

▶ THE BATTLE OF KAPYONG REVISITED:

Sixty-five years later, one man finally gets recognition for his gallantry on the field of battle

by Jack Bates,
Organization For Preservation Of Canadian Military Heritage (OPCMH)

MUCH HAS BEEN written about the April 23–25, 1951 Battle of Kapyong and the awarding of the United States Presidential Unit Citation to the Second Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (2PPCLI) for its actions. Unfortunately, one brave man, Lieutenant Mike Levy, did not receive his due for gallantry in the field while others benefited by this omission.

Also unfortunate is the fact that erroneous writings and official histories perpetuated inaccuracies until the true complete story was revealed in publications starting in 1999 — 49 years after the famous battle. This includes DND / Directorate of History and Heritage (DHH) official histories of the battle, the Canadian War Museum's "Battle Series," Veterans Affairs Canada's "Valour Remembered" booklet, the NDHQ "Sentential" and PPCLI regimental histories. They all had no mention of Levy.

Since the revelation in 1999, of the 50-plus sources I have reviewed, numerous authors and veterans of the battle — notably David Bercuson, Ted Barris, Hub Gray, William Johnston, Dan Bjarnason and Michael Czuboka — have undertaken to write about the "forgotten warrior."

Of equal importance are the numerous websites perpetuating the original misleading version of events. This deserves to be corrected in the light of the complete story having been validated by the above publications which are supported by the 2PPCLI war diary of the battle. Websites such as the winnipegrealtors.ca and talkingproud.us both credit Lt. Levy.

A must-read is *Beyond the Danger Close* by Hub Gray which includes documentation acknowledged by many authorities and Kapyong battle veterans in support of recognizing Mike Levy for his unheralded brave actions. Those actions were well illustrated in the 2011 video production entitled *Kapyong*.

For whatever intentions or reasons, and there are perceptions, Mike Levy was not officially recognized or nominated for a decoration or a Mention In Dispatches (MID); perhaps there are others, and the topic remains ignored and unresolved. Acting Captain

2PPCLI's Lieutenant Mike Levy holds a Thompson submachine gun that was captured from the Chinese in South Korea, 1951. His gallant actions at the Battle of Kapyong have long been known by his comrades, but omitted from publications until recently.



Mills was recommended for and received the Military Cross; the actual recommendation text also deserves exploration, possibly perception at the time, but proven to be adversely

subjective in its content. That is all part of history now and perhaps need not be researched any more in favour of honouring Mike Levy with a commemoration and adding it to the PPCLI regimental memorials without prejudice to others involved in the reality of the non-recognition. For example, in June 2015 three buildings at Kapyong Barracks, CAFB Shilo, were named in honour of three others present at the famous battle in 1951, so it would appear there is a possible issue regarding the mention of Lt. Mike Levy.

Major (ret'd) Murray Edwards, Battalion Quartermaster during the battle, has attested in the past to the valour of Lt. Levy, and recently reiterated the battle circumstances in further hopes of revising official histories by the inclusion of Mike Levy's "conspicuous gallantry," to perpetuate the true complete version of the famous battle. Lt. Mike Levy originated the request for and personally, under fire, directed the artillery bombardment through a relay onto his location for maximum effect on the charging enemy. The "danger close" fire proved positive.

ZK 4349 Lieutenant Mike Levy, 2PPCLI, "D" Company, #10 Platoon Commander passed away on June 4, 2007, a modest pauper for his Korean wartime heroics. 🍁