

Van Arty Association and RUSI Van Members News Feb 16, 2016

Newsletter on line. This newsletter, and previous editions, are available on the Vancouver Artillery Association website at: www.vancouvergunners.ca and the RUSI Vancouver website at: <http://www.rusivancouver.ca/newsletter.html>

Wednesday Lunches The 15 Field Officers Mess serves 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. Jacket and tie required, equivalent for ladies. We are now pushing the 3rd Wed lunch each month as the Van Arty Association lunch and encouraging members to attend. Come meet some old friends and help with the Yearbook project.

Whiskey Tasting - Friday – March 4th 1800 – 2300 hrs



The 15th Field Artillery Regiment RCA and the 78th Fraser's Highlanders welcome you to attend our annual Fund Raising and Whiskey Tasting event at the historic Bessborough Armoury. There will be food, draw prizes, and music. *See poster at the end of the newsletter.*

World War 2 - 1940

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

Feb 17th: Turkey and Bulgaria sign friendship agreements with Germany that allow for the presence of German troops in the latter country.

Feb 18th: British troops make a foray into southern Ethiopia and bag 1,000 Italian POWs at Mega.

Feb 19th: Haile Selassie returns to Ethiopia along with Wingate's 1700 man Gideon Force in the Dangilla Region to start a series of highly successful harassing attacks. Eden, Dill, Cunningham and Wavell meet in Cairo to plan British support for Greece and balance a host of other problems.

Feb 20th: German and British reconnaissance troops spot each other near El Agehila in Libya.

Feb 21st: There is a brief shakeup in the Soviet Party's Central Committee; to the detriment of their former ambassador to the US Litvinov – who is dismissed but not purged.

Feb 22nd: Scharnhorst and Gneisenau sink 5 stragglers from a dispersed convoy.

Feb 23rd: A victory for Cunningham in his invasion of Somalia, the Italian defence of Juba is over and the British race for Mogadishu. A small Free French force lands in Eritrea. The Greeks

agree to accept up to 100,000 British troops (and more if they can come); in the meantime, they are unwilling to withdraw to a defensive stance along the Aliakmon River well back from both the Albanian and Bulgarian frontiers.

Launch of the 'Before You Go' Website

built by reservists for releasing and retired reservists

1. The Chief of Defence Staff and the Chief Reserves and Cadets are pleased to announce the launch of the before you go website
2. This website, built by reservists for releasing and retired reservists, provides key information including the release process, medical releases, pension process, department of Veterans Affairs Canada services and benefits, transition services, and a list of other services, programs and benefits that reservists can access as they leave the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) and after release
3. The current second career access network (SCAN) program is not designed to address the needs of all releasing reserve members. Before you go is therefore intended to be a primary resource to inform the entire CAF community about the services, programs and benefits available to reservists
4. The website can be viewed on an accessible internet-based platform from any computer or mobile device. This approach will enable individuals to access the information in a private setting, plus have the added benefit of continued access even after release
5. This message is to have wide distribution throughout the CAF reserve community including retired personnel where ever possible
6. The before you go site can be found at <http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/caf-community-support-services-for-members-reservists/before-you-go.page>

'Swiss Army Knife' Armoured Vehicle Unveiled by BAE Systems

12 Feb 2016

BAE unveils its reworked 'Swiss Army knife' armoured vehicle - aptly named the Terrier.

It looks more like a Transformer, and could be the new sting in the British Army's tail. The 'Swiss Army Knife' combat vehicle, so dubbed because of its armoury of tools, now comes complete with a telescopic investigation arm, an upgrade on the existing Terrier ordered by defence chiefs.



Widely regarded as the 'Swiss Army Knife of combat engineering vehicles, the BAE Systems' Terrier

Aptly named 'Terrier', it has been designed to meet the challenges of warfare on the battlefields of the future. It can probe for buried explosives and split solid concrete with a rock hammer that stretches more

than 26 ft (8m) away from its body. The mammoth machine can now wade through deep waters and withstand waves of up to six and a half feet (2m). The remote controlled 32 tonne machine was originally launched as part of a £360m project in June 2013 to dig holes, lift objects, drill into the ground and even shatter concrete with troops a safe distance away. But it has been now been enhanced with sophisticated new technologies and systems by defence engineers at BAE Systems, ensuring it keeps a step ahead of competitors. One of the upgrades is a ripper that can tear up roads or runways, rendering them useless to the enemy, and an earth augur that drills holes for use in combat engineering.

The 32-ton Terrier can even be operated by remote control from more than half a mile away



BAE Systems Land (UK) export sales manager Rory Breen said: "The greater wading depth and surge protection will make Terrier even better suited for use in coastal or low lying areas, where it can play an important role in disaster relief as well as combat situations. "Along with the new telescopic arm and other attachments, Terrier remains the most technologically advanced and flexible combat engineer vehicle in the world. "Due to the modular nature of the vehicle, it could also be quickly adapted for a range of other situations, such as clearing paths through jungle or thick foliage." Terrier can reach speeds of 45 mph (70kmh) and already has complete remote control from up to 1km (0.62 miles) away, along with a variety of lifting, grabbing and moving capabilities. Its front loader system can lift weights of up to five tonnes and can shift 300 tonnes of earth an hour. In addition, its recently trialled sub-surface mine plough can penetrate to recognised safe depths while travelling at up to 15kmh (9.3 mph), quickly creating a path free of mines and improvised explosive devices. Terrier was designed to provide the British Army with maximum flexibility from a single vehicle, allowing them to reduce their equipment and logistic footprint. BAE Systems' engineers continue to develop new modular attachments, meaning that Terrier customers can upgrade their vehicles to meet new requirements without changing platforms.

Disabled Veterans Still Await the Government's Plan

lee Berthiaume, Ottawa Citizen February 5, 2016

Released from the military for medical reasons in 2012, Patrick Wilkins was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder and irritable bowel syndrome from a tour in Afghanistan; chronic back pain from falling out of a helicopter on a training exercise; and two bad knees from years of marching with a rucksack. The 23-year veteran believes that if he had left the military seven years earlier, he would have received a disability pension of around \$60,000 a year. Instead, because of changes to veterans' benefits introduced in 2006, he was given a lump-sum payment of \$245,000. Wilkins used the money to buy a house in Kelowna, B.C. Since then, however, he has struggled to make ends meet. A motorcycle tourism business has yet to take off, while his PTSD has scared off prospective employers. "There are days I just don't function as a human

being,” he says. The 45-year-old does receive a \$1,600 monthly allowance from Veterans Affairs for not being able to work. But he says that amounts to less than half what he would get after taxes if he had been able to take the pension, and leaves him barely above the poverty line.

Patrick Wilkins, shown in Kandahar, Afghanistan in 2006 as part of Operation Athena.

MCPL YVES GEMUS



Wilkins is one of more than 76,000 injured veterans who have received a total of \$2.8-billion in lump-sum payments since lifelong disability pensions were abolished in 2006. But he is also one of those who wants to be included in the Liberal government’s pledge to reintroduce the disability pensions. “I don’t want anything that I’m not entitled to,” he says, “but when I started off my career in the military, the pension was promised if I got injured. They agreed to it, and I agreed to it.”

While veterans such as Wilkins say offering pensions to everyone injured in uniform is an issue of fairness and equality, the move could also cost billions for a government already staring at a much larger deficit than originally promised. The Liberals were the only party that promised to reintroduce disability pensions for injured veterans as an alternative to the benefits and services offered through what’s called the “New Veterans Charter,” the system implemented in 2006. Veterans Affairs Minister Kent Hehr told the Citizen last month that his department was drawing up options to make good on the Liberals’ pension promise. Details have been scarce. Hehr declined to say whether the disability pensions would be exactly the same as those offered to veterans before 2006. His office also won’t say if the pensions will be offered retroactively to those injured veterans forced to take one-time payments upon release from the military. “The department is looking at options on how best to provide for the needs of all veterans in a viable and sustainable manner, which includes the mandate commitment on pensions,” Hehr’s spokesman, Christian Duval, said in an email. “It would be premature to discuss considered options at this time.”

Former NDP MP Peter Stoffer, his party’s long-time veterans critic, says he disagreed with reintroducing the lifelong pensions. He says he received numerous complaints about the old system, and that the new system is better – even if some veterans don’t receive as much money from the government – because the focus is on helping injured veterans find civilian careers. This was especially important with a new generation of veterans from Afghanistan. “The whole genesis of the charter was you did not want to give a 23-year-old a monthly pension and just leave him alone,” said Stoffer. “That’s generally what the old system was. Instead, you wanted

to help them become productive members of society.” Former veterans affairs minister Erin O’Toole says the system in place under the New Veterans Charter also directed the majority of resources to veterans who really needed them. Under the old system, veterans who suffered even minor hearing loss or back and joint pain could get hundreds of dollars a month for life. “In those cases, are you targeting a lot of funds at where you need it most? A hearing injury?” said O’Toole, who was re-elected and is now the Conservative public safety critic. “Where you need it is moderate and serious injuries.” Both Stoffer and O’Toole acknowledge shortcomings in the new system. But while they disagree on the extent of these, both believe the issues can be addressed without reintroducing pensions, which would also be prohibitively expensive.

The Liberals did not cost out the pensions in their platform, though they did promise to invest about \$143 million this year to increase benefits under the New Veterans Charter. Ray McInnis of the Royal Canadian Legion says reinstating the old pension system “wasn’t on our radar at any time.” Instead, the Legion has been asking the government to improve the new system, including topping up the income of seriously disabled veterans to 100 per cent of what they were making in the military. The current rate is 75 per cent, and Liberals have said they will increase it to 90 per cent. Lawyer Don Sorochan is representing six Afghan veterans locked in a class-action lawsuit with the federal government for more than three years. The lawsuit, currently on hold until May as the veterans wait to see what the new government will do, centred on whether the New Veterans Charter fell short of the benefits offered under the old system. “The minute the Liberals announced they’re going to return to the pensions, I basically asked people who were Liberals: ‘What do you have in mind?’ ” Sorochan said. “I don’t think they knew.” O’Toole alleges the Liberals simply made a promise to win votes, and that they are now struggling with their promise. “There’s fiscal realities to some of these things that have to be addressed,” he said. “And it’s irresponsible to get some veterans and some advocacy groups believing that there’s going to be some major, retroactively applying payment of some sort.”

But veterans argue the issue is one of fairness. “Will we be given the opportunity to accept a monthly disability pension?” asked Sheldon Maerz, who received several thousand dollars for a knee injury in 2009 that he says would have paid him a few hundred dollars a month for life under the old system. “This is the key question for men and women such as myself.” David MacLeod, who was medically released from the Canadian Army in 2010 due to chronic leg pain from a training accident, said the uncertainty has ratcheted up anxiety among veterans who did not get disability pensions. “The minister must be clear when he states that there will be pensions for life,” said the 27-year veteran. “What does that mean: the lump sum stretched over time, some cobbled-together system that is eroded over time, or the proven Pension Act?”

Until 2006, disability pensions were offered to all Canadian veterans who sustained injuries while in the military. They received a monthly, tax-free payment based on the extent of their injuries. Passed by all parties in 2005, and implemented by the Conservatives in 2006, the New Veterans Charter changed this. The pension was replaced with a lump-sum payment based on the extent of the injury, along with services such as rehabilitation and vocational training to

help with the transition to civilian life. The charter was heavily criticized, however, as not providing sufficient assistance to injured veterans. The Conservative government introduced improvements in 2011 and again in 2015, including an allowance beyond the age of 65. Most veterans groups have since indicated they support an improved charter. But some say it still falls far short of the benefits offered under the old pension system.

Canadian Army Conducts Training to Maintain Arctic Readiness

10 February 2016

Approximately 2,500 Canadian Army soldiers from the Regular Force, Primary Reserve and Canadian Rangers are participating in training exercises to maintain Arctic readiness. Scheduled to last until March, the training will be carried out in the north of Canada, and aims to maintain and sharpen soldiers' operational capabilities in austere environments. Soldiers will collaborate with government agencies and departments during the exercises, which will include parachute jumps and engaging first nations communities.

The US Army National Guard, the New Zealand Armed Forces and the Polish Armed Forces will also contribute soldiers to the training, which is expected to strengthen the nations' interoperability with Canada. Canadian National Defence Minister Harjit S. Sajjan said: "The protection of our northern borders remains a key security priority for Canada. "The Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces are fully committed to exercising our northern sovereignty and these Arctic training scenarios allow us to demonstrate greater visible presence in Canada's North." The Canadian Army regularly conducts simulated training exercises to develop and test cold-weather survival skills. The training enhances troops' ability to quickly respond to threats and domestic emergencies, such as natural disasters, extreme weather events and other hazards.

The CFOne Card

Everything you need to know about CFOne!



DND has started a program to replaced the NDI 75 card with the CFOne card.

The CFOne card is the one card you need to access programs and services delivered by CF Morale and Welfare Services (CFMWS). The CFOne card consolidates the functions of several cards into a single card. **It easily and accurately confirms your membership within the Canadian military community** of one million strong and provides you with access to both the CANEX Rewards Program (the program that rewards you for shopping at CANEX) and the CF Appreciation Program (the official discount program of the Canadian Armed Forces community). It will also be the one card to support membership to PSP sports, fitness and recreation programs and services at Bases and Wings across the country. In addition, the CFOne

card will provide membership and confirm access to messes and specialty interest activities, such as golf, curling and sailing clubs.

All members of the Canadian military community of one million strong are eligible for the CFOne card.

You are eligible to receive a FREE CFOne card if you are part of one of the following categories:

- Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) members (Regular and Reserve Force) and their families*
- Veterans (former members of the CAF) and their families, including families of the deceased
- Members of foreign military currently serving with the CAF and their families
- Current Staff of the Non-Public Funds, Canadian Forces (NPF, CF)
- Current staff of Military Family Resource Centres (MFRCs)

For more information and to sign up for a card, go to:

www.cfmws.com/en/OurServices/CFOne/Pages/default.aspx

Do You Have an Interest in Star Trek?

We have an unusual request from Stu McDonald but has to do with RCA fundraising. Do any of you know of a 15 Fd member or former member or associate who has an interest in Star Trek, especially the original series? Stu would be delighted to hear from them. Stu can be contacted through the editor: bob.mugford@outlook.com

Who is it?

Last Week: The reviewing stand is in front of the south entrance to Vancouver City Hall. (12th



Ave and Yukon St) Those light standards, which are still there, were in common use in Vancouver at that time and are still used in some areas of Vancouver (Angus Drive for one) albeit more for decoration than lighting. The Staff Officer is Col HA Sparling. He was posted back to Canada from the UK as a Lt Col and served from summer 1941 to Sept 1942 in the Directorate of Military Training, then was posted back to Europe as a Lt Col to take over an Artillery Regiment. He was probably promoted to Col (WSE) during the posting to the Directorate. He came to Vancouver to look over local units during that time. He retired as MGen HA Sparling CBE DSO CD. No IDs yet on the other officers.

This Week: We are switching to a nautical theme now, to quell any murmuring from below decks. This photo, obviously taken from Brockton Point in Stanley Park, shows properly kitted-out lads of 15th Coast Regiment, RCA (yes, Coast, so that should be a hint) saluting a visiting warship with pukka guns, 25 pounders, albeit more suitable to the regiment's current role than that of banging against the side of a heavily armoured (and armed) battleship.

Fortunately, at the time this photo was taken the big war was over, replaced now by a far colder one, and the Imperial Japanese Navy's puny battleships with their pathetic 18 inch guns never dared harass the grandmothers of BC Ferries.



So, dear naval-gazing reader, can you tell us the date of this fine photograph? More importantly, what is that fine ship cruising into our beautiful harbour? It's obviously a tad large to be even the largest Royal Canadian Navy ship of the time (our two cruisers: name them and you get bonus points, and tell us how one of them inspired our prime minister in his decision regarding our fighter-bombers in Iraq), so it must belong to one of our trusty allies. It is the mighty HMS Indecisive, or could it be the stalwart USS Zebulon P Lipschitz Jr?

Your answers may be sent either to the esteemed editor, or to the author, John Redmond ([john.d. redmond@telus.net](mailto:john.d.redmond@telus.net)). All answers are treated with the respect they deserve.

As always, you can email the editor for a picture you can zoom in on. - Bob.mugford@outlook.com

From the 'Punitentary'

What did the Circus owner say to the human cannonball when he heard he was planning to retire? "You can't! Where will I find a man of your caliber?"

Murphy's other Laws

Technology is dominated by those who manage what they do not understand.

Quotable Quotes

A pessimist is a person who looks both ways before crossing a one-way road.

– *Robert L Peters*

15th Field Artillery Regiment RCA & The 78th Fraser's Highlanders Fund Raiser and Scotch Tasting Night

The 15th Field Artillery Regiment RCA and the 78th Fraser's Highlanders welcome you to attend our annual Fund Raising and Whiskey Tasting event at the historic Bessborough Armoury. There will be food, draw prizes, and music.

Tickets are **\$55.00** per person for those sampling a selection of six excellent Whiskeys selected by the Officers of the Mess, or **\$25.00** if you are only having beer, wine, or soft drinks from our No-Host Bar.

Only 50 tickets will be sold for the full whisky fleet!

Dress is business casual. kilts, and highland dress, of course, are welcome.

DATE: Friday – March 4th, 2016

TIME: 1800 hrs – 2300 hrs

LOCATION: 15th Field Artillery Regiment RCA
2025 West 11th Ave Van, BC V6J 2C7

**DO NOT MISS OUT!
TO RESERVE YOUR TICKET CONTACT:**

Major James Barrett

Cell: (604) 916-1766

E-Mail: barrettjd007@gmail.com

All profits will go to support the activities of the 15th Field Regimental Society and the 78th Fraser Highlanders Fort Fraser Garrison.

Tax receipts will be issued for all donations upon request.

Taste of India Curry Lunch



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

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



- Date:** Thursday, February 25, 2016
- 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 Feb 17, 2016)
- RSVP:** For more information or to register, please e-mail Charlotte Yen at corporate@hplaw.ca
(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 February 15, 2016

BC Regiment Association

invites you to the



St. Patrick's Day Party

Where: BC Regiment Drill Hall
620 Beatty St, Vancouver

When: Sunday March 13, 2016

Time: 13:00hr – 17:00hr
(Meet & Greet 13:00hr,
Lunch 13:45hr)

Cost: \$20 RSVP by March 6

RSVP: Sandra Young 604-543-0368 or
sandymay@shaw.ca

Prize for St. Patrick's Day best dressed

Lunch: Irish Stew, Salad, Buns & Dessert

Door prize giveaways

Lucky Draw prize raffles: \$20 arm's length or 3 tickets for \$5
50/50

Come down for the St. Patrick's Day Parade 11:00-12:30hr Howe & Georgia Streets and then come warm up with some hot stew, catch up with some friends and listen to the BC Regiment Association Irish Pipes & Drums.