



## Van Arty Association and RUSI Van Members News Dec 17, 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** - Closed for holiday season. Lunches will start again on Jan 8, 2020

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

- Dec 18** Royal Westminster Regt Christmas Concert and Potluck dinner
- Jan 01** New Years Day Levee
- Jan 08** First lunch of 2020
- Jan 11** 78 Fraser Highlanders – Garrison Robbie Burns Supper
- Jan 31** 15 Fd Centennial Reunion – meet & greet
- Feb 01** 15 Fd Centennial Reunion

## World War 2 – 1944

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

**Dec 17<sup>th</sup>:** 82<sup>nd</sup> and 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne are pulled out of rest and sent to shore up the Ardennes: Various other US Corps and Army troops are rushed in as well. Admiral Vian sends the aircraft of Illustrious and Indomitable to hit oil installations in northern Sumatra. 10<sup>th</sup> Indian crosses the Senio River in Italy. US forces make gains on both Mindoro and Leyte. Troops from the 1<sup>st</sup> SS Division massacre 87 American POWs at Malmedy, Belgium. The 2<sup>nd</sup> US Infantry Division's determined fight on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> of Dec was a major contribution to the defeat of the Ardennes Offensive even as it began. One of the many soldiers whose grit and determination made this success possible was PFC Willam A Soderman outside the town of Rocherath. At dusk, as five German tanks rumbled towards him, he stood up in their sight with a bazooka, and then destroyed the lead tank. The others passed him by before he could reload, but he engaged another group of five tanks at dawn on the 18<sup>th</sup>, forcing their withdrawal after crippling the lead vehicle. He also used his bazooka with some effect on a platoon of German infantry. As his hard-pressed company began to fall back, PFC Soderman heard the approach of another group of German tanks and decided to engage them before they fell on his vulnerable comrades. He

disabled one of those tanks but was then severely wounded by their machinegun fire. However, he crawled away from the scene and was picked up and evacuated by withdrawing GIs. His actions won him the Medal of Honor.

**Dec 18<sup>th</sup>:** McCain's taskforce is hit by a vicious typhoon off the Philippines; three USN destroyers are lost, and three fleet carriers and four escort carriers are among the damaged ships.

**Dec 19<sup>th</sup>:** Eisenhower assigns Montgomery to command the forces north of the "Bulge" and Bradley those to the South. The 6<sup>th</sup> Army Group (of US and French troops) extends its front north to cover part of Patton's 3<sup>rd</sup> Army front and is instructed to take a defensive posture. The US is holding ground around Gouvy and St Vith, but the Germans are moving forward near Stavelot and Houffalize. Two regiments of the US 106<sup>th</sup> Division are encircled and surrender, yielding 6,000 POWs – the largest surrender of US troops in the European theatre. The Japanese decide to send no more supplies or reinforcements to Leyte. The Japanese escort carrier Unyo is torpedoed by the USS Barb.

**Dec 20<sup>th</sup>:** Try as they might, the Germans keep bouncing off the grab bag of American units holding Eisenborn Ridge – Dietrich's 6<sup>th</sup> SS Panzer Army is deflected to the West and will lose their reserves to Manteuffel's 5<sup>th</sup> Panzer Army. To the South, St Vith and Bastogne are still being held, although the latter is encircled with 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne and major components of 10<sup>th</sup> Armoured Division. The British have to rescue 350 of their personnel from Greek communists at Kifissia.

**Dec 21<sup>st</sup>:** On Leyte, the Japanese forces are now being chopped up into pockets with the linkup between X and XXIV Corps. 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne has withdrawn from Houffalize but Stavelot is retaken by US troops and the short route to Antwerp is now closed. Even a faint chance of success for the German's Bulge offensive is now gone. Corporal Henry F Warner of the famous 1<sup>st</sup> US Infantry Division is manning his anti-tank gun during a prolonged night action in the Bulge – he destroys two German tanks, engages in a pistol duel with the crew commander of the third (which then withdraws). With the pre-dawn gloom comes another attack, and he sets a Pzkw IV tank ablaze, but is then killed at his gun. He is posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor.

*Essential Reading: Fading brittle pamphlets, often made of dubious wartime paper, outlined how armies imparted tactics and trained their soldiers. German combined arms tactics were widely regarded as being the best practices available and were widely copied during and after the War by Western Armies. One good assembly of these tactics can be found in Wolfgang Schneider's Panzer Tactics: German Small-Unit Armor Tactics in World II. The book is extremely comprehensive, amply illustrated and very extensive. Unfortunately, it is completely without footnotes or a bibliography and has thus failed to at least deliver the titles of German wartime training materials. Still, it will be of interest in the collection of any soldier or wargamer.*

**Dec 22<sup>nd</sup>:** St Vith is finally taken but Model, Rundstedt and Guderian agree that this offensive has failed and should be ended; a decision Hitler vetoes. Another spanner in the works is Bastogne (now invested by nine German divisions) where McAuliffe rather contemptuously

spurns a German invitation to surrender. American troops from the 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division are on high ground overlooking Katlerherberg, Germany – on the edge of the growing ‘Bulge Salient’ when strong German forces stage an attack. Technical Sergeant Peter J Dalessandro is attached to one platoon that is getting subjected to a terrific bombardment. When the infantry assault begins, he becomes a dynamo – encouraging their recovery and resistance, calling down mortar fire on their attackers, and firing his own weapon. The attack ebbs away, but another one soon occurs, and T/Sgt Dalessandro repeats this performance. When he runs out of rifle ammunition, he retrieves a machinegun and uses it until it too is out of ammunition. Then, as the platoon withdraws to a reserve position, he stays behind, directing mortar fire and throwing grenades. When last heard from, as his foxhole is being overrun, he calls down mortars on his own position. He is posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor.

**Dec 24<sup>th</sup>:** A bad day for US consumers -- beef and other commodities are more tightly rationed. It’s a busy day in the air: With the first clear weather of much of Germany and Belgium since Dec 16<sup>th</sup>, it’s a big day for 8th Air Force as 2,000 bombers sortie this day and over the Bulge, Allied fighter-bombers get to work interdicting German road movement and aerial resupply begins for Bastogne. The Germans halt offensive operations with the 2<sup>nd</sup> SS Panzer’s reconnaissance elements outside Dinant as the furthest unit from the start-line. A grim day in Budapest – the supply corridor running into the city is 40 km wide and the Soviets are working into the outskirts of the city from most other directions. In September during the German retreat, members of the resistance near Bande, Belgium killed three German soldiers. With the reoccupation of the town comes revenge. Members of the SS Security Service massacre 34 men of the village. In the last 20 hours near Soy, Belgium, PFC Melvin E Biddle of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne has been acting as a scout during his battalion’s advance to relieve a cut-off company. He has been busy knocking out German snipers and machinegun posts as he encounters them, taking prisoners, spotting German tanks, and otherwise being useful. When the advance turns into an assault, Biddle has so sapped the enemy’s strength that they flee. On being informed of his recommendation for a high award, Biddle attempts to remonstrate with his company commander, but is turned away and reluctantly receives the Medal of Honor a year later from President Truman. At the award presentation, Harry Truman – an artillery captain in the First World War -- assures Biddle that he would personally rather have won the Medal of Honor than the presidency.

## **Settlement for Sexual Misconduct Class Action Suit for the CAF**

Approved by the Federal Court of Canada. *Ambar Syed 6 Dec 2019*

On November 25<sup>th</sup>, the Federal Court of Canada approved a settlement for the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) and Department of National Defence (DND) sexual misconduct class action. The class action settlement is between the Federal Government of Canada and former members of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), employees of the Federal Public Service (FPS) and Non Public Funds (NPF) who had been directly affected by the LGBT purge within the organizations. The settlement affects those who have experienced sexual assault, harassment, or discrimination on the basis of gender, sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation during service for the CAD or DND.

In a statement from the Chief of Defence Staff General Jonathan Vance and Deputy Minister Department of Defence Jody Thomas stated, “Approval of the settlement marks a significant milestone within the defence community. The settlement provides financial compensation for those harmed by sexual misconduct and highlights changes within the CAF and Veterans Affairs policies. The settlement also provides an opportunity for individuals to share their experiences with senior representatives within the CAF/DND, through a facilitated restorative engagement process. “We would like to acknowledge the representative plaintiffs as well as the many people who filed participation forms or came forward during the settlement approval hearings. We recognize how incredibly difficult it is to share such painful and personal experiences. We assure you that these stories have made an important and lasting impact on us and have further strengthened our dedication to change. “We are committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of those who come forward. It is our sincere hope that the implementation of this settlement will support people who have experienced sexual misconduct in their healing process.”

The CAF and DND are sharing information about the class action as part of their ongoing commitment to address sexual misconduct issues within the workplace, and approach them with accountability, compassion, and transparency. More information about the approved settlement can be found at - <http://www.caf-dndsexualmisconductclassaction.ca/> or by calling 1-888-626-2611. In order to make a claim, documents must be submitted between March 25, 2020, and September 25, 2021. Instructions regarding the process, claims, relevant forms, and supporting documentation are available on the website.

#### *Services Available*

**The Sexual Misconduct Response Centre (SMRC)** can be contacted to speak to a counsellor and learn about how to recognize inappropriate sexual behaviour. This service can be found at – <http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/caf-community-support-services/confidential-counselling.page>

**The Canadian Forces Health Services Centres (CFHSC)** website can be used to locate CAF medical, dental, or physiotherapy centres anywhere in Canada and abroad. The Canadian Forces Member Assistance Program (CFMAP) offers confidential, voluntary, short term counselling in order to provide assistance with resolving stresses at home and in the workplace. Visit their site for more information here – <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/guide/programs-canadian-forces/cfmap.html>

**The Family Information Line (FIL)** is a confidential, bilingual, free service that offers information, support, referrals, and crisis management to the defence community. They help Canadian Armed Forces members, Veterans, and their families. Chaplain Services offer a meeting with a Chaplain who can help meet spiritual needs through religious and counselling services. They aim to provide support by helping individuals through theological, moral, and ethical views. For more information, visit - <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/benefits-military/health-support/chaplain.html>

**Employee Assistance Services (EAS)** works to support federal workplace wellness initiatives, including providing an Employee Assistance Program (EAP), Trauma, and post-incident

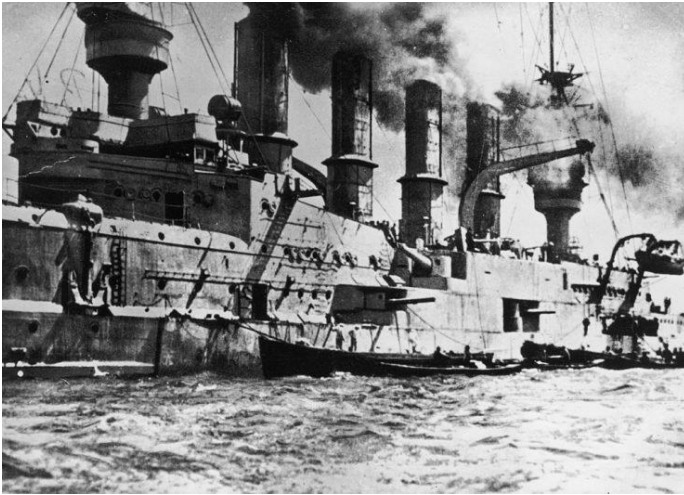


support. For more information visit - <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/environmental-workplace-health/occupational-health-safety/employee-assistance-services.html>

**The Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP)** are a confidential and voluntary support service that helps individuals find solutions to many different challenges. They offer access to Client Care Representatives, Clinical Counsellors, and professional service providers who adhere to strict privacy and confidentiality procedures.

## Wreck of SMS Scharnhorst Found off Falkland Islands

*War History Online    George Winston    Dec 14, 2019*



*A Photograph of SMS Scharnhorst during the Falklands Island War on November 1, 1914.*

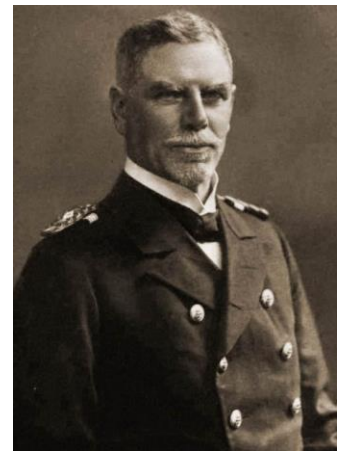
*(Photo by Fotosearch/Getty Images)*

What lies beneath the dark waters and rolling waves of the Falkland Islands are mysterious, awe inspiring, and to many of us, a little frightening. Everything from tiny rowboats to massive cruise ships have gone down at the apparent whim of ocean waters, sometimes because of ice, or waves, or weather hazards man seems ill-equipped to deal with at sea.

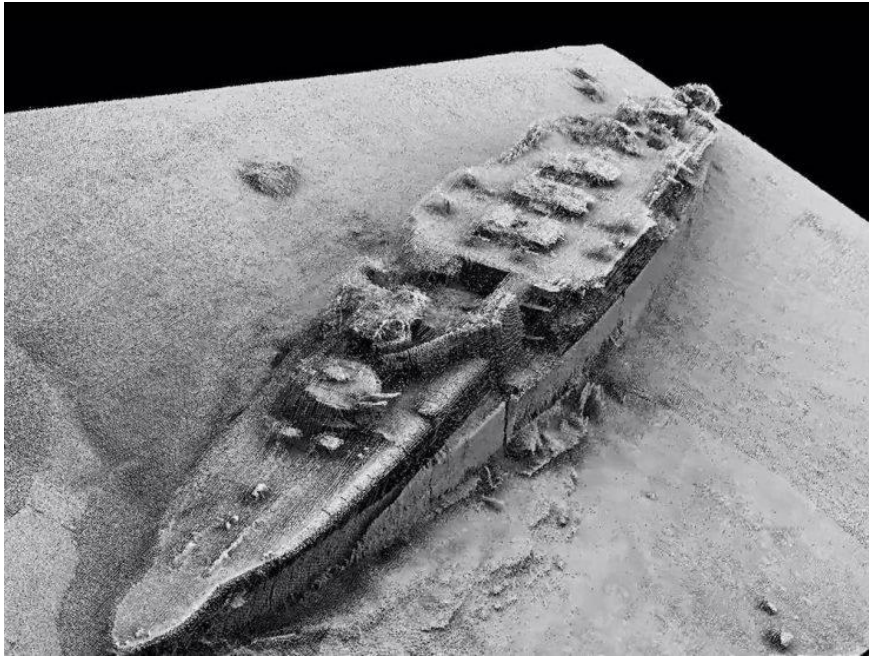
During war, nations have little choice but to take to the sea to combat enemies, who come at them on land, from the air and at sea. World War I was no exception. Great Britain, a chief participant in that conflict, was famous for its navy power, and sank many a German boat during the four years the nations were at war.

*Vizeadmiral Maximilian von Spee, who would command Scharnhorst during World War I.*

A number of German ships sit in the dark, cold waters, sunk by the Allies but never recovered. The expression “lost at sea” is truly apt for men who sign on as sailors and never know whether they will set foot on land again. One such ship, along with its 800-member crew, has been laying at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean, just off the coast of the Falkland Islands, for more than a century. The *SMS Scharnhorst*, a German cruiser. Sunk by the British during the Battle of the Falkland Islands in early December 1914. Now, the ancestors of the men on that boat know where their forefathers are buried, thanks to a recovery operation by marine archaeologist Mensun Bound. He was deeply touched, he told *BBC News*, by the successful operation, an event that can take someone in his field an entire career to accomplish. He told the *BBC*, “Suddenly... there was no doubt that it was one of the German fleet,” he stated. He and his team were monitoring



cameras and computers linked to a Seabed Constructor, a highly technical piece of equipment used expressly for these marine operations. “Suddenly, she just came out of the gloom, with great guns poking in every direction. As a Falkland Islander, and a marine archaeologist, a discovery of this significance is an unforgettable, poignant moment in my life.”



*Radar scan of the wreck.*

*Credit: TVT Productions*

The search for the *Scharnhorst* initially began five years ago, but the crew simply didn't have the technologically advanced gear they needed to access the ship. They knew where it went down, of course, but could not pinpoint its location without the Seabed Constructor. During the entire battle more than 2,200

German sailors perished. One of them was Maximilian Graf von Spee, who was Vice Admiral of the East Asian Squadron. His family was notified immediately of the discovery. One of his descendants, Wilhelm Graf Von Spee, spoke with the *BBC* on behalf of the family. He said it was a “bittersweet” moment for them, and added. “We take comfort from the knowledge that the final resting place of so many has been found and can be preserved, whilst also being reminded of the huge waste of life... We lost a father and his two sons in one day.”

*The Falklands Maritime Heritage Trust*



The ship was launched from Hamburg on March 23, 1906 and did participate in one battle in which the Germans defeated the British Navy. But only weeks later the Falkland Islands battle ensued, and soon the *Scharnhorst* was on the bottom of the sea. The site, the *BBC* reported, is going to be preserved for the men who are buried there, under the UK's Maritime Heritage Trust. That means that the ship cannot be disturbed, nor can anyone — recreational divers, salvage operators, anyone — alter it or remove





Find a ticket seller at Bessborough Armoury or email your name and address with an interac e-transfer to [15rca100th@gmail.com](mailto:15rca100th@gmail.com)

## **Vancouver Artillery Association Yearbook Updates**

Here's the latest activities from the website of the 15<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Regiment RCA.

What do you do with the extra whiskey from a tasting event? Invite a few friends over, drink the remainder and send another donation to the tire fund. The 18 pounder tires are now on order, thanks to the whiskey and all our friends! A big shout out to all our donors, including those on the Island!

2019 Yearbook Update; the Christmas Tea <https://www.vancouvergunners.ca/2019.html>

2011 Group photo has been updated. Thanks to everyone that assisted in putting names to faces. There's still a few more to go! <https://www.vancouvergunners.ca/2017.html>

RSM's photos are a go! Almost. We still have two to sponsor.  
<https://www.vancouvergunners.ca/regimental-sergeants-major-project.html>

2016 Group photo has been updated. Is your name correct?  
<https://www.vancouvergunners.ca/2016.html>

Have you talked to your buddies about the centennial events? Check out the details here.  
<https://www.vancouvergunners.ca/whats-new/regimental-centennial9922586>

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

**The 15<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Regiment Museum**  
is currently in the process of purchasing  
*New/Old 7.5 x 24 tires/tyres*  
For the Q.F. 18 Pounder  
That was acquired last year.

Unfortunately, these tires/tyres are no longer a standard  
item and our current pricing estimate sits at \$1,500.00 installed.

Care to chip in? Tax deductible!

0 200 400 600 700 800 1000 1200 1400 !

Contact Leon Jensen for additional details - [president.vcrgunners@gmail.com](mailto:president.vcrgunners@gmail.com)

Many thanks to the 78<sup>th</sup> Frasers Fort Fraser Garrison who donated \$1000 towards the purchase of the new tires for the 18 Pdr at the St Barbara's dinner.





**THE ROYAL WESTMINSTER REGIMENT BAND**

# ***The Rhythm of Tradition***

Westies Family and Community Friends  
Christmas Concert & Potluck

**WEDNESDAY 18 DECEMBER 2019 7 PM POTLUCK 8 PM CONCERT**  
**THE ARMOURY 530 QUEENS AVE NEW WESTMINSTER**  
**FREE ADMISSION**

**DOOR PRIZES**

**CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES**

**REFRESHMENTS**

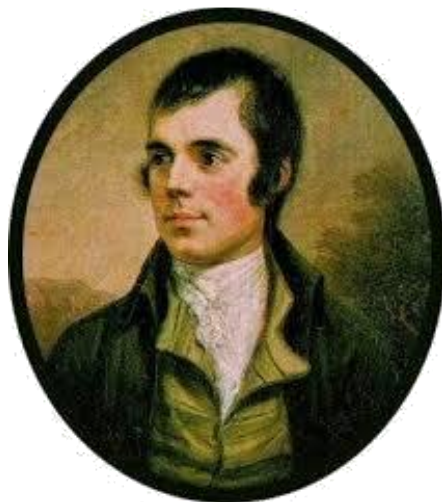
**DRESS: CHRISTMAS/FESTIVE CASUAL**

Bring a small appetizer or dessert to share and come prepared to enjoy an evening of community fun, music and festivities!

Donations accepted to support the Westie Historical Society and Hyack Festival Association. Band performance with the kind permission of LCol Chuck MacKinnon and HCol Karen Baker-MacGrotty



Fort Fraser Garrison



I request the company of our Officers, Miladies and Guests at our annual

## Garrison Burns Supper

to be held in

The Officers' Mess at Bessborough Armoury,  
15<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment RCA  
2025 West 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Vancouver, BC

Saturday, 11 January, 2020

1800hrs for 1900hrs

Dress: Scarlets, Highland Evening wear, Black Tie or Business Attire

Tariff: \$78 per Person

**RSVP to [jobarb@shaw.ca](mailto:jobarb@shaw.ca) or 604-522-5766**

**ASAP! (before 6 January)**

Places will be allocated on the sequence (date & time) of RSVP emails received  
at [jobarb@shaw.ca](mailto:jobarb@shaw.ca)

Members have priority, but please RSVP soonest as this event is  
usually oversubscribed.

Looking forward to seeing you there

*James Barrett, Maj.* Officer Commanding



15 Fd Centennial Reunion

**15<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Regiment's**

*Open Messes*

*Live Music and Dancing*

**100<sup>th</sup> Centennial Reunion**

**Tickets—\$30**

*Band Reunion Concert*

*Equipment Displays*

**Food Trucks (included in the ticket price)**



**Bessborough Armoury**  
2025 West 11th Ave, Vancouver

31 Jan	Meet and Greet 1800 - 2300
1 Feb	Open House 1300 – 1600 &
1 Feb	Reunion Party 1800 – 2330

[\\* click here for Tickets at Eventbrite \\*](#)