



Van Arty Association and RUSI Van Members News July 26, 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> . 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 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.

Yorke Island Visit – Aug 2016

The Regt and Association are planning a visit to Yorke Island in August. For details, visit the Association website at: <http://www.vancouvergunners.ca/whats-new/yorke-island-2016>

We need to see how many are interested, so check the details and let me know ASAP

World War 2 - 1941

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

July 27th: The Smolensk pocket closes on 100,000 Soviet soldiers, and the Germans attack Kalinn.

July 30th: Carrier planes from HMS Victorious and Furious attack shipping off Kirkenes and Petsamo, to little gain and 15 of their 57 aircraft are downed. Japanese aircraft damage the American gunboat USS Tutulia off Chungking in yet another apparent case of mistaken identity (at least, that's the official story from Tokyo, just as it was for the Panay incident in 1937).

July 31st: 16th Army (Army Group North) reaches the south side of Lake Ilmen as the Finns attack towards Viipuri. Rommel's re-organization of his forces is complete as 5th Light Division becomes 21st Panzer; he has two Panzer Divisions, a motorized Division and seven Italian Divisions – most of which are the best Italy can muster. Force H covers another supply run to Malta by sending Ark Royal to hit Alger in Sardinia.

August 1941: Churchill and Roosevelt Design the Postwar World “The President of the United States of America and the Prime Minister, Mr. Churchill, representing His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, being met together, deem it right to make known certain common principles in the national policies of their respective countries on which they base their hopes for a better future for the world.” -*Preamble to the Atlantic Charter*

General: The Allies sink three U-Boats, but lose 41 ships of 130,700 tons displacement. The RAF is beginning to suspect their bombing offensive is failing and the Butt Commission completes its research and demonstrates that only 40% of the bombs dropped by the RAF's heavy bombers in their night attacks on Germany come within five miles of their targets.

Aug 1st: Roosevelt adds further steps to the oil embargo against Japan and all non-Allied nations outside the Western Hemisphere. Goering gives Heydrich verbal orders to find a “final solution” to the “Jewish problem.” The Soviets try a counterattack on the northern edge of the Pripet Marshes from Gomel (using cavalry and paratroopers to get into German rear areas).

Aug 2nd: The US decides to send lend lease aid to USSR. German troops from Army Group North attack Staraya Russa.

DND at the Back of the Drone Line Despite Contractor Pitches

By Murray Brewster, CBC News Jul 20, 2016

A total of 16 companies have come forward to express interest in providing the Canadian military with drones, but more consultation is in the offing, and it's likely other federal departments will be using the technology well before it arrives at National Defence. The Trudeau government started browsing the defence marketplace earlier this year, asking contractors for information about what kind of systems were out there, when they are available and potential program options. The absence of the capability has come up in presentations submitted to the current defence policy review undertaken in the spring by the Liberals. The consultation paper that kicked off public feedback noted unmanned systems — regardless of whether they are in the air, on land or under the sea — have become "integral to modern military operations." It also says unmanned aerial systems have been used with "great effect" on operations, including by Canada when the previous Conservative government leased drones from the Israelis.

That lease was dropped after Canada ended its Kandahar combat mission, and since then, troops and sailors have only experimented with micro-drones. The latest involves the recent \$14-million purchase for the navy of the small RQ-21A Blackjack, which launches via cable system. The government consultation paper made clear that pilotless planes "offer several advantages that manned aircraft cannot provide." Even still, a spokesman for Public Services and Procurement Canada says the military is a long way from committing to anything, or even issuing a request for proposals. "The (Joint Unmanned Surveillance and Target Acquisition System) project team is analyzing the information gathered, and will use it to develop detailed

cost estimates and planning documents to help inform available options for this program," said Nicolas Boucher in an email.



Technicians from MacDonald, Detwiler & Associates make final adjustments to a Heron unmanned surveillance drone on the tarmac at Kandahar Airfield in Afghanistan just before a test flight under the setting sun on March 6, 2009. (The Canadian Press/Murray Brewster)

It's conceivable that other federal departments will be operating drones before the military. Last spring, Transport Canada issued a tender call for an unmanned aerial system to survey ice and oil spills in the Canadian Arctic. 'Going forward, additional consultations will be required to further refine a strategy that addresses National Defence's short and long term needs.'- Nicolas Boucher, spokesman for Public Services and Procurement Canada. The department is only looking for one drone, which would conceivably replace three manned, civilian turbo-prop aircraft that patrol the region.

The Fisheries Department also conducted its own test program on the West Coast in February. And that is to say nothing about the explosion in commercially available drone technology. However, National Defence's equipment acquisition guide, which was updated in May, does not foresee the military getting such a capability until at least 2026, a quarter century after the plan was first suggested. Boucher's written response did not speak to the timeline, but did say that government needs more information to determine project risks, costs and potential economic benefits. "Going forward, additional consultations will be required to further refine a strategy that addresses National Defence's short and long term needs," he said.

The request for information was at least third time the Canadian government has gone to industry looking for ideas over the last decade and a half. The Defence Department first began pitching for the technology in September 2000, but the project didn't get any traction until 2003 when medium-altitude drones were leased for experimentation. The military deployed French-manufactured Spewer remotely piloted planes during the early phases of the war in Afghanistan. The former Conservative government even promised to create a drone squadron during the 2005 election, and soon after being elected, it implemented a \$500-million acquisition program. But a shortage of staff, which were reassigned to the CH-47F Chinook helicopter program, and political disagreements over whether the drones should be armed caused delays. The program is now estimated to be between \$1 billion and \$1.5 billion. The Harper government, at the insistence of the Manley commission, temporarily acquired Heron remotely piloted surveillance planes to support troops during the latter half of the

Kandahar combat mission, but the lease was handed over to the Australians after Canada withdrew in 2011.

The air force has pushed for armed drones. The country's top military commander, Gen Jonathan Vance, publicly supported the notion last winter. "If we are in operations against a force like ISIS, the surveillance piece is important but we also want to contribute to the strike," he said. "In my view, there's little point to having a UAV that can see a danger but can't strike it if it needs to." But there are also critics who say while a drone strike capability is important, the Canadian government hasn't done enough homework, or put in place a legal framework of accountability for using the weapons.

The Canadian Who Changed the Course of WWII

By [Marc Montgomery](mailto:english@rcinet.ca) | english@rcinet.ca 15 July, 2016



F/Lt Charley Fox leaning on the wing of his Spitfire with its 20mm cannon

Photo Credit: Dept National Defence PL-29263

July 17, 1944 in Normandy France was a beautiful summer day. To the west, the Allies were in a bitter struggle but continuing to push inward from the beaches and coastal towns against determined resistance from German forces. Since January the German defences in Normandy had been under the command of Generalfeldmarschall Erwin Rommel, a senior officer not only idolized in Germany, but even highly respected by the Allies. Erwin Rommel, Der Wustenfuchs (desert fox) took over command of Normandy defence in January 1944, and immediately began improvements. If all of his orders had been carried out by reluctant officers, the outcome of D-Day might have been different. His view that a landing must be



stopped on the beaches was not widely held by the High Command. Unlike most of the German High Command, Rommel was well aware of the Allies abilities to recover from attacks, and of their ability to control the air war, which he knew was a critical element. Also unlike most of the High Command, he also knew that Allies must be defeated on the beaches, which differed from the accepted German plan to counter-attack once the Allies had established a beachhead. Rommel, with his experience in North Africa knew that if the Allies were able to establish a foothold in Normandy, Germany could not win the war. In July, with the feeling that Germany would eventually lose, he nonetheless was dedicated to fighting as best as he could with his resources. However, it appears he had also begun sounding out other senior officers about their views on continuing the war, apparently with an idea of negotiating a secret peace with the Allied commander, General Montgomery.

In the early evening of July 17, the “Desert Fox” was heading back to his headquarters after meeting with the commander of the 1st SS Panzer Corps, Sepp Dietrich and being assured that the tank commander Dietrich would follow him in whatever he was planning, even against Hitler’s own orders. Both knew that the Allies basically now ruled the skies over that part of Normandy and Dietrich suggested that Rommel take the back roads and use a small and less conspicuous Kubelwagen. Rommel ignored the idea and left in his large open Horch staff car.



Field Marshal Erwin Rommel in his Horch staff car. Unlike many officers, he liked to sit up front. had he been in the back, he might not have suffered the severe head injuries from the crash which ended his war, and which changed the course of the Normandy campaign which continued without the leadership of one of Germany’s best leaders.

It was early evening when the car was travelling quickly down a road near Ste Foy de Montgomery when spotted by a Canadian Spitfire pilot of RCAF 412 Squadron. Charley Fox peeled off and with his wingman turned in low sweeping dive to come up behind the staff car and firing a burst from his 20mm cannon. The car was struck and drove off the road.

“I spotted a large black car travelling at high speed along a road with trees on either side. It was coming towards us, on my left, at about 11 o’clock. I maintained steady, level flight until the vehicle passed us at 9 o’clock. I then began a curving, diving attack to my left, with my number two following to watch my tail. The other two aircraft maintained their height, keeping an eye out for enemy activity. I started firing at approximately 300 yards, and hit the staff car, causing it to crash. At the time, I had no idea who it was...just a large black open car gleaming in the sun without any camouflage, which was unusual.”

Fox did not know who it was, but the shots fatally wounded the driver, and Rommel suffered severe injury from the crash that ended his war. When Fox learned later that he had taken out Rommel, the Canadian was of mixed feelings. By taking one of Germany's best tactical senior commanders out of the war, he changed the course of the war and thus may have greatly helped the Allied cause. However, on the other hand he and historians have often wondered exactly what Rommel was planning in relation to Hitler, and a peace with the Allies. Thus Charley wondered that if he hadn't shot at Rommel, would the officer have managed to end the war early?

His actions changed the course of the war in Europe, but he was always of mixed emotions about the attack. The Americans quickly claimed it was one of their P-47 pilots who hit Rommel's car, but Germans clearly said it was a Spitfire. Close examination of flight logs show only Fox's group was in the air at the right time and place. In any case the German plot and bomb attack against Hitler took place on July 20, and Rommel's name came up in interrogation. Although likely not a party to the attack he was blamed as a conspirator and was offered to commit suicide to protect his family from retribution, which he did in October.



Flight Lt. Charley Fox, DFC and Bar, CD.

As an aside, Charley Fox may have taken part in what was the last combat air patrol, or at least one of the very last patrols. On May 4th, 1945 a message was read in the 126 Wing officers mess: *“From 83 Group Headquarters to all units – all hostilities on the second front will cease at 0800 hours – tomorrow, May 5th, 1945.”* Rousing cheers were heard and a party began which continued well into the night. Then the Wing Commander decided to take three others and go on a final flight. Charley Fox in a Spitfire Mk IX took off with the group at 0630. The group flew around (one wonders about their condition for this!) and landed again at 0800 at the time of ceasefire, thus making one of the last, if not the very last air patrol of the war. Charley Fox continued his connection with flying right into his later years and passed away in 2008.

Boundary Bay Airport Airshow

On Saturday July 23, the Vancouver Artillery Association took the 25pdr to the Boundary Bay Airport to join members of the Regiment in setting up a display for the annual Airshow. This year, the Airport is celebrating 75 years since it was first opened during WW2. In the mid 1960s, the Regiment had a Battery (85 Bty) parading in the old hanger on the base, which make the Regiment part of the Airports heritage and, every year, the Airport invites the Regiment to send a display to this event.



These pictures were taken before the gates opened to the public. Here, the 25pdr and limber are set up with the old hangar in the background and the Regiment's display and gun tractor to the left. The C3 and mortar are obscured by the 25pdr

The Regiment set up a 105mm C3 with its tractor, an 81mm mortar, a display of webbing and packs and a helmet and casing for the public to check over. We set up the 25pdr and limber on the other side of the display area. Unfortunately, we were unable to take the FAT out and had to use one of John Hawthorne's

vehicles, driven by Chuck Ingram. Chuck, his brother Bill and members of the Regimental group, helped us deploy and set up the gun as well as hooking up on both legs of the trip and putting the gun away on return to the Armoury. Chuck and Bill also helped man the gun, along with Bernie Rowe and your editor, during the show making sure no kids hurt themselves and answering questions from the public. When the gates opened at 1100 the crowd surged in and there was always a crowd around the guns. Both teams were kept very busy answering questions and entertaining all the kids. We all thoroughly enjoyed the day, in spite of coming home with sunburnt faces.

Another view looking towards the airfield, showing The 105 C3 and the 81mm mortar



The Airshow was very interesting, with many different aircraft making flybys and performing acrobatics. Most popular was the flyby featuring a B17 and an F4U Corsair and another featuring a P38 and a Japanese 'Oscar'.

Many thanks to the hard working members of our team, and of the Regimental team who gave us much assistance and support.

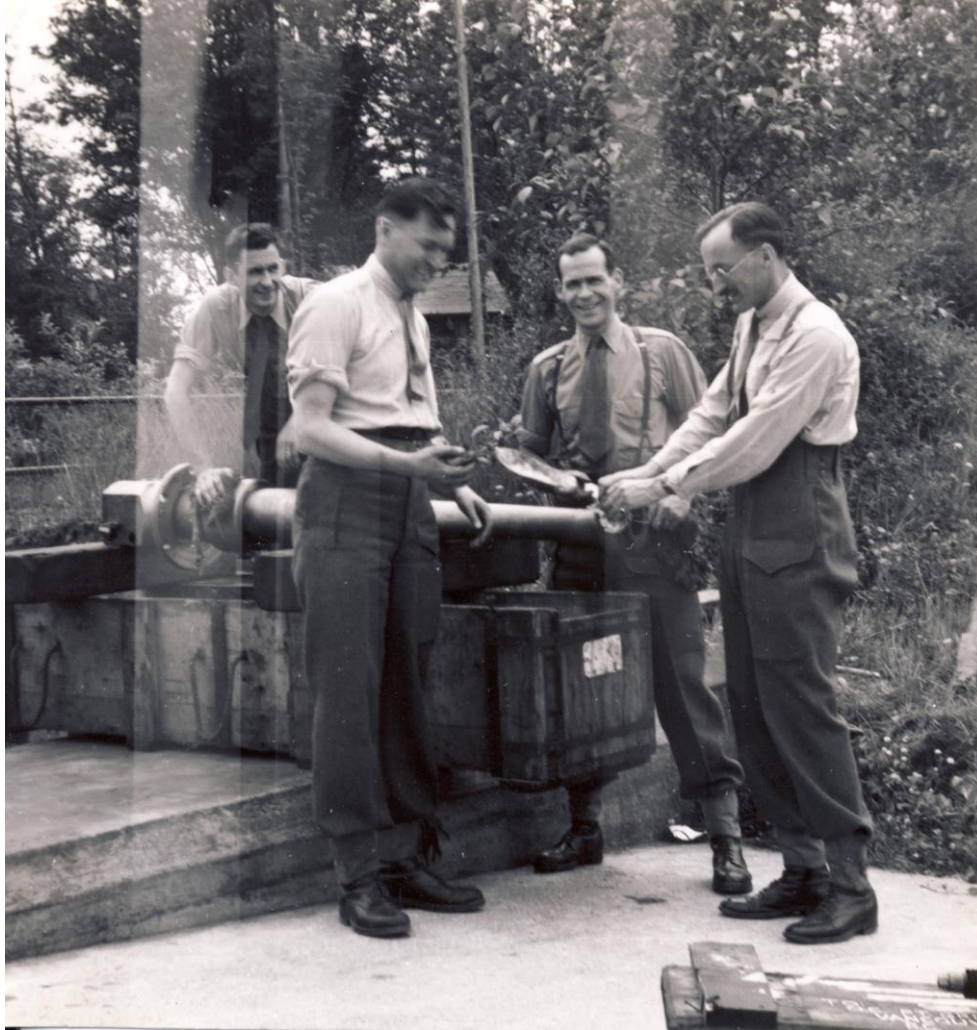
Who is it?



Last Week: Visit to Camp Shilo of Miss Gracie Fields in July 1940. 6 Canadian Infantry Bge concentrated here along with 6th Canadian Field Regiment, RCA to prepare for overseas deployment. The 6th Canadian Field Regiment embarked from Halifax on 24 Aug 1940.

This Week: We hark back to the 1940s and to the role of the Regiment as that of a coast artillery unit. As many of you know, such units were equipped with large guns, capable of pulverizing battleships. This is no doubt the reason the Imperial Japanese Navy feared sending the Yamato and Musashi to the waters of British Columbia. Those tiny vessels would have been sunk in a second by our plucky lads.

However, something is interesting in this aged photo (which is partially double-exposed,



something quite unknown to the digital age). These four lads, one of whom is quite familiar, are engaged in a task related to the gun barrel that lies amongst them. The location is that mighty fortress at Point Grey, warden of the West Coast and scourge of the Axis. For the more pacifistic among you, that is located just above Wreck Beach.

Our queries this week are: what is that gun with which they are playing? Bonus points can be scored by identifying more than one of the four guardians of the coast. These points will count towards the awarding of a copy of CAMT 13-13 “Field Sanitation and You”, our monthly prize for July.

Answers can be sent to the editor, or to the author, John Redmond johnd._redmond@telus.net

From the ‘Punitary’

Why was the Tomato blushing? Because he saw the salad dressing.

Murphy’s other Laws

When nothing is going right – go left.

Quotable Quotes

It’s better to walk alone, than with a crowd going in the wrong direction. *Diane Grant*

"Photographs Required"

1960 – To present

"History of the Gunners of Canada Vol 3" *urgently needs relevant photographs about units, equipment, memorable events including ceremonial, and unusual tasks or activities. To date only 2 units 5eRALC and 6eRAC have provided material. Some individuals have also contributed. 1 RCHA can be covered by persons in contact but most are pre-1980.*

Please submit up to 20 suitable photographs per unit or individual with detail of activity/event, location and date, description of equipment, source (who took the photograph). Pictures should be a minimum of .300 dpi where possible. We assume that all submissions may be used - no copyright limitations, etc.

The design of the book will be firmed up by September 2016. Material received after that might not be usable.

Please email submissions by 31 August 2016 to dtomaso@rogers.com or mail to:

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*Tom Tomaso
Vol III Committee Member*



SAVE THE DATE

**15th Field Artillery Regiment,
The Royal Regiment of Canadian Artillery
Officers' Mess**

St Barbara's Day Special Guest Night

Saturday 3 December 2016

1800hrs for 1900hrs

