



Youth Remember the Defence of Hong Kong

Remembering Sergeant Gander

Sergeant Gander was a Newfoundland dog, and was raised by the Hayden family on the airport base in Gander, Newfoundland. He was a friendly dog who loved playing with children. He pulled them on their sleds and kids watched him drool—Newfoundland dogs drool a lot!—He enjoyed living on the base but spent too much time on the runways, trying to catch the planes as they came in to land.

One day, because he was growing to be so large, the Hayden family decided to give the playful dog to the *Royal Rifles of Canada* Regiment. (Did you know that Newfoundland dogs can grow to weigh 55 kilograms? That's one BIG dog!) He quickly became a good friend and mascot for the soldiers of the regiment.

In 1941, the *Royal Rifles of Canada* Regiment was sent to Hong Kong to defend the land from an enemy invasion. The men didn't want to leave Gander behind, so they gave him the rank of "Sergeant" and he boarded the troopship with his fellow soldiers!

Taking care of Gander was a pleasant duty. During wartime the friendship of a dog reminded many of the men of pets and family at home. Gander was a mascot, but he was also seen as a fellow soldier with a job to perform. He would bark and nip at the legs of the enemy, scaring them away. One night in December 1941, Gander showed his true courage.

He was a smart dog—he knew what a grenade was and how it could hurt people. That night, Gander saw a grenade tossed near a group of wounded Canadian soldiers. He ran to it, took it, and rushed away with it. The grenade exploded and Gander was killed. But he had saved the lives of the seven soldiers! Those men never forgot Sergeant Gander.



Artist: Anne Mainman

Courtesy of: *Newfoundland Dogs Working for Childrens Charities*