

LCQ4: The Hong Kong Museum of the War of Resistance and Coastal Defence

Following is a question by the Hon Maggie Chan Man-ki and a reply by the Acting Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Mr Raistlin Lau, in the Legislative Council today (May 22):

Question:

The Hong Kong Museum of Coastal Defence (MCD) will be converted into the Hong Kong Museum of the War of Resistance and Coastal Defence (MWRCD) in September this year, with more efforts put in promoting the history of the War of Resistance (the War) and the significant contributions made by the Hong Kong Independent Battalion of the Dongjiang Column (the Battalion) during the War. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) as some members of the public opine that the exhibits relating to the Battalion in the MCD are displayed in a scattered and inconspicuous manner, whether the Government will set up a thematic gallery or a thematic exhibition on the Battalion at the MWRCD to serve as a highlight exhibition of the museum, and whether related exhibits will be consolidated for display in a prominent place, e.g. displaying the Certificate of Commendation issued to the Battalion together with the Roll of Honour listing the names of 115 martyrs belonging to the Battalion;

(2) as there are views that as an important venue for promoting the spirit of resistance and introducing the history of the War, the MCD should seek to create more interactive multi-media presentations, whether the Government has considered increasing the audience seating capacity at the Narrative of the War of Resistance gallery of the MWRCD, so as to allow more visitors to watch the documentary films on the War; and

(3) as there are views that the facilities and services for guided tours at the MCD are inadequately arranged, whether the Government has considered allowing visitors and more organizations to apply for the MWRCD's free guided tour service and enhancing the guided tour system of the MWRCD, e.g. placing guided tour QR codes for the exhibits to provide real-time textual and audio narration, so that the relevant information can be obtained without the need to download the relevant mobile application inside the museum?

Reply:

President,

Since the reopening of the Hong Kong Museum of Coastal Defence (HKMCD) in November 2022 after the completion of revamping its exhibition and repairing its canopy, the HKMCD has seen an attendance of over 270 000, including some 475 school groups visits. In order to let more students learn

about the history of the War of Resistance, and to promote patriotic spirit, the HKMCD co-operated with the Education Bureau to invite dozens of school principals to visit the HKMCD in March 2024 and organise guided tours and thematic lectures for teachers in order to encourage the schools to arrange more students to visit the museum. Apart from facing the Hong Kong communities, the museum also received many relevant Mainland authorities, including the National Cultural Heritage Administration, the Museum of the Communist Party of China, Henan Provincial Administration of Cultural Heritage, Shenzhen Municipal Cultural Relics Bureau, and Nanjing Museum, and received positive comments and affirmation from them. Among these authorities, the HKMCD had reached an agreement with Shenzhen Municipal Cultural Relics Bureau to co-organise thematic exhibitions about the War of Resistance in the future. The HKMCD has always valued the opinion received from various groups and individuals, and responded positively in order to keep enriching visitors' experience. Our reply to various parts of the question raised by the Hon Maggie Chan Man-ki is as follows:

(1) The HKMCD will be converted into the Hong Kong Museum of the War of Resistance and Coastal Defence in the coming September. To highlight the theme of the War of Resistance, the museum will group together four galleries related to the history of the War of Resistance, namely "Narrative of the War of Resistance" gallery, "Join Hands to Resist Japanese Invasion" gallery, "Japanese Invasion of Hong Kong" gallery and "Anti-Japanese Guerrillas behind Enemy Lines" gallery, and name them collectively as "The War of Resistance Galleries". Plaques will be mounted at the upper part of the galleries for easy identification and to facilitate visitors' planning of their routes for a focused exploration of the history of the War of Resistance. Two of the galleries, namely "Narrative of the War of Resistance" gallery and "Anti-Japanese Guerrillas behind Enemy Lines" gallery, will give a detailed elaboration on the Hong Kong and Kowloon Independent Brigade of the East River Column.

The existing "Narrative of the War of Resistance" gallery of the HKMCD includes an area with the theme of "Commemoration of Martyrs", where the names of the 115 members of the Hong Kong and Kowloon Independent Brigade of the East River Column on the Roll of Honour 1941-1945 who died during the period of Japanese occupation are set out in recognition of their contribution to the War of Resistance. Besides the name list, there is an interactive installation entitled "Tribute to Martyrs". With some simple steps of operation, visitors can lay virtual bouquets on the installation to pay tribute to the heroes who sacrificed their lives in the war and during Japanese occupation, recognise their contribution to the War of Resistance, and show respect to them. The aforesaid gallery is also supplemented by a film introducing 16 heroes who have been placed on the List of Anti-Japanese Martyrs and Heroic Groups. As regards the Certificate of Commendation to the Hong Kong and Kowloon Independent Brigade of the East River Column, it is currently on display in the "Anti-Japanese Guerrillas behind Enemy Lines" gallery. In light of the conversion of the HKMCD into the Hong Kong Museum of the War of Resistance and Coastal Defence in the coming September, the HKMCD is actively exploring to enhance the presentation of the certificate together with the name list of the aforesaid 115 members in a prominent manner to

allow citizens to show respect more conveniently.

Additionally, the HKMCD will use its special exhibition gallery to hold thematic exhibitions relating to the War of Resistance on a regular basis, and to collaborate more with the relevant Mainland authorities. The first key collaboration project will be an exhibition on the War of Resistance activities of the East River Column in Hong Kong and Shenzhen areas jointly organised with the Shenzhen Municipal Cultural Relics Bureau in September this year.

(2) The "Narrative of the War of Resistance" gallery of the HKMCD gives an account of the history of Japan's aggression against China and Hong Kong's participation in the War of Resistance. It also narrates the missions and contributions of anti-Japanese guerrillas after the fall of Hong Kong. Apart from using exhibition panels, historical photos and exhibits, the HKMCD also complements the exhibition with interactive installations and videos to introduce this period of history to visitors through different media and enrich their museum-going experience. The number of seats currently provided by the HKMCD has already taken into account the pleasant viewing experience for visitors and the available space in the gallery. In order to enrich the visual content, the HKMCD will arrange excerpts from three films by Hong Kong directors about the War of Resistance, namely The Battle of Shanghai, Hong Kong 1941 and Our Time Will Come, to be shown in the multi-media room of the "Discovery Zone" on the Upper Redoubt to accommodate a larger audience for the screenings.

(3) At present, guided tour service for the public is available at the HKMCD three days per week and on public holidays for public participation. Registered schools and charitable or non-profit-making organisations are also welcome to apply for free guided tour service for groups in other time slots. The 55 docents currently working for the HKMCD have led over 1 700 guided tours in total since the museum's re-opening. In the future, the HKMCD will discuss with the Tourism Commission the feasibility of providing docent training for serving tourist guides.

In addition, an audio guide to the HKMCD's highlight exhibits is already available on the museum website. The HKMCD thanked and has taken on board the Hon Chan Yung's earlier suggestions so that the QR codes of the webpages of those exhibits have been displayed in the museum. Apart from using the iMGuide mobile app for the audio guide to the exhibits, visitors can also scan the QR codes directly to access the information on the exhibits on their webpages. Later, the HKMCD will also add textual guide to cater to the habits and needs of different visitors.

In summary, the HKMCD will continue to listen with an open mind the opinions from the visitors, constantly enhance and enrich the viewing experience, persistently promote the history of War of Resistance and patriotic education. Thank you President.