



## Van Arty Assoc and RUSI Van Members News Jan 15, 2013

### Wednesday Lunches

We had a great turn out last week. There is always a worry that numbers will drop if we take some time off but our regulars didn't disappoint – Thanks to all. All our lunch attendees are aware that our lunch is the best deal in town by far. \$12 for a five course meal, even buffet style was a steal. Well, with increasing costs in general and the kitchen renos in particular we have raised the price of lunch to an exorbitant \$15. We know this will leave many of you reeling (lol) but it has to be done. I expect that we will continue to sneak the price up over the next few years, to help pay off the renovations but we promise that the price will always remain the best deal in town.

### DUES 2013

It's time to pay dues again:

**Vancouver Artillery Association** – Dues are \$75/yr. Make cheques payable to the Vancouver Artillery Association and send to the Vancouver Artillery Association at the address below.

**15 Field Regt Officers Mess** – Dues are \$60/yr. Make cheques payable to 15RCA Officers Mess and send to the Associate Members Representative at the address below.

Association and Mess dues to:

2025 West 11<sup>th</sup> Ave, Vancouver, BC V6J 2C7

**RUSI Vancouver** – dues are \$25/yr. Make cheques payable to RUSI Vancouver and send to Keith Freer

524-666 Leg-in-Boot Square

Vancouver BC V5Z 4B3

### Attention Airborne Gunners

As all of you may have heard, one of the ideas which emerged during last summer's most successful reunion of the Royal Regiment came in the form of a suggestion to write a "coffee table style book" regarding the history of Canada's Airborne Gunners. Thanks to the efforts of Bill Tremain and others, an oversight committee was established.

LCol (r) Brian Reid, a distinguished Gunner and an author of several books of military history has most kindly offered his services. He has waived any professional fee so any profits will accrue to the Heritage Fund of the Royal Regiment.

The Concept for publication is as follows:

"To provide reasoned, documented explanations so the airborne gunner community and the intelligent general reader alike may understand the why as well as the how, where and when of the airborne gunner world. At the same time the similarities and the differences between the experiences of generations of airborne gunners will make a fascinating saga, and this is best captured by personal accounts and pictures."

In order for the author to fill out the historical framework, extensive use must be made of the experience/knowledge of soldiers, of all ranks, who have had practical experience in this domain. (This includes of course those who have supported these operations).

May I ask all of those with the requisite background to assist the author by providing stories, comments, photos etc. relating to their service/support for these operations ?.

LCol Reid may be contacted through his e mail address [BReid10271@aol.com](mailto:BReid10271@aol.com)

Many Thanks

Ubique

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## **US Group Reports Top Numbers in Wounded Warrior Jobs**

*By Terri Moon Cronk American Forces Press Service*

WASHINGTON, Jan. 15, 2013 - A national organization has had such a high rate of success in its jobs program for severely wounded warriors, it's calling on the Defense Department and other agencies to adopt its approach, officials of the non-profit group announced. At a news conference conducted by the National Organization on Disability at the Disabled American Veterans headquarters here today, officials said an evaluation of its four-year program shows 70 percent of its seriously wounded warriors are experiencing employment and education success at about twice the rate of veterans who are not in the program. The findings of the study stem from the organization's Wounded Warrior Careers program, which has had about 275 wounded veterans under its tutelage since the program became active in 2008 at the Army's suggestion.

Candidates in the program often have severe cases of post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injuries, the two signature wounds of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. Of those 275 wounded warriors, the organization says the 70 percent represents those who are employed, in training or enrolled in other forms of education. Organization representatives said veterans not in their Wounded Warrior Careers program have a comparative job rate of about 30 to 40 percent. "The successful transition of wounded warriors into civilian careers provides an invaluable opportunity for the United States to continue benefiting from the dedication, talent and leadership of its bravest young people," said retired Army Lt Gen Franklin L Hagenbeck, a member of the organization's board of directors, who led troops during Operation Anaconda

along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border in the months following 9/11. Hagenbeck also is a former Army deputy chief of staff for personnel and U.S. Military Academy superintendent.

"But more fundamentally, making sure that this transition is successful is the ultimate debt we owe to those most severely injured in their country's service," Hagenbeck said. "The question, therefore, is not whether such an effort is called for, but how creative, smart, and effective that effort can be." Essentially, the organization demonstrates new employment practices, evaluates results and shares approaches for widespread use. Research on disability employment issues also is conducted, and it includes widely used polls on employment trends and the quality of life for people with disabilities. Experts in disability and employment provide consultation to employers who want to hire people with disabilities because they bring unique talents to the work force, organization officials said.

"The dedicated career specialists at NOD [to whom wounded warriors are assigned] -- many of whom were wounded veterans themselves -- have developed a model that works, at a sustainable cost of about \$3,500 per veteran, per year," Hagenbeck said. "NOD is proud of the work we do on behalf of our veterans, and we wish to see the federal government, particularly the departments of Defense, Labor and Veterans Affairs, as well as providers of career services to disabled veterans, embrace that model and expand its reach to many more deserving veterans." The organization works with employers, schools, the military, service providers, researchers and disability advocates. Conducted in three states with high concentrations of veterans -- Colorado, Texas and North Carolina -- the program covers career planning, career preparation, job-seeking support and post-placement support. The organization's representatives are scheduled to meet with congressional and Defense officials this week to share their study's findings. The organization also is encouraging the departments of Labor and Veterans Affairs and others on a national level to adapt its "proven, cost-effective" model that places severely wounded veterans into the civilian workforce, the organization's officials said.

## **Mussolini's bunker: Il Duce's futile search for safety**

*By Alan Johnston BBC News, Rome*

*The extensive air-raid shelter that Benito Mussolini had built under his home gives a flavour of the fears that must have haunted the Italian dictator's final days.*



*The villa now belongs to the municipality of Rome and was renovated in 2006*

The Via Nomentana is an avenue like many others in Rome. Taxis

and motorbikes hurtle along it in the summer heat but, half-way down, through a set of iron gates, lies another world - the cool and the calm of the gardens of the Villa Torlonia. A lawn, shaded by palm trees, rises up a slope and a path lined with flowers leads to the villa itself - grand and imposing. For 18 years, this was the home of Benito Mussolini, his wife and their children. In this beautiful place, Italy's dictator, Il Duce, lived out his rise and fall. The villa is a museum now and, as you wander through its marble halls, it is easy to see that - for a time - life here for the Mussolinis was very good indeed.

As the war turned against him, he feared for the safety of his family - how could they be protected from any Allied air raids? ” The ballroom is lit by low-hanging chandeliers and above them, on the ceiling, painted angels go gliding through the heavens. Mussolini's bedroom is still much as he would remember it. You can almost see him throwing open the tall green shutters on a summer night, letting in any breeze that might emerge from the trees beyond the balcony. Black-and-white photographs show how Mussolini spent his days at the villa. Out on the fine white gravel of the driveway, you see him pictured as a swordsman, practising his fencing - Il Duce's stocky frame presenting a rather large target for his coach.



In one photo, he is on a white horse, easily clearing a jump on a riding track in the grounds. Another shows the dictator on the tennis court wearing a cap to protect his bald head from the sun. But he is much more smartly dressed when we

see him welcoming to his home an Arab diplomatic delegation. And in one of history's stranger encounters, Mussolini once entertained Mahatma Gandhi at the villa. We can only imagine what the famously restrained, pacifist Indian was thinking as he sat and watched his host - this strutting, vain man - consumed by a passion for power and conquest.

But the dictator's grand ambitions had of course set his nation on a route to defeat and disaster and, in his quieter moments, in the luxurious surroundings of the villa, Mussolini must have gradually begun to realise just how badly he had over-reached himself. As the war turned against him, he feared for the safety of his family. How could they be protected from any Allied air raids? His own Italian forces had used bombers in the colonial war that he had unleashed in Abyssinia in 1935. Now Mussolini worried that he himself might be targeted in the same way. At first the answer seemed to lie in a cellar out in the garden. A steel door was fitted and beds put in. But there was a problem. If there was a sudden terrifying attack, to reach the bunker the family would have had to come out of the villa and run across a lawn. For a moment they

would have been exposed to the falling bombs. So instead a new shelter was made inside the house. A basement was converted into a more sophisticated bunker. Mussolini was afraid that the Allies might use gas bombs, just as he had in his African war and so this second shelter was fitted with airtight doors and a decontamination room where chemical residues could be washed off the skin.

But then Il Duce decided that even this was not enough. He began building another bunker, several metres below the villa. Going down into it today, you feel a little as if you are descending into a submarine. The corridors are like huge tubes - cylindrical, for maximum strength. The walls stream with water that presses in from the damp earth and the construction of this dank and eerie place did not seem to put Mussolini's mind at ease - rather the opposite. There were delays in the work and, as his enemies closed in, he confided to his diary that he worried that the bunker would not be finished quickly enough. Indeed it was not ready by the time Mussolini was forced from power in Rome in July 1943. He would eventually end up being shot and put on public display hung upside down on a street in Milan.



*Inside  
Mussolini's  
bunker.*

The last bunker stands now just as it did the day that work on it stopped and, looking around down there, you get a fuller sense of Mussolini's vast misadventure. In the dazzling light and space of the house and its gardens, he set out on what he thought was a path to glory and greatness. But his time at the villa would end in a desperate - futile - search for safety in the darkness deep beneath its foundations.

For a video tour of the bunker go to;

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-20991123>

## 2013 Military Ball



*Vancouver Garrison Officers Society*

# **The Military Ball**



*We invite everyone to attend our*

## **68<sup>th</sup> Annual Military Ball**

*to be held at the*

### ***Hyatt Regency Hotel***

*on*

## **April 6, 2013**

**For information about the event and ticket orders please contact us at:**

**[bcmilitaryball@gmail.com](mailto:bcmilitaryball@gmail.com)**

**Tickets - \$110pp**

Mark your calendars now for the **6th of April 2013** to attend the Annual Vancouver Garrison's Military Ball, scheduled once again to be held at the Vancouver Hyatt Regency Hotel. The tariff to attend the Vancouver Military Ball remains unchanged for 2013 at \$110 per person - Tickets must be purchased in advance. To purchase tickets send an email to the address on the poster above to have an order form emailed back to you. We look forward to seeing you there.

Want to book a room at the host hotel for the Military Ball? The Hyatt has once again offered a special room rate for our guests and the reservations link is pasted below. The rate is **\$149.00!** As per last year, this rate is ***only available by booking on-line via this link***. You will not be able to find it if you call the Hyatt 1-800 reservation phone number or try to book via Hyatt.com.

On line reservation: <https://resweb.passkey.com/go/mball2013>

## Oldest UK POW Dies



Born in 1913, Alfie Fripp joined the RAF in 1930. At the outbreak of war in 1939 he was a Sergeant serving as an observer with No 57 Squadron, flying air reconnaissance missions over Germany when his Bristol Blenheim aircraft was shot down. Sgt Fripp became known as one of the “39ers”, the unfortunate few taken prisoner in the first year of World War II, and was held in a succession of prison camps including the infamous Stalag Luft III, site of ‘The Great Escape’. His pilot colleague Flight Lieutenant Mike Casey was one of the 50 Allied servicemen who escaped from the camp in 1944, only to be caught by the Nazis and executed on Hitler’s orders.

More than 60 years later, in 2009, Mr Fripp would return to Stalag Luft III to pay tribute to his former crewmates: “I’m glad I came to remember Mike – you reflect back on all the memories and the people you knew.” Casting his mind back to the fateful day in 1939 when they were shot down he added; “We were forced to hedge hop at six feet to avoid being attacked again by a Messerschmitt in a

cloudless sky. We crash landed after colliding with the treetops.”

Mr Fripp then wrote on his website: “I look back over the years on my RAF career with pride and consider it a great privilege to have served from the time when the strength was only 30,000 airmen and the ration allowance five pence per day...It is little short of a miracle that I survived for so long, through a forced landing in the bay of Biscay in a Scapa flying boat in 1936 whilst ferrying it to Alexandria, to a pre-war crash in a Blenheim Mk I in 1938, through my World War II experiences.” After the war Mr Fripp served in the RAF until 1969, reaching the rank of Squadron Leader. He lived with his wife in Bournemouth and became a sixth-form teacher before retiring at the age of 65.

Retired Air Commodore Charles Clarke, President and Chairman of the Royal Air Forces Ex Prisoners of War Association, described Mr Fripp as an irrepressible character: “Alfie was a remarkable man for his age, as bright as a button. He was a natural performer who liked being in charge – in the camps he took on the role of distributing the Red Cross parcels. Just 2 months ago he took part in the Remembrance service at the Cenotaph, albeit in a wheelchair, and he was hoping to return to Stalag Luft III with us this year.” Alfie Fripp was thought to be the oldest surviving and longest-serving British prisoner of war.

## Newsletters

*Miss a newsletter? Want to see a back issue? Newsletters for the last couple of years are archived on the RUSI Vancouver website ( [www.rusivancouver.ca](http://www.rusivancouver.ca) ) Go to: <http://www.rusivancouver.ca/newsletters.htm> to view.*



## From the ‘Punitary’

A boiled egg in the morning is hard to beat.

## Murphy’s Rules of Combat Operations.

Having all your body parts intact and functioning at the end of the day beats the alternative...

## Great Truths

*Light travels faster than sound. This is why some people appear bright until you hear them speak.*

## BCR Curry Lunch – Jan 2013

### **Curry Lunch - India**



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



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

**Date:** Thursday, January 31, 2013

**Time:** 11:45 am - 1:30 pm  
(bar opens at 11:45am)  
(welcome at 12:15pm)  
(lunch starts at 12:20pm)

**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 January 25, 2013)

**RSVP:** For more information or to register, please contact Bill Diamond at [Bill@DukeaBear.com](mailto:Bill@DukeaBear.com) or 604.618.3607 (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 January 25, 2013

**NEXT LUNCH: Thursday, February 28, 2013**