



Van Arty Association and RUSI Van Members News Dec 19, 2017

Newsletters normally are emailed on Monday evenings. If you don't get a 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 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 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>

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

Jan 01 New Years Levee – starts at 1100hrs in the Officers Mess
Jan 10 First Lunch of 2018

Dues

A reminder that dues are payable as of January 1, for members of the Vancouver Artillery Association, RUSI Vancouver and Associate members of the 15 Fd Officers Mess.

See details at the end of this newsletter.

World War 2 - 1942

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

Dec 20, 1942: Manstein, under increased pressure from the advancing Soviets on his flanks, pleads with both Zeitzler (at OKH) and Paulus, to cooperate with him in arranging a breakout for 6th Army, but the opportunity is refused.

Dec 21st: The Soviet Voronezh Front makes some impressive gains driving southwest, and Hitler vetoes Manstein's continued requests to order a break-out attempt for 6th Army.

Dec 22nd: The Soviets are making rapid advances in the direction of Rostov and

Voroshilovgrad. In Tunisia, heavy rains and mud interfere with British troops (V Corps of 1st Army) in the ferocious fighting for Longstop Hill near Medjez el Bab.

Dec 23rd: Hoth's high tide – his force has reached the Myshkova River, but can advance no further towards Stalingrad and the Germans in the pocket have no hope of rescue save for a seat on an evacuation flight.

Dec 24th: Hoth's Army Group Don ebbs away from Stalingrad, where what is left of the Red October factory complex is liberated by 62nd Army in Stalingrad. The Soviets aim a separate offensive at what is left of the Romanian Army and drive it back again in some disorder. The Australians are running out of steam at Buna, but have made some gains. Longstop Hill in Tunisia is in British hands. Admiral Darlan dies at the hands of a French royalist-Gaullist assassin.

The War Diary of C31 L/Sgt Charles D Phelan, A Battery, RCHA 1939 - 1945

Edited by BGen (ret'd) Robert P (Bob) Beaudry CD

Chapter 39. Cattolica, Casualties, Riccione, Coriano, and Rimini



1 Sep 1944. Capt W Howarth was killed by a sniper while working as a FOO with the infantry. Sitrep at 1130 hrs. 1 Bde in reserve. 2 Bde holding firm 3000 yards beyond the first defences. In 3 Bde, R22R are on Gothic Line, and C&Y are 1000 yards inside the Line. In an attack by the R22R in the afternoon, which we supported with a good number of targets, they gained their

objective about 1800 yards inside the Gothic Line. We engaged quite a few targets in the evening.

2 Sept Lt Doe left on recce at 0400 hrs, and the Bty followed at 1030 hrs. We crossed the Foglia River and passed into the Gothic Line. The defences, which had consisted of anti-tank ditches, an elaborate trench system, and thick minefields, were now a shambles. Several knocked-out guns, with the remains of their crews sprawled around, marked the line. Every little village had been entirely flattened. We took up a position about 5000 yards inside the Line, and engaged a few targets in late afternoon. At 2240 hrs we received a report that our troops were on the edge of Cattolica, on the Adriatic coast along Highway 16.

3 Sept I was ordered to “Move Now” on recce, and had to leave with only a cup of tea for breakfast. We travelled about five miles to a position about a mile SW of Cattolica, a good-sized town. The guns were right behind us and were soon in action. A few Jerry shells fell nearby but did no damage. We set up the CP in a large farmhouse, along with about 20 scared Italians. At 1615 hrs the RCR reported they were about 4000 yards along the coast above Cattolica. A Jerry bomber dropped flares and incendiaries not far away. It broke up a party which got underway when the boys found the Italians’ wine store. We fired some M Tgts.

4 Sept Jerry strafed and bombed the area at 0330. Direct hits were scored on BHQ. Gnr DJ Mingay was killed. Sgt Graham and Gnrs Lee, Winters, Steeves, Dark, Paquette, and East were wounded and evacuated. The water wagon and ration truck were burned out, three other vehicles and three motorbikes were badly damaged. The tanks, in harbour behind us, also had some casualties. We established a First Aid Post on the ground floor, and sent what help we could to BHQ and to the tanks. All was quiet by 0445 hrs and we went to bed. I was up again at 0745 hrs to prepare a HF programme which we engaged shortly after. In the morning Gnr Mingay was buried at a nearby CCS while our guns provided a salute as we pounded the Jerry positions. From our position, we could observe an attack on a hill near the coast. Two destroyers appeared and battered the target, and we put down heavy concentrations before the tanks roared up and took the hill. Jerry retaliated with shellfire and with AA fire which downed a strafing Spitfire. Our troops advanced about 4000 yards along Hwy 16 above Cattolica and stretching SW to Misano. GGHG crossed the river but were forced to return. Very stubborn opposition. Early in the evening a couple of jerry planes began dropping bombs and incendiaries behind us. This lasted all night, but only one bomb came close, about 50 feet from the CP. No damage.

5 Sept I was up most of the night doing HF and DF targets. At about 1020 hrs the RCR were reported to be about one mile South of Riccione, and the 48th about two miles SW of Riccione. We fired HFs all day, and fired on a Fire Plan during the evening to support a river crossing by the 48th. No air raids at night, as our night fighters were overhead from dusk to dawn.

6 Sept Fired several HF and M Tgts during the day. Jerry counterattacked in the afternoon, and our Infantry had to withdraw somewhat. Worked on DFs during the night. Well this is the

fifth anniversary of the day I joined up. Five years seems a long time, but I did say when I joined that I thought it would last about five years. Things look pretty promising – I'd give the war till Christmas at the most.

7-8 Sept Some HFs and a few shoots. It appears the infantry is held up at the river.

9 Sept Air raids during the night, with a number of close ones, but no damage. At 0420 hrs, Jerry launched a counter attack. We fired steadily on a big series of DFs and M Tgts until 0630, at which time we received word that the attack had been broken up by our artillery and the enemy had withdrawn. Between 0420 and 0630 hrs, the Div Arty fired 7200 rounds of HE. During the firing, we had several bombs land in our area. We were not touched, but the LAA lost a truck near our RHQ.

10 Sept Soon after midnight we began to pour HE into Jerry positions on our DF and M Tgts. During that time, Jerry planes that showed up were met with heavy AA fire, forcing them to drop their bombs more or less at random. At 0600 hrs we got news that the infantry had put in a successful attack. Their casualties were light and they were pleased with the artillery fire. The cooks had provided the Italians in the farmhouse with a lot of flour, and that evening they cooked up a big spaghetti supper for the whole troop. We paid them back with some cans of bully beef. We had a bit of a party. Wine flowed freely and a good time was had by all. Then at 2330 we fired steadily on DFs for 90 minutes.

11 Sept Recce parties left at 0715 and the guns at 1300 hrs to a position about one mile from Riccione. Our CP was in a large clean stable in a good stone house. Jerry began putting over shells. One round landed 25 feet from the CP, and another went through the roof of the next house. Bdr Willie Ling was slightly wounded. We fired on several targets, then at 1600 hrs we received a long list of DF, U, and M Tgts which kept me busy for 7 hours. Then I went to bed.

12 Sept We did some HFs, and a lot of ammo was delivered to our position during the night. In the morning Jerry shelled our position very heavily for two hours. Gnr JV White was killed, and Sgt Roy Long leapt out of the gun pit when he saw White fall and was also killed. Gnr MC Handford was wounded. As we got no answers to our calls over the Tannoy, Bob Armishaw and I grabbed First Aid kits and made our way from gun to gun, checking up. God, was I scared! But we were lucky and managed to duck the shells in between gun pits. A little later Sgt Johnny Clarke and Bdr J Gwinner were wounded and evacuated. After Jerry let up we ran another check. There had been no further casualties, and no damage to the guns or equipment, except for some charges which had burned. In the afternoon, we prepared new gun pits a little farther forward, and we moved into them at about 1800 hrs. In the evening, we received big lists of targets to prepare for an attack on Coriano. Jerry shelled our position again, and a 105mm shell hit the corner of the house, knocking in the roof and part of the walls. Miraculously no one was hurt.

13 Sept We opened fire at 0100 hrs on a Fire Plan which must have involved a 1000 guns.* The thunder of the guns was terrific. In 90 minutes B Tp fired 543 rounds. At about 0500 a heavy concentration of Jerry shells landed quite close – no damage except to nerves. In the morning, I took a quick trip around the position. A good many shells had landed within 10 feet of various gun pits. The house was pitted by shrapnel, and the corner which had been struck before was a shambles. At 1830 hrs we fired a Fire Plan in support of the C&Y Regt. Enemy MGs were dealt with by the Medium Regt, and by 1935 hrs the C&Y were on their final objective. At 2000 hrs a Sitrep stated that 4 Br Div took 1000 POWs when they attacked the Jerries in their FUP, capturing them with all their transport. We fired several good shoots during the evening.

14 Sept We fired all day and evening on DFs, M and U Tgts. We pulled a new one by firing a “Stonk” (Linear), then made it a barrage by increasing the range 100 yards at a time.

15 Sept Higgins woke me up at 0600 hrs to inform me that he and Lt Walsh had been recording and firing targets all night. We fired smoke to give our infantry cover when they were engaged by our own aircraft. The CO congratulated the gunners on their good work. At 1830 hrs I took off on recce, and we found an area about a mile south of Riccione. It was pitch dark, but I was able to spot the guns and director by the light of flares in the distance.

16 Sept The guns arrived at 0200 hrs. During the day, we did several good shoots. Jerry shelled the whole area for a long time. In A Tp Bdr FJ Stevens was killed, and in our troop Gord Woods was wounded. I shot a dose of morphine into him and we took him to a nearby Car Park to be evacuated. By evening our nerves were badly worn and a couple of men were in pretty poor shape. We worked on Fire Plans and recorded many targets for tomorrow.

17 Sept Fired a large number of targets, and worked on a new DF list. We were warned that 4 Br Div was mounting searchlights in B and C Bty areas, and we were introduced to “Artificial Moonlight”. The beams of light were bounced off the clouds and afforded quite a bright light.

18 Sept The infantry Zero Hour for the attack on San Martino was 0700 hrs, and we opened fire on a Fire Plan at 0500 hrs. Around 0830 the infantry ran into stiff opposition. The Fire Plan was halted, and we were ordered to fire on Tgt “S” “until stopped”. We fired on Tgt “S” until 1425 hrs. A report in the afternoon said the infantry were taking quite a beating. The C&Y lost a great number of officers; the R22R had one company down to 25 all ranks, and the Edmontons also had heavy casualties. At 2130 hrs we fired an hour-long Fire Plan, followed by an hour of firing on recorded targets. I worked on the usual crop of DFs between engaging many M Tgts.

** (Editorial Note). Maybe not quite 1000, but well over 500. 1st Cdn AGRA had command of a total of fifteen field, six medium, and two heavy regiments, plus four batteries of HAA and the normal anti-tank units for the attack on Coriano and Coriano Ridge. Col GWL Nicholson, **The Gunners of Canada**, p 230.*

19 Sept I went to bed at 0100 hrs and Lt Doe controlled the fire on a Fire Plan. The guns fired steadily until 0500 hrs, at which time B Tp had expended 1111 rounds. In the morning, we fired on HF targets. At 2100 hrs we began firing on a new Fire Plan in support of 2 and 3 Bdes. We fired a few serials, halted, and started over, as the infantry couldn't keep up. But by 2130 hrs things were going well, and by 2220 hrs the R22R were firmly on their objective. The guns were still firing at midnight when I turned in for 1 ½ hours.

20 Sept I was up at 0130 hrs to work out new DFs. At 0700 hrs, the R22R reported that they were mopping up and had taken 60 POWs. At 1030 hrs a Sitrep said the Greeks are moving up the coast and are a mile south of Rimini. The Cdn infantry is 2000 yards SW of Rimini. At 1500 hrs the Regt headed north. The area which we passed through was littered with wrecks, burned out vehicles, tanks, and abandoned guns. Every house was badly damaged. We took up a position a mile west of the Rimini airport in an open field. At dusk, it started to rain and the tent leaked badly. The arty board was soon soaked and useless, so the Bty CP sent down the board data for the big list of targets that came in.

21 Sept Spent the day trying to keep dry. Rumors are that the Greeks have taken Rimini.

22 Sept The sun came out and dried the mud. We were told we are going to a rest area. It is believed a NZ Div passed through 1 Cdn Div and is 10 miles past Rimini. Slept all night.

RCAF No 111 (F) Squadron's Role in the Aleutians Campaign

By William H. Eull, Ph.D.

From the July-August 2017 issue of 'In Formation', historical publication of the Alberta Aviation Museum.



*RCAF 111 Squadron Kittyhawks over Alaska, autumn 1942
(DND Photo)*

Before we consider what high level considerations caused the RCAF to be operating on American soil in 1942 to 1944, let's get a feel for what serving there meant to the individuals who had to carry out the orders. Here is Pilot Officer (P/O) Oden John Eskil reporting to the Board of Inquiry investigating

111 Squadron's most tragic event, a relocation flight, July 16, 1942, involving seven P-40 Kittyhawks on their way to Umnak Island in the Aleutians:

After rounding Makushin Cape (Unalaska Island) and altering course to roughly follow the shoreline – weather became progressively worse. Fog banks and showers continually appeared to the north. We flew through several areas about 50 feet above the water. I could hear F/L Kerwin talking to Captain Fillmore (in an American C-53 support aircraft) intermittently but they seemed to be making very poor radio contact. I could not tune either one in clearly The air seemed clear near the water, but visibility was very poor – much impeded by large areas of

dense fog and showers. We were forced very near the water... We were forced right along the shore by a dense fogbank about 200 yards offshore. We were forced to about 20 feet from the water and I estimate the ceiling at about 50 feet. We were flying with the Wing Commander leading a "VIC" consisting of F/L Kerwin's section (with Maxmen) and P/O Whiteside's section (with Lennon) on the starboard of the Wing Commander, and my section (with Baird) off the port. Sections were about three to four spans apart and ships in the sections slightly closer. F/Sgt Baird had overtaken me and slid over abruptly, forcing me to pass through his slipstream. We were very low, and I dropped back slightly while righting my ship. As I was moving up to form on F/Sgt Baird's port wing, the Wing Commander ordered a turn to port. I was trailing the Wing Commander and Baird by 100 yards when the turn began. I was too low to drop into proper position for a turn and thus lost sight of all the other ships when I began my turn. I turned as tight and as low as I dared but sighted an aircraft well ahead of me cutting me off. Afraid that I would fly into the green beneath me, I continued my turn and increased the throttle to about 37 Hg. My gyro horizon was out so I had trouble in maintaining steep climb and turn. At about 500 feet freezing mist appeared on my windscreen so I undid my harness and removed my oxygen and radio connections – intending to bail out if I stopped gaining height because of icing. At 4800 ft. I broke through between cloud layers, continued to turn and plugged in my radio. (He reported being momentarily disoriented by cloud and fog and making a couple of course adjustments) In a few minutes I ended up in what turned out to be the only hole in the area and sighted the Umnak air base... I phoned Captain Fillmore to clear me so I would not be fired on and proceeded to land.

Seven P-40 Kittyhawks had been ordered on a relocation mission so they could take up patrolling duties in defence of Umnak Island in the Aleutians. They were making their way from Elmendorf Air Force Base, Anchorage, Alaska through the predictably unpredictable weather that tears through this region almost incessantly. They were to become an integral part of the defence against Japanese interference with the North American west coast. Specifically, their job would be to protect the base from which American counter-attacks would be launched. Of this seven-man mission, only two survived. Four slammed into Unalaska Island's mountain, the fifth flew off, disoriented, into the clouds never to be seen again. Wing Commander McGregor found his way back to where the mission had begun. P/O Eskil, as noted in his report at the Board of Inquiry, luckily spotted the Umnak airfield and landed safely on Umnak Island. The dead were S/L John William Kerwin, P/O Dean Edward "Whitey" Whiteside, F/Sgt Gordon Douglas Russel Baird, F/Sgt Frank "Pop" Lennon and Sergeant Stanley Ray Maxmen. It was Baird who flew off.

Why were seven Canadian pilots putting their lives at hazard in such abysmal conditions? Ah, there is an interesting story. The answer lies in understanding that that was the nature of war in the Aleutians. But first, let's take a look at the story of their squadron. No 111 (F) Squadron had formed at RCAF Rockcliffe (Ottawa) in the previous November. The plan was for them to become operational in their P-40E Kittyhawks and then join the war in Europe. In fact, Canada was vigorously building a fighting capability because the Commonwealth was seen to be in

danger. Every aspect of our nation's energy was being focused to bring relief to the war in Europe. Then, on December 7, 1941, the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.



Pilots of 111 and 14 Squadrons at Patricia Bay. 111 is showing off its Thunderbird Totem, June 12, 1942

(DND Photo PL 13139)

Both Canada and the United States suddenly became aware of vulnerability on their western borders. The United States wanted to hurl everything they had into dealing with the Japanese in the South

Pacific. Canada was asked to assume some of the load of patrolling the Alaskan coastal waters and shipping lanes. Canada agreed, redirecting four squadrons, two fighter (No 111 and No 118, Curtiss Kittyhawks) and two bomber (No 8 and No 115, Bristol Bolingbrokes) to this task. Two Wings were created. X Wing (111 and 8) guarded Anchorage; Y Wing, based on Annette Island, Alaska, guarded the approaches to Prince Rupert. Though Prince Rupert is in Canada, the sea lanes entering Prince Rupert harbour were vital to American supply lines, for transporting to Alaska but also for carrying people and materiel to the Alaska Highway project, creating the only non-marine link between continental USA and Alaska. When, six months after Pearl Harbor, the Japanese sent a major strike force into the north Pacific, attacking Dutch Harbor on Unalaska Island, the United States switched all of the units they had retained in the north Pacific from defensive duties to the offensive. RCAF No 111 Squadron was re-deployed from their task of guarding the shipping lanes approaching Anchorage to guarding Umnak Island in the Aleutians. They filled in for the re-tasked USAAF fighters. Other Canadian squadrons covered the coastal patrols.

Eventually, the tide of battle shifted, allowing the RCAF to take on offensive duties. 111 Squadron was the first RCAF unit to move forward along the Aleutian Islands string, at first, playing defensive roles but, later, joining in on the attack against the Japanese who were well dug in on Kiska Island. Squadron Leader Boomer shot down a float-rigged Zero. He later went to the European war, where he had several victories before he was killed in action. He had the honour of being the only member of the RCAF to shoot down an enemy aircraft in a North American theatre.



111 Squadron coming out of briefing, Amchitka Island

(DND Photo)

No 111 Squadron was delighted to be in the thick of it, finally. They were warriors who wanted to face a tangible enemy. War in the Aleutians, however, had to be fought, not just against the enemy but against the unrelentingly chaotic weather. Fogs, winds, driving rains caused many hardships. A Canadian Press reporter named Lorne Bruce, was sent out to Umnak Island to experience conditions first hand. His story appeared in The Winnipeg Tribune, June 21, 1943. He had much to say. Chief danger in the North Pacific theatre is the weather – the worst for flying in the world. Snow, rain and sleet storms come and go in minutes. Fogs roll down from the snow-covered volcanic mountains to blot out a landing strip in less than a quarter of an hour. Williwaws – strong winds that come straight down or in a verticle (sic) circle – make flying more dangerous... PO Keeling Barrie, of Edmonton, reported seeing a fog following a plane so rapidly down a landing strip that visibility was zero in a matter of seconds after the plane was in the air. The field had been clear when the plane began its run to take off. Another time a pilot got out of his machine and walked a few yards to talk to the ground crew. When he turned around a few minutes later, the machine was upside down. The wind had picked up the plane, turned it over, and set it down almost noiselessly.

Piloting under those conditions tested skill and courage. And the pilots deserved the recognition they got. It is, however, too easy to underestimate the ordeals of the ground crews who had to be out in that weather as it raged at them from all directions at once. A plane, going out on patrol, needs servicing and arming. Coming back from patrol, it will certainly need to be checked very carefully for damage. There were no hangers or closed spaces to work in. The ground crew had to learn to keep their hands from freezing as they turned the wrenches, loaded the weapons and replenished the liquids that keep machinery functioning. They were genuine heroes, in my book. Sadly, there was little record of their sacrifices and remarkable feats. There were entries in 111's Daily Diary that recognized the ground crew's extraordinary effort in particularly dicey circumstances but seldom were individuals named or saluted. By the fall of 1942, the pressures of the south Pacific theatre pulled three more USAAF squadrons away from the north. RCAF No 111 Squadron was re-deployed to Kodiak Island from which, for ten months, they defended the Prince Rupert shipping lanes. RCAF No 14 Squadron replaced them at Umnak Island. The atmospheric conditions, terrible for the Allies, must have been even more so for the enemy. The Japanese forces had established strongholds on Attu and Kiska Islands, more than 1000 miles from Alaska, but still part of the US-owned Aleutian Islands. They were under heavy bombardment from allied aircraft on any day the weather permitted flight. They held out as long as they could, but they were isolated from resupply and relief. The U.S. Marines with support from the Canadian Army and Navy invaded Attu Island, destroying the Japanese position. By August, 1943, the Japanese forces on Kiska Island, taking advantage of particularly terrible weather, managed to re-board their ships and depart. The threat had been contained.

RCAF 111 (F) Squadron had managed to fly 598 sorties (more than 1,200 operational hours in filthy flying conditions) in the 24 months they flew in defence of the North American coast. Five pilots were lost and six Kittyhawks destroyed to accomplish this record. The outcome of

the collaboration between the United States Army Air Force and the RCAF (a first) was highly successful. In a little more than a year (between June 8, 1942 and August 19, 1943), No 111 (F) Squadron had played a vital role in defending the American coast and driving away the invader. Their collaboration drew great praise from the USAAF 11th Fighter Squadron Commanding Officer, Major Jack Chennault, who wrote: “It is with great regret that we see the departure of 111 Fighter Squadron, Royal Canadian Air Force... We are proud to be brothers-in-arms with them.”



US Navy refueling RCAF P-40E Kittyhawk, probably on Umnak Island (DND Photo)

In mid-August 1943, 111 Squadron returned to Canada, to RCAF Patricia Bay, where they began preparations to go to Europe. They were told they would be flying a different airplane, the Hawker Typhoon, in a different role: ground support dive bombing. On January 20, 1944, they left Patricia Bay, making the long trek across Canada. Airmen took pre-departure leave and then re-joined the squadron at Halifax. They landed in Scotland, and on February 8, 1944, at Ayr, they were re-designated 440 Fighter Bomber Squadron. Their experience in Alaska stood them in good stead because they were declared operational, with a new airplane against a new enemy in a different kind of war, in just over a month. They flew their first mission out of Hurn, Scotland, deploying 10 Typhoons on an anti-shipping sortie over the Channel Islands. They became part of No 143 (RCAF) Wing, a formidable force providing ground support to allied troops and interfering with enemy troops on the ground. They were ready in time for the big push, “the second front”, on D-Day, June 6, 1944. They became fierce predators of German tanks, trucks and infrastructure, commanding fearful respect. They flew 4,213 sorties in their Typhoons in 12 months. 3 weeks. They wreaked a lot of damage, yes, but at enormous cost: 23 pilots killed, 5 more missing, never found, and 38 Typhoons destroyed. Three pilots spent some time as POWs. Dive bombing was very dangerous work but 111 Squadron, renamed as 440 Squadron, showed that they could find their way through clouds of flack to get the job done – skills learned, perhaps, in the swirling mists and tricky winds of the Aleutians.

From the perspective of 75 years later, one might wonder if the sacrifice in the Aleutians was needed. But in the fevered atmosphere of the world in 1939-1940, powerful nations had begun to jockey for a realignment of influence. No one nation could afford to be complacent in such an atmosphere. Major threat, however implicit, had to be addressed as if real. Probably everyone over-reacted. But, they did, indeed, act. Canadian nationhood, firmly asserted at Vimy nearly thirty years before, was indelibly imprinted in the minds of all nations. Canada can and will respond and fight well above her weight in defence of noble principles and sovereign integrity. In that cause, over-reaction served a purpose.

Squadron History. The squadron was formed in Vancouver on 5 October 1932 as *No 11 (Army Co-Operation) Squadron* before being redesignated *No 111 (Coast Artillery Co-Operation) Squadron* on 15 November 1937. At the outbreak of the Second World War the squadron formed a detachment at Patricia Bay on Vancouver Island (now Victoria International), before being redesignated *No 111 (Fighter) Squadron* on 1 July 1940. At this time the squadron flew the Westland Lysander as no modern fighter aircraft were available. It was disbanded on 1 February 1941 and then reformed on 3 November 1941 flying the Curtis Kittyhawk. The squadron and took part in air defence operations in Western Canada and the Aleutian Islands Campaign under RCAF Western Air Command. The squadron had the distinction of shooting

down the only Japanese fighter by the RCAF home air force during the war. From the new American base in Umnak, Alaska flying the Curtis P-40K from American stock, 111 squadron took part in several raids against the Japanese base at Kiska. On 26 September 1942 the Commanding Officer, Squadron Leader K A Boomer shot down an intercepting Nakajima A6M2-N Rufe fighter while leading four Canadian manned P-40's involved in flak suppression.



William H. Eull

EDITOR'S NOTE: William H Eull is a retired Clinical Psychologist who returned to a childhood fascination with all things aero. After retirement from a clinical practice, while poking through an antique shop, he found a 1942 Squadron portrait. Curious, he researched and discovered the fascinating and little-known story of the RCAF in the Aleutian Campaign. He has been hooked ever since. See his tribute to the men of 111 Squadron at www.RCAF111fSquadron.com

From the 'Punitentary'

Did you hear about the dyslexic Satanist? He sold his soul to Santa.

This is an abbreviated 'holiday edition'. Regular articles, the Vancouver Gunners Update, Murphy's other laws and Who is it, will return on Jan 5th.



Dues 2018

Dues for the Vancouver Artillery Association are \$25, payable to the Vancouver Artillery Association. Send to:

Treasurer, Vancouver Artillery Association
2025 West 11th Avenue, Vancouver, BC V6J 2C7

Dues for RUSI Vancouver are \$50 (\$25 for students), payable to RUSI Vancouver. Send to:

Treasurer, RUSI Vancouver
2025 West 11th Avenue, Vancouver, BC V6J 2C7

Dues for Associate Mebers are \$60, payable to 15 RCA Officers Mess. Send to:

Treasurer, 15 Fd Regt Officers Mess
2025 West 11th Avenue, Vancouver, BC V6J 2C7