



## Van Arty Association and RUSI Van Members News July 16, 2019

Newsletters normally are emailed on Monday evenings. If you don't get a future newsletter on time, check the websites below to see if there is a notice about the current newsletter or to see if the current edition is posted there. If the newsletter is posted, please contact me at [bob.mugford@gmail.com](mailto:bob.mugford@gmail.com) to let me know you didn't get a copy.

**Newsletter on line.** This newsletter, and previous editions, are available on the Vancouver Artillery Association website at: [www.vancouvergunners.ca](http://www.vancouvergunners.ca) and the RUSI Vancouver website at: <http://www.rusivancouver.ca/newsletter.html>. Both groups are also on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=vancouver%20artillery%20association> and <https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=rusi%20vancouver>

**Wednesday Lunches** - We need your support to keep the lunches going. Hope all you regular attendees can keep coming. The Mess serves a great 5 course buffet meal for only \$20. Hope to see you all there. Guests are always welcome, and we encourage members to bring their significant others and friends. Dress - Jacket and tie, equivalent for Ladies. For serving personnel, uniform of the day is always acceptable at lunch.

**NOTE:** There will not be a lunch on Sept 11. Mrs Lum will be out of town.

**Upcoming events – Mark your calendars** See attached posters for details.

**Sept 11 NO LUNCH - mark your calendars! Mrs Lum away.**

### World War 2 – 1944

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

**Jul 17<sup>th</sup>:** Rommel is injured by Allied fighter aircraft and von Kluge takes over his duties as commander of Army Group B in addition to his functions as commander in chief of Germany's forces in Northwestern Europe. US troops enter St Lo. A strike by carrier aircraft from HMS Formidable, Indefatigable and Furious on Tirpitz is defeated by intense smoke screens. Some 5,000 tons of naval ammunition detonates at Port Chicago near San Francisco, killing 323 servicemen, 202 of them African American. The Japanese start another cabinet shuffle to reflect the growing interest in ending the war by many of their statesmen – but no outside observers pay attention to these too subtle maneuvers. The British ring church bells and the Americans run war-bond drives, but Stalin's way of celebrating victories is to march prisoners through Moscow, and 57,000 Germans from Army Group Centre are on display today.

**Jul 18<sup>th</sup>:** US XIX Corps largely clears St Lo as Operation Goodwood begins near Caen with a massive bombardment by 2,200 aircraft while five divisions attempt to tackle the German defences south of the Orne and secure Caen. Tojo resigns as PM and chief of staff in the

ongoing Japanese Cabinet shuffle. In Italy, US IV Corps starts to attack Leghorn while the Poles capture Ancona on the Adriatic coast. The Soviets continue pushing towards Lvov while their forces to the north aim themselves at Kovel, Ostrov and Pskov. Flying Officer John Cruickshank's Catalina has been badly hit by flak in an attack on a U-Boat, killing one crew member and wounding three – including John Cruickshank, who is badly hit in the lungs and legs. Regardless, he takes his aircraft in for a second attack, which sinks the U-Boat. He fights unconsciousness throughout the five and half hour return flight and assists with the safe landing of his damaged aircraft. He is awarded the Victoria Cross.

**Jul 19<sup>th</sup>:** Goodwood continues with mixed results, the Germans are firming up their front and knocking out a lot of British tanks (over 400 and only losing 100 of their own) thanks to their superior gunnery from prepared defensive positions while Canadian troops take the Caen suburb of Vaucelles, Louvigny and Fleury-sur-Orne. The 34<sup>th</sup> US Division liberates Leghorn. 1<sup>st</sup> Ukrainian Front pockets five German divisions near Lvov while other Soviet troops enter Latvia.

**Jul 20<sup>th</sup>:** Von Stauffenberg's attempted assassination of Hitler and the bungled coup attempt in Berlin increases Hitler's pathological distrust of the professional military and leads to wilder mood swings; one result of the plot will be several hundred executions, particularly of dozens of officers (especially aristocratic Catholic ones) and their families, in the coming weeks. Operation Goodwood winds down – as a breakthrough battle it was a failure, gaining only 5km down the road to Falaise, as an attritional battle it was a success as German personnel losses exceeded those of the Allies and the Germans cannot make good their material losses while the Allies can. Army artillery on Saipan joins in the pre-invasion bombardment of Tinian.

**Jul 21<sup>st</sup>:** The Roosevelt/Truman ticket is finalized at the Democratic national convention. Troops of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Marine Division become the first of 54,000 American servicemen to land on Guam, where 19,000 Japanese troops (mostly of the 29<sup>th</sup> Division) await them. The French Corps in Italy comes out of the line to prepare for the Anvil/Dragoon Landings in France. Zeitzler is replaced by Guderian as Chief of Staff at OKH. The Japanese try another attack at Aitape but this one is soon repulsed. 3<sup>rd</sup> Baltic Front captures Ostrov.

**Jul 22<sup>nd</sup>:** The First Belorussian Front takes Chelm. The Marines on Guam push their two beachheads inland by a mile or so.

**Jul 23<sup>rd</sup>:** Pskov, the last major pre-War Russian City in German hands, is liberated and other Soviet troops begin fighting their way inside Lublin. Army Group North needs men, material, supplies and permission to withdraw; what they get is a change of command as Field Marshal Schoerner replaces General Friessner. The HQ of the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Army (under General Harry Crerar) is formed in France with I UK Corps under JT Crocker and II Canadian Corps under GS Simonds under command. On Guam, the Marines capture the base of the Orote Peninsula and reach Point Adelup. US IV Corps enters southern Pisa but cannot get a crossing site over the Arno. The Soviets form a Polish Committee of National Liberation (from members of the Polish Communist Party); it will later form the basis for their puppet government.

## **PROJECT '44 - Mapping the Battle of Normandy**

Project'44 is an online web map (Beta) that will let you explore the Battle of Normandy. A dedicated team of volunteers have spent over a year in digitally preserving historical documents and mapping out the Allied advance. With the war diaries of the First Canadian Army on hand you will be able to follow along and discover the sacrifice that was made in summer of 1944. Launching for the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Normandy was not the end of our project rather the beginning and over the next several months we will be performing updates to the look and functionalities as well we will be uploading hundreds of rare documents and map that will offer new perspective into the Canadians contribution to the invasion and in the land campaign.

To learn more go to: <https://www.project44.ca/>

## **US Air Force Gets First Upgraded 'Ghostrider' Gunship**

*Military.com Oriana Pawlyk 8 Mar 2019*



*An MC-130J Commando II lands on the flightline at Hurlburt Field, Fla., Aug 11, 2016. The AC-130J Ghostrider is a modified version of the MC-130J.  
US Air Force/Staff Sgt Kentavist Brackin*

The Air Force has received an upgraded version of its Ghostrider gunship. The 4<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Squadron, 1<sup>st</sup> Special Operations Wing, at Hurlburt Field, Florida, received its first AC-130J Ghostrider Block 30 gunship this week during a ceremony at Bob Sikes Airport in Crestview, Florida, Air Force Special Operations Command said in a news release Thursday. The 4<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Squadron currently operates and maintains the AC-130U Spooky. The Block 30 model marks "a major improvement in software and avionics technology" over the original Block 20 software AC-130J, the release states. "The Ghostrider is the newest and most modernized gunship in existence, fulfilling the same mission sets as the Spooky but with upgraded avionics, navigation systems and a precision strike package that includes a mission management console, a robust communications suite, two electro-optical / infrared sensors, and advanced fire control equipment. In addition, the new gunship offers a precision-guided munitions delivery capability and is armed with trainable 30mm Mk 44 Bushmaster II and 105mm M102 cannons. Other enhancements include updated crew seats with added safety features and relocation of equipment into more optimal locations. The first Block 30 model will remain in a testing-only status for a year before it can deploy for battlefield operations, officials said.

Along with the 105mm cannon the U-models sport, the AC-130J is equipped with a 30mm cannon "almost like a sniper rifle. ... It's that precise, it can pretty much hit first shot, first kill,"

Col Tom Palenske, then-commander of 1<sup>st</sup> Special Operations Wing, told *Military.com* last May at Hurlburt. The model achieved initial operational capability in September 2017. The J-model also has improved turboprop engines, which reduce operational costs with better flight sustainability, the service has said. It has the ability to launch 250-pound, GPS- or laser-guided small-diameter bombs (SDB). The aircraft is expected to carry AGM-114 Hellfire missiles, interchangeable with the SDBs on its wing pylons, AFSOC has said. Palenske said last year that airmen have been waiting to see the aircraft in action. "It's going to [be] the most lethal, with the most loiter time, probably the most requested weapons system from ground forces in the history of warfare. That's my prediction," he said.

The fourth-generation J is slated to replace the AC-130H/U/W models, with delivery of the final J- model sometime in 2021, according to the Air Force. The service plans to buy 37 of the aircraft. Crews expect the J to be deployed in late 2019 or early 2020. "It's our big gun truck," Palenske said. "It's going to have more powerful engines, a more efficient fuel rate. ... You can keep the sensors on the bad guys longer ... [and] it's also going to have AGM-176 [Griffin] missiles on the back, so you can put 10 missiles on the back of them. "It's going to be awesome," he said.

## **Earthquakes Hit Naval Station China Lake**

Station 'Not Mission Capable'. *Gidget Fuentes* July 9, 2019



*California State Route 178 SW of Trona, following the M7.1 earthquake. Road is now closed for repairs. USGS Photo*

SAN DIEGO – Just 10 months ago Hurricane Michael almost destroyed Tyndall Airforce Base in Florida. Now two major earthquakes struck Southern California late last week opening fault lines on Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake and prompted officials to evacuate residents. Since Saturday, the Navy testing installation has been declared “not mission capable until further notice.” As of late Monday, the Navy’s key research-and-development site for major aviation and weapons systems testing and evaluation remained off-limits to anyone but mission-essential personnel, as crews worked to inspect facilities at the sprawling installation complex. China Lake, which covers 1.2 million acres of the Mojave Desert, felt the brunt of the significant tremors, from the magnitude 6.4 earthquake that struck at the morning of July 4 to the scores of aftershocks and then a magnitude 7.1 earthquake on Friday evening.

US Geological Survey experts identified the epicenters of the two largest tremors and countless others as occurring within the Navy installation. Navy personnel and California National Guard air crews assisted geologists in surveying the impacts of the tremors, which cracked paved roads, opened gashes across the desert area and shifted railroad tracks. The weapons station, as well as nearby towns of Ridgecrest and Trona, saw scattered damage from the quakes but no deaths or major destruction. As of Monday evening, China Lake officials had reported few

details about effects to the weapons station and offered scant information in public updates posted on the weapons station's official Facebook page. The installation's spokesperson hadn't responded to a USNI News query as of Monday night. Basic services such as water and power have been restored in most areas of the base, China Lake officials wrote in a Monday post on Facebook. The weapons station's Navy Exchange planned to reopen Tuesday, so mission-essential personnel could get supplies and other items. "The barbershop will also open, but patrons will need to be escorted inside the barbershop," officials wrote in another post. But the earthquakes damaged the installation's All-Faith Chapel, which was established in 1944. "The NAWSCL Religious Ministries services are cancelled due to structural damage to the building. All personnel are encouraged to seek services out in town," officials posted on Facebook.

"The safety of our workforce is our priority. All are reminded to maintain high situational awareness," installation officials wrote in a Facebook posting Monday afternoon. Navy Region Southwest's commander, Rear Adm Bette Bolivar, "authorized the evacuation of non-essential personnel to safe haven, Naval Base Ventura County," on Friday, a region spokesman, Brian O'Rourke, told USNI News in a statement Monday afternoon. "This order remains in effect until further notice." It's unclear how many personnel and families opted to evacuate to Ventura County or other "safe haven" military installations, as the earthquakes happened over an extended holiday weekend for many military personnel. "A diverse array of infrastructure and services exists on base and are spread throughout the installation's approximate 1.2 million acres," O'Rourke said. "Damage and structural assessment is a lengthy process after two major earthquakes and associated aftershocks." "Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake has completed assessments for 10 percent of approximately 1,200 buildings within the installation's perimeter as of noon Monday," he continued. The installation's "top priorities are safety of personnel, security of capabilities, reconstitution of infrastructure, and the systematic progression to full mission capability. The installation remains at Mission Essential Personnel (MEP) status," he added. "Lincoln Housing crews and an emergency response team will be entering homes to assess for damages, and begin water extraction as needed" starting Sunday, Lincoln Military Housing-China Lake officials posted on the community's official Facebook page.

According to NAWS's website, the weapons station has 2,132 buildings and facilities, 329 miles of paved roads and 1,801 miles of unpaved roads, as well as Armitage Field, the main air station, all valued at some \$3 billion. Its 19,600 square miles of restricted and controlled airspace supports integrated testing and training for aircraft and weapons systems. About 620 active duty military, 4,166 civilian employees and 1,734 contractors work at the weapons station, which include several key tenants: Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division; Air Test and Evaluation Squadrons 31 and 9; Naval Facilities Engineering Command Southwest China Lake Detachment; Marine Aviation Detachment; and several Navy explosive ordnance disposal detachments. "Some essential facilities on the installation that service the city of Ridgecrest and surrounding area remain a top priority," O'Rourke added. The weapons station, about 150 miles north of Los Angeles, stretches northeast from Ridgecrest, a high-desert desert town of 28,000. The installation includes several significant cultural or archaeological areas, including the Coso Rocks, a national historic landmark.

## **Iranian Boats Driven Off by RN Warship in Strait of Hormuz**

Iranian boats 'attempted to impede' British oil tanker. But Tehran denies involvement.

*Bethan McKernan, Middle East correspondent, and agencies 11 Jul 2019*



*The Royal Navy frigate HMS Montrose positioned itself between British Heritage and the Iranian boats.*

*Photograph: Mick Storey/EPA*

Three Iranian boats tried to intercept a British oil tanker in the Gulf before being driven off by a Royal Navy warship, the UK said, in a major escalation of tensions in the vital shipping channel off Iran. The incident took place in the strait of Hormuz through

which the commercial vessel British Heritage was attempting to pass on Wednesday.

It is the latest in a series of recent incidents in the area which have sent tensions between Iran and the US soaring. It also comes after the UK seizure last week of an Iranian oil tanker, the Grace 1, off the coast of Gibraltar, for which Tehran has threatened retaliation. On Thursday, Gibraltar police said the captain and chief officer of the Grace 1 – both Indian nationals - had been arrested in connection to alleged breaching of EU sanctions on Syria, but neither had been charged. Documents and electronic equipment were seized from the vessel, a spokesperson said. Speaking about the latest confrontation, the Ministry of Defence said in a statement: “Contrary to international law, three Iranian vessels attempted to impede the passage of a commercial vessel, British Heritage, through the strait of Hormuz.”

The British warship, HMS Montrose, was “forced to position herself between the Iranian vessels and British Heritage and issue verbal warnings to the Iranian vessels, which then turned away,” the statement said. “We are concerned by this action and continue to urge the Iranian authorities to de-escalate the situation in the region.” Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt described the confrontation as “a very concerning development and said the UK is “continuing to monitor the situation very, very carefully.” Iran has rejected the claims. Foreign minister Javad Zarif called the British allegations “worthless” in remarks to the semi-official Fars news agency. “Apparently the British tanker has passed. What [the British] have said themselves and the claims that have been made are for creating tension and these claims have no value,” Zarif said. Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corp (IRGC) also issued a statement denying involvement. US defence officials, speaking on the condition of anonymity, had earlier told Reuters that the incident happened at the northern entrance of the strait of Hormuz. “The Royal Navy HMS Montrose, which was also there, pointed it[s] guns at the boats and warned them over radio, at which point they dispersed,” one of the officials said. “It was harassment and an attempt to interfere with the passage,” another official said.

A spokesperson for US central command, Captain Bill Urban, said: “We are aware of the reports of Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corp Navy’s FAC/FIAC harassment and attempts to interfere with the passage of the UK-flagged merchant vessel British Heritage today near the strait of Hormuz. “Threats to international freedom of navigation require an international

solution.” CNN reported that a US surveillance aircraft recorded video of the incident. It said the HMS Montrose, which was escorting the oil tanker, trained its guns on the IRGC boats and issued a verbal warning. No shots were fired. British Heritage was believed to be near the island of Abu Musa when it was approached by the Iranian boats. The island is in disputed territorial waters between Iran and the UAE, but the UK said the HMS Montrose remained in international waters throughout the episode. On Wednesday Iranian president Hassan Rouhani warned the UK it would face unspecified consequences as a result of the UK’s seizure of the Grace 1 oil tanker bound for Syria off the coast of Gibraltar last week. The ship, believed to be in breach of EU sanctions on Syria, remains in British possession. Rouhani was quoted by the Iranian official IRNA news agency calling the seizure of the Iranian oil ship “mean and wrong”. During a cabinet meeting he warned London: “You are an initiator of insecurity and you will understand its repercussions.”

## **Vancouver Artillery Association Yearbook Updates**

Here’s the latest activities from the website of the 15th Field Artillery Regiment RCA family.

Major Graig Halpin was in town from Ottawa.

<https://www.vancouvergunners.ca/whats-new/yearbook-update-20194681386>

A fascinating video with Vic Stevenson and the Stanley Park Battery .

<https://www.vancouvergunners.ca/2005.html>

Six more Regimental Sergeants Majors photos have been sponsored! Only 9 more to go. Have you sponsored yours?

<https://www.vancouvergunners.ca/regimental-sergeants-major-project.html>

One of our newsletters from 1997 has been posted in our newsletter archive section. Check them out here. <https://www.vancouvergunners.ca/newsletter.html>

New happenings in 2019. Second clasps to their Canadian Forces Decorations were awarded to Bombardier Rob Stone CD and Captain Rob Wishnicki CD. Congratulations! A great video from Canada Day produced by the 39 CBG Public Affairs team.

<https://www.vancouvergunners.ca/2019.html>

Keep those stories, calendar events and pictures coming! [president.vcrgunners@gmail.com](mailto:president.vcrgunners@gmail.com)



### **Who (or What) Is It?**

**Last Week:** We don’t know the names of any of the people pictured but the photo was taken in about 1940 in Hong Kong, at one of the naval dockyards. We know the "soldier" is actually a sailor, as his tall gaiters were only issued to the RN/RCN. He is carrying a Rifle No 1 Mk III with Pattern 1907 bayonet. These for the most part removed from service early in 1943 and were replaced by the No 4 Mk I rifle.

**This Week:** As this newsletter is written in the vast newsroom of an artillery regiment, it is only understandable that most of our quizzes refer to artillery/army items. Nonetheless, we do sometimes venture into the wild blue yonder and the deep blue sea. It is to the latter that we turn this week.



A few months ago, the local area headquarters at Jericho was closed, and moved to a newly-constructed edifice (later than anticipated, due to the usual federal government Byzantine machinations). Amongst the detritus of Jericho, were many folders of older photos, abandoned

and left to the elements. Fortunately, some soldiers do have a sense of history, and, thankfully, one well-respected sergeant rescued these and brought them to us. This naval photo (the navel ones were taken by others with an interest in that sort of thing) was one of those photos. It shows a shapely floating artillery platform of some sort, surrounded by friendly natives. In the background is a larger floating object, no doubt bringing wealth to our producers of minerals and other environmentally sensitive items.

We would like first to know the name of this elegant vessel, as being formerly khaki-clad, we don't have a clue, other than it is Canadian (note the flags, colours, etc.). We would then like to know the date and the event. Were these friendly natives of such a patriotic vein that they would welcome any visiting Canadian warship, or was there another ship, a visiting foreigner, out of sight? We are intrigued, and hope you are, too.

Send your answers to the editor, Bob Mugford ([bob.mugford@outlook.com](mailto:bob.mugford@outlook.com)), or the author, John Redmond ([johnd.\\_redmond@telus.net](mailto:johnd._redmond@telus.net)). Thank you, mateys!

### **From the 'Punitary'**

How do you make a fire with two sticks? You make sure one of them is a match!

### **Murphy's Other Laws**

Mother Nature is a bitch. (*see stories above*)

### **Quotable Quotes**

Everything's got a moral, if only you can find it. - *Lewis Carroll*