



Van Arty Association and RUSI Van Members News 12 May, 2015

Wednesday Lunches

The 15 Field Officers Mess holds weekly lunches, serving a 5 course, 'homemade' meal for only \$15- you won't find a better meal - or a better deal, anywhere. If you are in the area on a Wednesday, drop in and join us for lunch.

The dress for Wednesday lunches is suit/blazer/sports jacket and tie. Dress for ladies is the equivalent. Your guests are always welcome but don't forget to tell them about dress requirements BEFORE they come.

From the Journal of Capt Fred G Coxen RFA - 1915

May 5th: Was awakened after a couple of hours and went on again as billeting party with Mr Woods, in [the] direction of ESTAIRS. [Due to] a long ride, [we] could not fix up billets before about 7 pm. Had a little trouble with a farmer, but after a threat and help of [an] interpreter, managed to secure [a] place I had selected for [the] Battery. [I] was very tired and went in a barn, after fixing up the old charger, and dropped just as I was, sound asleep. The Battery arrived at dawn, and after fixing this up, was informed that the Battery was to take up the old position at CROIX BARBETTE that night for an attack in the region of FESTABERT.

May 6th: Was a beautiful [day], which I spent mostly in much needed sleep; I was elated to find my mattress still there.

This was Frederick Coxen's last journal entry for reasons unknown. However, one could speculate that the loss of his friends and continuing exposure to horror may have influenced his decision to stop writing. Another explanation might be that his area of responsibility changed prior to receiving his field promotion to 2Lt, the duties of that position preventing him from maintaining his journal.

He left France on September 1, 1915 and returned to England, where he took his Officer training, then an Anti-Aircraft Artillery course. On November 28, 1917, he was redeployed to France and appointed Battery Commander of the 47th AA Battery. Fred remained in France until May 18, 1918, at which time he returned to England. A military record disclosed that in November of 1918 he was seconded for service with the newly-formed Royal Air Force, and was assigned to the 253 Squadron, RAF Bembridge. He was listed as an Observer Officer and placed in charge of the payroll department.

Fred's official military record shows that he transferred back to the Regular Army Reserve of Officers as Captain, on the 26th of February, 1920, at which time he left the service and returned to his civilian occupation of electrician.

World War 2 - November 1940

John Thompson Strategic analyst quotes from his book "Spirit Over Steel"

May 7th: Neville Chamberlain resigns as the British Prime Minister after a narrow victory in a non-confidence vote; he has the confidence of the House, but not enough to depend upon it.

May 8th: After considering Lord Halifax as PM, the Conservatives and Labour turn to Winston Churchill. Timoshenko replaces Voroshilov as Commissar for Defence and starts implementing a number of reforms based on the lessons of the war with Finland.

May 9th: The Belgian Army goes on alert as the distant rumbling of German activity wafts over the border. Political divisions in France between Reynaud and Daladier grow sharper.

May 10th: Hitler's other shoe drops: Leeb's Army Group C closes up to the Maginot Line, Rundstedt's Army Group A crashes into the Ardennes with three Panzer Corps out in front, and Bock's Army Group B goes into Belgium and Holland with airborne troops leading the way – including the dramatic glider assault on the Belgian fort of Eben Emael. The Allies are not entirely unready, but they are outclassed and off balance. Elsewhere, fighting goes on in Norway and British troops begin landing on Iceland to keep the Germans from getting tempted. Churchill formally becomes the new British prime minister and forms a coalition government to keep party politics to a minimum during the conflict. There are many crimes imputed -- usually correctly -- to the men of the Waffen SS, but nobody ever said they were cowards. When SS Hauptscharfuhrer (the SS equivalent of a Company Sergeant Major) Ludwig Kepplinger finds the bridge over the Issel River that his company is supposed to capture has been blown up; he immediately assaults the Dutch defenders on the far side of the river. Scrambling over the tangled wreck of the bridge with two men, the ferocity of his assault induces 90 Dutch soldiers to surrender; letting pioneers improvise a new bridge. Kepplinger becomes the first Waffen SS NCO to win the Knights Cross, and like so many of them, does not survive the war; being killed in Normandy in August 1944.

May 11th: The Germans have caught the Dutch with their pants down, are coming into contact with the Allied First Army Group in Belgium, and Rundstedt's panzers are nearing the Meuse. British and French troops land on the Dutch Caribbean islands of Aruba and Curaçao.

Crossword Panic of 1944

By Ben Johnson

During World War II the daily newspapers were at their most popular ...even though they consisted of only a few pages. People throughout Britain could find out what was happening in the parts of the world where our troops were engaged in the fight against Hitler and the Nazis. At the beginning of the war, the news was mainly bad with the German blitzkrieg advances throughout Europe but as the years rolled on, the news slowly became better ...and in October 1942 British morale was greatly bolstered by General Montgomery's famous success at El Alamein in North Africa. But it wasn't just the news that was eagerly sought in the papers; there were other matters of interest. Nearly all newspapers had crossword puzzles in them and

they were very popular as they helped fill in the hours spent in the air-raid Shelters, waiting for trains or just simply engaged in that great British tradition of queuing.

One of the popular ‘dailies’ of the time was the Daily Telegraph, and so too was its crossword puzzle. It was in January 1943 that the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and American President Franklin D Roosevelt met and agreed that the future of the war must include an invasion of northwest Europe or a ‘return to the Continent’. Planning for the invasion started almost immediately, and after extensive research it was decided that the sheltered Normandy coastline with its wide sandy beaches presented the best option for the surprise attack that was to be the D-Day landings. The assault was code-named *Operation Overlord* by Churchill himself. The US General Dwight D Eisenhower was made overall commander of *Operation Overlord* in December 1943, with the British hero General Bernard Law Montgomery assuming control of ground troops. It was in early May 1944 that Eisenhower decided that D-Day would fall on 5th June 1944.

A huge security blanket had been thrown over all aspects of the operation, including the place and exact date of the landings, in order to maximise the element of surprise and minimise casualties. One US major-general was even demoted and sent home for simply speculating at a cocktail party on the date of the invasion. But while some members of MI5, Britain’s counter-espionage service, were whiling away their spare moments in May 1944 by doing the Telegraph Crossword, they noticed that vital code-names that had been adopted to hide the mightiest sea-borne assault of all time, appeared in the crossword. They noticed that the answer to one clue, ‘One of the USA’, turned out to be *Utah*, and another answer to a clue was *Omaha*. These were the names given by the Allies to the beaches in Normandy where the American Forces were to land on D-Day. Another answer that appeared in that month’s crossword was *Mulberry*. This was the name of the floating harbour that was to be towed across the Channel to accommodate the supply ships of the invasion force. *Neptune*, another answer, referred to the code name for the naval support for the operation. Perhaps the most suspicious was a clue about a ‘Big-Wig’, to which the answer was *Overlord*. This was the code name given for the entire operation!



Operation Overlord and the Normandy beaches

Alarm bells rang throughout MI5 ... was the crossword being used to tip-off the Germans? Two officers were sent immediately to Leatherhead in Surrey, where a man called Leonard Dawe lived. He was the crossword compiler, a 54 year-old teacher. Why, the officers demanded to know, had he chosen these five words within his crossword solutions? “Why not?” was his indignant reply. Was there a law against choosing whatever words he liked? MI5 eventually became convinced of Dawe’s honesty and he managed to

convince them that he had no knowledge of the coming D-Day invasion. It appears his crossword solutions were perhaps just another of life's astonishing coincidences!

However, fascinating facts have come to light that reveal that the solutions were perhaps not, after all, simply astonishing coincidences. Recently, Richard S J Wallington supplied new, local information: "Mr Dawe was and had for some time been the Headmaster of Strand School - originally a part of King's College, London. In 1939 the school was evacuated from its home in South London to the area of Great and Little Bookham in Surrey. The school buildings it occupied were in Effingham. Both boys and masters were billeted in that general area. Mr Dawe was a compiler of puzzles for the Daily Telegraph and it was often his practice to call in 6th formers and ask them for words for inclusion. At that time the US Forces were liberally strewn through Surrey, particularly in the Epsom area and there is no doubt that boys heard these code words being bandied about and innocently passed them on. I should know as I was then a 6th former there myself, although not involved with this particular matter. Mr Dawe was a disciplinarian and a man of extremely high principle and one could not imagine anyone less likely to be involved in anything incorrect."

Downed WW2 Airman's Ring Returned to Sister



A gold ring has been returned to the sister of the World War Two airman who died when his plane came down in Albania in 1944. Dorothy Webster was handed the wedding band at a special ceremony that was the culmination of an extraordinary series of events. Her brother flight

Sergeant John Thompson was given the ring when he married Joyce Mozeley in June 1944. He spent just a weekend with his wife before being posted abroad from where he took part in sorties to supply Albanian rebels. The ring was found by Albanian Jaho Cala in 1960 while he was collecting metal and wood in the mountains of the then Stalinist state. It took another 55 years, and the chance finding of the plane, before he was able to return it to Sgt Thompson's family.

At the ceremony in Albania's Defence Ministry, Mr Cala's son Xhemil knelt as he handed the ring to Mrs Webster, along with a fuel gauge from the aircraft and a piece of rock from the mountain that brought it down. Defence Minister Mimi Kodheli told Mrs Webster: "Your brother helped to liberate my country. He will never be forgotten." Mrs Webster said she was "overwhelmed ... getting all these keepsakes that we never thought we would ever get". "I remember him very well, as if it were yesterday," she added. The clue to the owner of the ring were the words "Joyce & John" engraved on the inside. Jaho Cala had no idea whose it

was when he found it but decided he was determined to give it back to the owner. Xhemil Cala, said: "He gave it to me when I got married in 1971, but told me clearly the ring did not belong to our family and I was to return it to its owner after communism ended."

The Albanian tried several ways of locating the owner of the ring including asking fellow Albanians who were visiting Britain to help. In desperation he appealed to a regional government official, who contacted the British Embassy about two years ago. Then, in October last year, a British-US expedition found the remains of a Handley Page Halifax bomber 6,000ft (1,829m) up in the Albanian mountains. One of those who was part of the expedition Chris Casey said: "Clearly what we found was enough to suggest we had found the remains of a big four-engine bomber. "The ring ... really helped us to solve this riddle." Gerd Kaceli, a military assistant at the British embassy, said Sgt Thompson's plane dropped supplies in the Biza valley in Albania before it came down. It was the only plane out of 14 supplying anti-fascist fighters in Albania on 29 October, 1944, not to return. On turning west to return to Italy it clipped the top of a mountain and crashed, killing the crew, Mr Kaceli said. It was listed as "missing and assumed to have crashed", according to military records. Sgt Thompson's widow remarried after the war and died in 1995.

The Austrian Castle Where Nazis Lost to German-US Force

By Bethany Bell BBC News, Itter, Austria 7 May 2015

Holding Itter Castle was a tough challenge as Nazi troops were in the surrounding woods.



Seventy years ago one of the most unlikely battles of World War Two took place, at Itter in the Austrian Alps.

In early May 1945, American and German soldiers fought together against the Nazi SS to free prominent French prisoners of war. It is believed to be the only battle in the war

in which Americans and Germans fought as allies. Hans Fuchs remembers how Itter Castle was converted into a prison by the Nazis in 1943. "We saw everything from our school window," he said, "a double barbed-wire fence... and floodlights so that the whole night was lit up like day." Schloss Itter, which dates back to the Middle Ages, was a sub-unit of the Dachau concentration camp. It was used for VIP prisoners, prominent politicians and military figures that the Nazis wanted to use as bargaining chips. They included two former prime ministers of France, Edouard Daladier and Paul Reynaud, as well as the elder sister of Gen Charles de Gaulle, Marie-Agnes Cailliau.



In May 1945, the last days of the war in Europe, the German guards at Schloss Itter fled. But the French prisoners were trapped, as the woods around the castle were full of roaming units of the Waffen SS and Gestapo secret police. The French sent out two prisoners on bicycles to find help. Stephen Harding, author of the book *The Last Battle*, says one of them managed to contact a German

major, Josef (Sepp) Gangl. A highly decorated Wehrmacht officer, Gangl had become opposed to the Nazis and was collaborating with the Austrian resistance. "Gangl realised he could not protect them [the prisoners], as he only had about 20 soldiers who were loyal to him," Mr Harding said. Taking a big white flag, Gangl met up with the closest American unit, the 23rd Tank Battalion of the US 12th Armoured Division, led by Capt Jack Lee. Lee offered to lead a rescue mission to the castle.

Maj Sepp Gangl of the Wehrmacht switched sides to help US forces



US Capt Jack Lee teamed up with Gangl's men to take on the SS

A small group of Americans, accompanied by Gangl and some of his men, made their way to Itter, parking their Sherman tank close to the castle entrance. At dawn on 5 May, they were attacked by the Waffen SS, who blew up the US tank, but were unable to storm the castle.

"There was only one casualty," says Mr Harding. "Josef Gangl was killed by a sniper." Hans Fuchs, who was 14, watched the battle from his family's farm. "There was machine gun fire for hours," he said. "We saw clouds of dust and smoke." That evening, once the fighting stopped, he went down towards the castle. "The tank was still burning," he said. "I saw how around 100 SS men were taken prisoner... They had to give up everything and were taken away on lorries."



Schloss Itter was damaged in the fighting as this May 1945 photo shows

Josef Gangl was buried in the nearby town of Woergl. Today a street is named after him. Mr Harding says the battle was decisive. "If the SS had managed to get into the castle and kill

the French VIPs, the history of post-war France would have been radically different. These people... formulated the policies that carried France into the 21st Century. Had they died, who knows what would have happened?"

France's Gen Maxime Weygand (right) and his wife leave the castle in this May 1945 photo



Churchill Society Seminar 25 June

The evening features guest speakers **Lew House** and **James Boutilier** who will address the audience on "*China: the Paradox of the Western Pacific and the Rise of the Military*". The seminar will commence at 5:00 pm, include a light dinner and conclude by 8:00 pm.

Please the poster at the end of this newsletter for the Thursday, June 25 event notice for this event.

Who is it? **Last Week:** The French battleship *Jauréguiberry*, shown here anchored off the coaling station at Port Said, was a pre-dreadnought battleship of the French Navy launched in



1893. She was one of 5 similar battleships built in the 1890s, including Masséna, Bouvet, Carnot, and Charles Martel. *Jauréguiberry* was in the Mediterranean when World War I began and she spent most of 1914 escorting troop convoys from North Africa and India to France. She supported French troops during the Gallipoli Campaign in 1915 before she became guard ship at Port Said from 1916 for the rest of the war. Upon her return to France in 1919 she became an accommodation hulk until 1932. She was sold for scrapping in 1934.

This Week: Having commemorated the brilliance of French naval design in our last quiz (beauty and elegance being the first words to come to mind), we now turn our gaze on to those magnificent men in their flying machines. This photo is also from the person who donated last week's shot, and is presumably taken in the Middle East, as are all the other ones in the series. Our guess is that the photographer was one of the Second World War sergeants-major of 15th Coast Brigade, but more research is needed. The image is that of a float plane, most likely of the Royal Flying Corps or the Royal Naval Air Service, both of which amalgamated in April of



1918 to form the Royal Air Force. Given that a decade and a half earlier you could have counted the number of people who had flown an aeroplane on the fingers of one hand, it is amazing that this device so quickly saw extensive active service.

So, dear reader, can you name this elegant aircraft, and possibly give us a potted history of its service. This is a challenge to all you air force types out there. Answers can be sent to the erudite editor, or to the author, John Redmond ([johnd. redmond@telus.net](mailto:johnd.redmond@telus.net)).

From the 'Punitary'

Time is a great healer – but a lousy beautician.

Murphy's other Laws

A little ignorance can go a long way (usually in the direction of maximum harm).

Quotable Quotes

A diplomat is a man who says you have an open mind, instead of telling you that you have a hole in the head. - *Anonymous*



**The Commanding Officer,
Officers and Cadets Of**

**2472 15th Field Artillery Regiment
Royal Canadian Army Cadet Corps**

Cordially invites you to the

62nd Annual Ceremonial Review

Saturday June 6th, 2015 13:00 P.M.

The Reviewing Officer will be:

Honorary Lieutenant-Colonel Al De Genova, CD

Honorary Colonel
15th Field Artillery Regiment

**Location: Bessborough Armoury
2025 West 11th Ave
Vancouver, British Columbia**

Please be seated by 12:45 P.M.

There will be snacks and beverages available.

There will also be a silent auction with all proceed going to the cadet corps.

**Dress: Military 1A (with Medals)
Cadets: 1C (with Medals)
Civilian: Business Attire**

**RSVP: 604-666-4000
2472 RCACC
2472army@cadets.gc.ca**



Churchill Society of British Columbia

PATRON: RANDOLPH CHURCHILL

PRESENTS A SEMINAR:

“China: The Paradox of the Western Pacific and the Rise of the Military”

Thursday, June 25, 2015

Please join us on Thursday, June 25, 2015 to welcome our guest speakers Lew House and James Boutillier. This event will be in a different format from our Evenings With Churchill. The Seminar will commence at 5:00 p.m., include a light dinner and conclude by 8:00 p.m. The Seminar will focus on China’s activities and capabilities including its aggression in the South China Sea, its ballistic missile program and the reaction of the ASEAN countries. The initial presentation will be made by Lew House of Louisville, Colorado.



Lew House holds a Master of Physics (Nuclear) from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, New York, a Ph.D. in Astro-Geophysics from the University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado and an M.A. in Military Studies from American University in Manassas, Virginia. Lew worked as a physicist at the Hanford Atomic Product Operations in Richland, Washington. His research, based on Admiral Rickover’s project for the first nuclear submarine reactor, served as a Master’s thesis for Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. Mr. House, as Senior Scientist, served as NASA Principal Investigator in developing and managing the telescope on the NASA Solar Maximum Mission Satellite studying solar mass ejections. He served as NASA Principal Investigator on the Solar Maximum Repair Mission that performed the first in-space repair mission.

Mr. House has taught graduate courses in astrophysics and quantum physics. He has conducted joint research modeling the “Behavioral Power’ of nation states. Mr. House is the President of the Rocky Mountain Churchillians and lectures on a variety of topics on Winston Churchill. He is a member of the Society for Military History and the U.S. Naval Institute. Lew maintains his interest in geopolitics, military affairs, history, climate change, wargaming, flight simulation and builds his own high performance PC’s.

Commentary, particularly from the Canadian point of view, will be given by James Boutillier, Asia-Pacific Policy Advisor, Maritime Forces Pacific Headquarters.



Dr. James Boutillier is the Special Advisor (Policy) at Canada’s Maritime Forces Pacific Headquarters in Esquimalt, British Columbia. He is responsible for advising the Commander of Maritime Forces Pacific on matters of defence and foreign policy and maritime security in the Asia-Pacific region. Prior to his appointment at MARPAC, Dr. Boutillier spent twenty-four years on staff at the Royal Roads Military College in Victoria as Head of the History Department and then as Dean of Arts. During his time at RRMCC, he was instrumental in establishing the military and strategic studies degree program at the college and taught courses on naval history, contemporary Asia, the history of the Pacific, and strategic issues. He is also an adjunct professor of Pacific and Asian Studies at the University of Victoria and the President of the Maritime Awards Society of Canada.



Dr. Boutilier was born in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and attended Dalhousie University (BA History: 1960), McMaster University (MA History: 1962), and the University of London (PhD History: 1969). Dr. Boutilier served in the Royal Canadian Navy Reserve from 1956 to 1964 as a navigating officer and in the same capacity in the Royal Navy Reserve from 1964 to 1969. After completing his time with the RN, Dr. Boutilier taught at the University of the South Pacific in Suva, Fiji, from 1969 to 1971. Dr. Boutilier's field of expertise is Asia-Pacific defence and security, particularly with regard to maritime issues. He has published widely on international defence and security issues, including RCN in Retrospect (1982), and articles in professional monographs as well as the Asia-Pacific Defence Reporter and Canadian Institute of International Affairs journals. Some of his recent lectures have focused on the Canadian Navy's role in the Asia-Pacific, the new Asian security architecture, Northeast Asian security issues, and the new naval order in Asia.

Date: Thursday, June 25, 2015

Location: UBC Room, The Vancouver Club, 915 Hastings Street West, Vancouver, B.C.

Time: Wine and Cheese starts at 4:30 p.m., Program from 5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. Light Dinner 6:30 p.m.

Cost: \$50 each for a Member of the Society, spouse, partner or an immediate family member;
\$65 each for a non-Member

The ticket cost includes a light dinner and one beverage ticket per attendee for 1 glass of wine or beer, or for 2 soft drinks. Additional drinks can be purchased from the bar.

Please inform our Administrator, April Accola, of your attendance by email at aprilaccola@hotmail.com, by mailing the attached form, by registering by phone at 778-321-3550 or online at www.winstonchurchillbc.org.

I look forward to seeing you on June 25. Please feel free to send this notice to any interested parties.

Ian E. Marshall, Secretary
Churchill Society of British Columbia

Taste of Singapore Curry Lunch



Hosted by:
*The British Columbia
Regiment
Officers' Mess*

Coordinated by:
*The BC Regiment
(DCO) Association*



- Date:** Thursday, May 28, 2015
- Time:** 11:45 am - 1:30 pm
(bar opens at 11:45am)
(lunch starts at 12:25pm)
- Location:** Officers' Mess - The BC Regiment
620 Beatty Street, Vancouver, BC
- Dress:** Business Attire (jacket & tie, ladies similar)
- Price:** \$30/person (\$5 discount for those that confirm
attendance by May 20, 2015)
- RSVP:** For more information or to register, please e-mail
Events@DukeaBear.com
(Please advise of any dietary needs with your RSVP)

Payment by cheque or cash will be accepted at the door
Cheques are payable to: The BC Regiment (DCO) Association
No cancellations after May 20, 2015

NEXT PLANNED LUNCH: Thursday, September 24, 2015

RECONNECT... WITH NATURE, FRIENDS, AND OUR 1 AIR DIVISION HERITAGE

Tigh-Na-Mara Seaside Spa Resort & Conference Centre
in Parksville, BC; your premier resort destination on Vancouver Island,
invites you to reconnect. All former 1 Air Division personnel and their
"brats" are welcome!

Reconnect For The Weekend

- \$160 early bird before May 31st 2015 (\$175 after May 31st)
- Full Registration (Friday meet and greet buffet + Saturday breakfast + Saturday banquet and dance)
- Friday Only (Meet and Greet and buffet): \$90
- Saturday Only (Banquet and Dance) \$110

Activities

- Day trips on Saturday (Comox Air Museum, Little Qualicum Cheeseworks, Cathedral Grave)
- Memory Room: a gathering place for attendees to reconnect with our heritage as 1 Air Division. Chat, look at pictures, and reminisce
- Photographer; affordable portrait sittings and a group photo

Accommodation

Tigh-Na-Mara rates from \$139 standard room and \$159 deluxe room
Quote "10F2GG"
Stay longer and make it a holiday: these rates apply for 5 days before
and 5 days after the reunion. <http://www.tigh-na-mara.com/>

Camping Options also available. <http://www.surfside.bc.ca/>
Mention "RCAF" for rates between \$25-35, full hook-up

Travel

WestJet discount code "CC8679"

Register Online

<http://www.proreg.ca/events/rcmf/reunion/>
Or Via Mail (contact us for a registration package if you are not on
email/internet)

Lorne/Jane Sundby
19 Ironwood Drive,
St. Albert, AB T8N 5J8
Phone: 780-909-1953



RCAF 1 AIR DIVISION REUNION

October 30-31, 2015

TIGH-NA-MARA
SEASIDE SPA RESORT & CONFERENCE CENTRE



1155 RESORT DRIVE, PARKSVILLE, BC
1-800-663-7373 OR 250-248-2072

TIGH-NA-MARA.COM