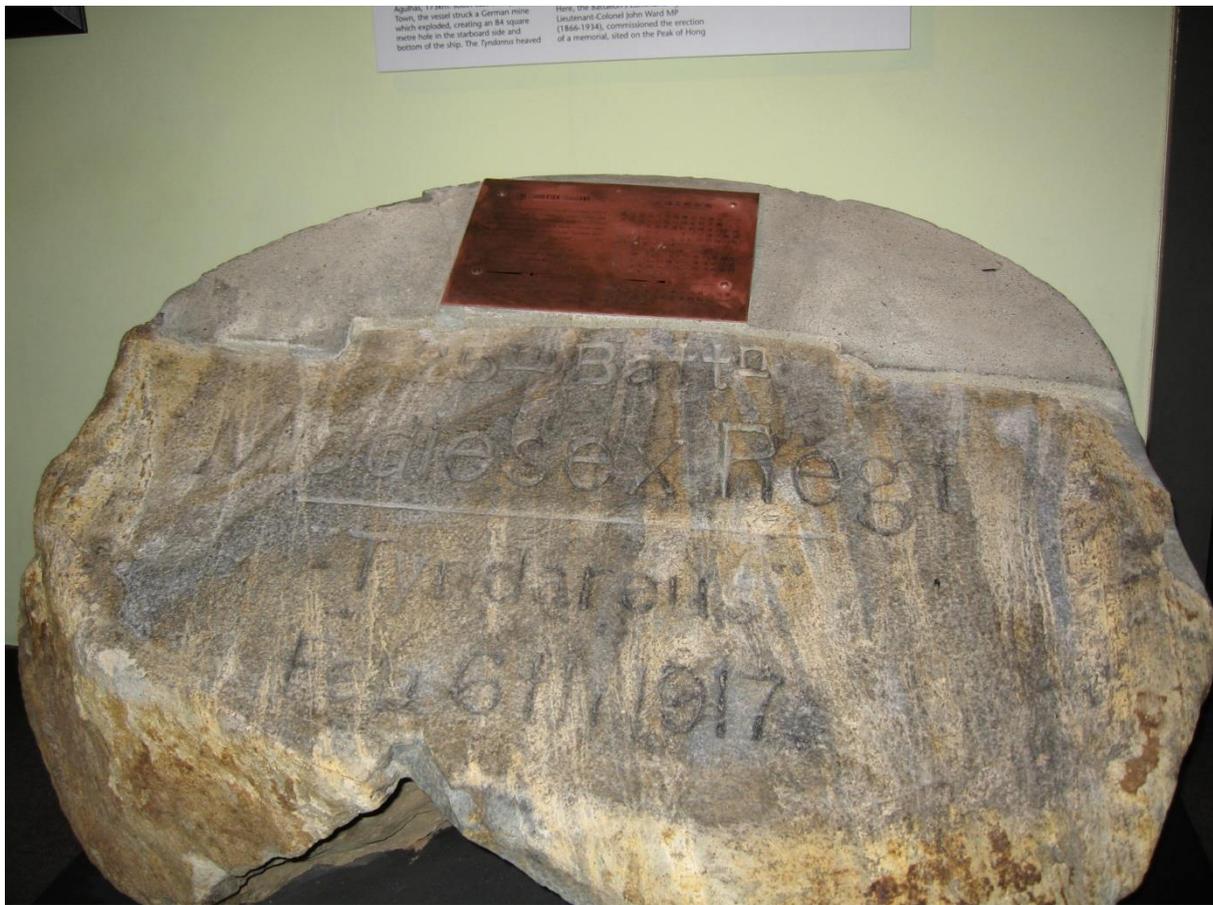
The Tyndareus Stone is a memorial stone to the Middlesex Regiment which, until October 1993, stood at the junction of Lugard, Harlech and Hatton Roads in the Peak District of Hong Kong Island.

It had been placed there by the 25th Battalion of the Middlesex Regiment upon their departure from Hong Kong at the end of the Great War, (1914 - 1918).

During the Great War the Middlesex Regiment raised a total of 46 battalions, and in 1916 it was decided that the 25th (Garrison) Battalion, a service battalion of the Regiment, would be posted to the Far East to provide garrison defence to the (then) Colonies of Hong Kong and Singapore. Half of the battalion would serve in each Colony, with the half who would serve in Hong Kong being commanded by Lieutenant Colonel John Ward MP who had actually raised the battalion. Accordingly, in late December 1916, the battalion left the U.K. on board a Blue Funnel line ship, the SS Tyndareus, which was making her maiden voyage.

The first part of the voyage passed without any untoward event and in January 1917 the ship arrived in Cape Town, South Africa, where soldiers and the ship's company were able to enjoy shore leave. However on 6 February 1917, having left Cape Town, the ship struck a German mine off Cape Agulhas. Although the bow of the ship went under the water, she did not sink and the calmness and discipline of the soldiers of the Middlesex were recorded as reasons why there was no loss of life or injury amongst those on board. The skill of the ship's master enabled the Tyndareus to go astern, thus keeping the damaged bow clear of the water. The ship was taken to Simonstown where she was later repaired while the men of the Middlesex continued their voyage to the Far East by other means.

On arrival of the Battalion in Hong Kong, the Battalion's Commanding Officer commissioned a memorial, the Tyndareus Stone, to be placed on the Peak to commemorate the exemplary conduct of his men when the ship was mined. The simple inscription reads: "25th Battalion Middlesex Regiment "Tyndareus" Feb 6th 1917".



From the photograph of the Stone, it can be seen that there is a brass plaque above the inscription. This was added in August 1981 by the (then) head of the Antiquities and Monuments Office, Dr Solomon Bard, a past Honorary Colonel of our Regiment. He had appreciated that the Stone was a valuable piece of Hong Kong's heritage.

This plaque reads, in both English and Chinese

“This stone memorial was erected by Lieutenant Colonel John Ward, Commanding Officer, in memory of those men of the 25th Battalion, The Middlesex Regiment, who died when the Troopship TYNDAREUS struck a German mine off Cape Agulhas, South Africa on 6th February 1917. The Battalion had embarked in England and were en route for Hong Kong to carry out garrison duties.

There is no doubt that the exemplary conduct of all ranks after the accident contributed in considerable measure to the Master's ability to prevent his ship from sinking with further loss of life.

The 1st Battalion of the Regiment subsequently fought with distinction during the defence of Hong Kong – December 1941”.

Unfortunately, the wording on the plaque is incorrect in noting "further loss of life"; there was no loss of life with this incident. The loss of life relates to the sinking of the Troopship HM Birkenhead on 26 February 1852 when she hit an uncharted rock in the same area. There were insufficient

serviceable lifeboats for all the passengers, and the soldiers famously stood firm on board, thereby allowing the women and children to board the boats safely and escape the sinking.

The Joint Liaison Group established under the Joint Declaration between the PRC and the British Government had agreed that heritage monuments in Hong Kong which, it is suggested, would include the Stone, would not be removed from Hong Kong in the lead up to the change of sovereignty in 1997. However, within the then Headquarters of the British Forces, there was a feeling that monuments such as this stone would not be safe and in October 1993 they arranged for the Stone to be and taken to the United Kingdom where its arrival was unexpected.

Eventually the National Army Museum in Chelsea, London, took over the ownership of the Stone and it was displayed in the museum until April 2014 when the museum was closed for renovation. There is no place for it in the renovated museum and it is believed to be now sitting in the museum's store.

The Middlesex Regiment has a long and close association with Hong Kong, commencing with the Regiment's 3rd Battalion being posted to Hong Kong and North China in October 1907. In 1938 the Regiment's 1st Battalion arrived in Hong Kong and was stationed here in 1941 when the Japanese invaded on 8 December. The battalion saw bitter fighting during the battle with many men lost in combat and subsequently as prisoners-of-war both here, in Japan and on the sinking of the Lisbon Maru. The Middlesex Regiment also served in Hong Kong post war and formed a close association with "The Volunteers" which we, as the Royal Hong Kong Regiment (The Volunteers), continued with the Middlesex successor units. Of our PSIs, one always came from the Middlesex Regiment or from one of their successor units, the Queen's Regiment and then the Prince of Wales Royal Regiment. Hence our Association's interest with the Middlesex Regiment and their memorial stone "The Tyndareus Stone".

With the Stone now resting unseen in a store in England, the Association along with other Hong Kong organisations have been requesting the Stone's return to Hong Kong where it can continue to commemorate the Middlesex Regiment. The Hong Kong Antiquities and Monuments Office encouraged the Association to liaise with the National Army Museum to seek agreement that the Stone could be returned. We now await the confirmation from the Government that, once the Stone is returned, they will resume the responsibility for its care which they had prior to its removal in 1993. Once this has been obtained, arrangement can be made for the Stone's return to Hong Kong, its rightful home.

Chairman's Message

The members of The Royal Hong Kong Regiment (The Volunteers) Junior Leaders

Corps have organized a 50th Anniversary Dinner of the founding of the Junior Leaders Corps in 1969 to be held on 11 November 2019. All who served in the Junior Leaders Corps are welcome to join on payment of the dinner cost.

As a veteran who served the Regiment from 1965, I witnessed the young cadets who developing from youngsters to become family heads, they still carry heartfelt memories of the Juniors Leaders Corps. Therefore I appeal to all veterans to support their celebration by taking part in the dinner. More details will be announced when they are ready.

After the Regimental disbandment in 1995, the veterans retained a feeling that members of Junior Leaders Corps should not be treated as full members of the Association because they were only boy soldiers. This issue haunted the Junior Leader Corps members and they were unhappy with the Association. They strived for the same treatment as the veterans to be full members and have voting rights. Though this had been discussed a number of times at the Association directors' meeting, the solution was not been clearly sought.

Thanks to Major Taylor, our Honorary President, who has made the clarification from the Company Registry as follows:-

Cadets of the RHKRV Junior Leaders Corps are already entitled to be full members of the Association with voting rights. The Association's Articles make no reference to Junior or Senior members of the Regiment, treating all as the same. The Articles are clear in referring to "all ranks "- which can only be interpreted to include those junior members of the Regiment who were enrolled in what was known as the Junior Leaders.

In this respect, all juniors who joined the Junior Leader Corps before the disbandment are entitled to voting rights as full members, they are all welcome to join the Association which will help the continuation of the Association's existence.

They need to pay HK\$240. – the annual fee to keep the Clubhouse running.

A. The Volunteers Challenge Cup 2019



B. Family Walk

The Family Walk 2019 was organized on 17th March 2019 (Sunday).

It was a one day local tour (scenic spots include Tsz Shan Monastery [慈山寺]; Shuen Wan Temple in Tai Po; and vegetarian lunch meal at Wun Chuen Sin Koon, Ta Kwu Ling.



C. The Hike of Hospice

The Hospice event was finished at an extremely bad weather. Many thanks to our V.A. members and the A.C. members who provided the excellent logistics support to us.



D. Dart Competition 26th April 2019

The first Dart Competition was successfully completed. All participants enjoyed the keen competition, refreshment, and beverage that all gamers also received a complimentary gift. The final winners were Chan Man Wai, Tam Siu Kwan, To Chi Keung. All V.A. members are encouraged to join the next competition that will be held twice a year. Do not hesitate, come join us !



E. RHKR SHOOTING CLUB

From January to June 2019, our Club members won the following prizes:

Service Rifle with 0.22 Conversion Inter-Club Match with Hong Kong Gun Club:

- (1) Yan Suk Yin (RHKR)
- (2) Chan Chi Kwong (RHKR)
- (3) Franco Yeung (RHKR)

62nd Festival of Sport Shooting Competition 2019 ; Event - Free Pistol (50M):

- (1) Chung Li Bing (RHKR)
- (2) Li Wai Kit (RHKR)
- (3) Man Chun Kit (HKSA)

Event - Prone Rifle (Man):

- (1) Chan Yiu Keung (RHKR)
- (2) Luk Kam Shing (RHKR)
- (3) Tsang Wai Keung (RHKR)

In June 2019, our Club's Shooting Team participated in Ulaanbaatar (Mongolia) IPSC 2-Gun Match.



F. 165th Foundation Day Dinner (FDD)

All members had a memorable gathering night regardless of their previous ranks of The Royal Hong Kong Regiment (The Volunteers) and The Royal Hong Kong Auxiliary Air Force



G. Oversea Branch

i) FDD British Columbia Branch of Canada was held on 25 May 2019





Long March to Northwest 10,000 km Road Trip, from 1 to 30 June 2019

Vancouver, Canada to Alaska, U.S.

Vancouver>147 Km Whistler>139 Km Lillooet 1>178 Km 100 mile house>326 Km Prince George 2>371 Km Smither 3>515 Km Iskuit 4>339 Km Watson Lake 5>438 Km Whitehorse 6>532 Km Dawson City 7>308 Km Tok 8>324 Km Fairbanks 9>200 Km Denali Park 10 11 12>383 Km Anchorage 13>269 Km Coche 0>104 Km Homer 14 15>269 Km Seward 16 17>267 Km Anchorage 18>479 Km Valdze 19 20>405 Km Tok 21

Alaska, U.S. to Vancouver, Canada

Tok 21>618 Km Whitehorse 22>438 Km Watson Lake 23>208 Km Liard Hot Spring 24>305 Km Fort Nelson 25>381 Km Fort St John 0>75 Km Dawson Creek 26>465 Km Hinton 27>441 Km Kamloop 28>357 Km Vancouver 29(Sat)> return cars 30







Members come from New Zealand, United State of America, Hong Kong to join this (Long March to Northwest) journey; they finished 10000 Km trip and came back to Vancouver safely at 29 June 2019. Congratulation!
Well done.

ii) Branch of Australia



H. Donation

The following beautiful decoration at Clubhouse is donated by our member Andy CHENG





Coming Events

(a) Ceremony

1. *Victory Day Ceremony - 11 August 2019*
2. *Chung Yeung Ceremony - October 2019*
3. *Remembrance Day - November 2019*
4. *Canadian Remembrance Day - December 2019*
5. *Nanjing Massacre National Memorial Day - December 2019*

(b) Community Events

1. *Oxfam Trailwalker – 15 to 17 November 2019*

(c) Major Functions

1. *Mahjong Competitio- 麻雀大賽 - 20 July 2019*
2. *Association General Meeting and Dinner - 30 August 2019*
3. *Dart Competition - October 2019*
4. *J corp 50th Anniversary - 23 November 2019*
5. *Christmas Party - December 2019 (TBC)*

Editor WONG Ying-piu Wilbur