



Van Arty Assoc and RUSI Van Members News Aug 27, 2013

Wednesday Lunches

Mrs Lum is on her scheduled vacation. NO LUNCH tomorrow (Aug 28). Lunches resume NEXT WEEK (Sept 4th). The first Wednesday in Sept is one of the Wednesdays in the year that we have trouble meeting our minimum number so, if you can possibly make it, please come and join us.

Summer Dress will be in effect for a couple of more weeks. Just to clarify, this does not mean shorts, sandals and tee shirts. Summer dress for civilian clothing means you take off your jacket and tie so you can be more comfortable on hot days. On cool days, many of us keep jackets and ties on to keep standards up.

Minister Fantino Responds to Ombudsman's Report on Vocational Services

Ottawa – The Honourable Julian Fantino, Minister of Veterans Affairs, today announced that Veterans Affairs Canada is taking action on the recommendations made by Guy Parent, Veterans Ombudsman, in a report called Investing in Veterans' Vocational Training.

“Our Government is committed to helping those who served Canada make a successful transition from military to civilian life despite the injuries or illnesses they may have incurred during their service,” said Minister Fantino. “As these Veterans become ready to begin a new civilian career, we will continue to be there to help in their transition through support including specialized assessments, vocational counselling or financial assistance for education.”

Veterans Affairs Canada offers vocational services which build on Veterans' skills and abilities to help them secure gainful employment after service. If a Veteran has a health problem which developed primarily as a result of service, Veterans Affairs Canada funds services such as specialized assessment, vocational counselling, financial support for training and related costs such as tuition, books and child care, help finding a job, and help to gradually return to work, as necessary.

When a Veteran's vocational plan indicates that training, university education or a professional certification is necessary to meet the occupational goal, VAC will provide the needed support. The Veteran is assessed by a vocational expert to determine the best option for training or education based on individual circumstances.

“As part of our work to improve services by cutting red tape, we are modernizing vocational rehabilitation to ensure Veterans are able to access the benefits and services they deserve in the easiest, fastest way possible,” said Minister Fantino. “To that end, we are already in the process of evaluating and updating vocational assistance measures. I thank the Ombudsman for his work on this file, and I look forward to considering his recommendations as part of the review that is currently underway.”

“CanVet is very proud to provide vocational rehabilitation services to Canadian Veterans and their families as part of our holistic, outcome-based approach to vocational rehabilitation services,” said Darlene Bailey, spokesperson for the joint venture that runs CanVet nationally with WCG International, the March of Dimes and the Innovative Rehabilitation Consultants. “Since launching our program four years ago, the CanVet team has served more than 3,000 Veterans across Canada. To serve those who have served our country is truly an honour, and we will continue to work to provide the best support possible to those who defended Canada.”

In line with the recommendation made by the Ombudsman to enhance performance measures, Veterans Affairs Canada has already taken steps to work closely with Rehabilitation Program partners to carefully monitor the delivery of vocational services to ensure that goals are met and that Veterans are supported. As Veterans Affairs Canada moves further forward on its evaluation, additional data will be collected on the training and other vocational services Veterans and other recipients receive.

Probe of military support units begins

Ombudsman to examine crisis in care network for wounded soldiers
Ottawa Citizen- 27 Aug 2013 CHRIS COBB

Canada’s military ombudsman has launched a probe into the network of support units created almost five years ago to help mentally and physically injured troops. The probe comes less than a month after the Citizen reported that the network of 24 support platoons have deteriorated due to overcrowding, chronic staff shortages, staff burnout and the filling of key positions with unqualified personnel, many of whom are on the eve of retirement. Ombudsman Pierre Daigle decided to launch a review following the Citizen’s coverage and a specific complaint sent to his office, spokesman Jamie Robertson told the Citizen Monday. Investigators plan to contact all the units and, if they find a pattern of systemic failure, could launch a full-fledged investigation, said Robertson. “We will be trying to find from the people who work there what is happening on the ground,” said Robertson. “We want to get good information from all levels.”

Investigators typically interview fewer senior staff away from their units and keep their identities secret, he added. The support units operate under the umbrella of regional Joint Personnel Support Centres and are intended to help the ill and injured troops — mostly Afghan war veterans — either reintegrate into the armed forces or be prepared for civilian life, which is most often the case. A key requirement introduced in 2006 is that all troops, irrespective of their military job, meet the “Universality of Service” standard, which in effect means being fit enough to fight. While posted into a support unit, troops will either work on base, learn trades

with local businesses or take college courses. Most receive some form of mental or physical therapy and all are supposed to report regularly to their supervisors, who in turn are required to produce regular reports on the ill and injured under their supervision.

Former senior non-commissioned officer Barry Westholm, who resigned to protest the current state of the JPSU system after more than four years overseeing the unit's vast Eastern Ontario region, told the Citizen that his constant efforts to get extra resources and fundamental changes were all rebuffed by DND senior brass. "I couldn't collect a paycheque to be part of that anymore," he said. "We asked them to go to war and they went. They got beat up over there and now they want to get better. But we've set a trap for them. We're saying, 'Come on, it's here.' But it's not." Westholm and numerous others confirm that some units are failing so badly that ill and injured soldiers are left to their own devices while overworked staff attempt to keep up with their work. There have been at least two recent cases of support unit staff burning out and becoming clients of the system.

DND insists that the staffing levels at the support units are "adequate" and that the welfare of ill and injured troops is a priority. According to DND, JPSU is currently "offering direct assistance" to about 5,500 ill and injured Forces members and 533 families of soldiers killed on duty.

Ombudsman spokesman Robertson says the JPSU review should be complete by early fall.

US Army Leaders Give Subordinates Two Weeks to Cut Staffs, Budgets by 25 Percent

Aug. 19, 2013 - By [PAUL McLEARY](#)

The Secretary of the Army and the Army Chief of Staff have given their staffs just two weeks — until Sept. 11 — to report back with "a comprehensive set of recommendations" as to where the service can make 25 percent cuts in funding and manning levels at all Army headquarters elements at the 2-star level and above.

In some of the strongest language yet about how seriously Army leadership is taking the cuts, the memo bluntly says that "Let there be no mistake, aggregate reductions **WILL TAKE PLACE**. The money is gone; our mission now is to determine how best to allocate these cuts while maintaining readiness. **We expect Army leaders, military and civilian, to seize this opportunity to re-shape our Army.** This effort will take **PRIORITY OVER ALL** other Headquarters, Department of the Army activities."

The Group is being led by Deputy Undersecretary of the Army Thomas Hawley and head of Army's Office of Business Transformation Lt. Gen. Thomas Spoehr. The memo states that the group will have seven "Focus Area" teams, each tasked with developing "bold executable recommendations which will be used to balance the already directed reductions" in the budget projections from 2015-2019. The initial focus areas are:

- Institutional Headquarters Reductions
- Operational Headquarters Reductions
- Operational Force Structure and Ramps
- Readiness
- Acquisition Work Force
- Installation Services and Investments
- Army C31 and Cyber

When it comes to Institutional Headquarters reductions, service leadership warned subordinates that “movement of personnel outside of headquarters to subordinate units is not a legitimate means of achieving savings. Teams should consider consolidation, reductions, and closing organizations.”

When it comes to the Operational Force Structure, staffers are tasked with looking at “specific interest areas [such as] forces that provide support to other Services, task organization of Corps and Divisions, Logistics, Theater capabilities and other echelon above Brigade Combat Team (BCT) forces.” Given that reductions in the defense budget outlined in the 2011 Budget Control Act now look like they’re going to remain the law of the land, the Army of the future is likely going to look very different from what recent projections assumed.

To that end, service chief Gen. Ray Odierno and Secretary John McHugh wrote that “We must focus on the Army's core missions, sustaining the Army's ability to provide a smaller, more capable Army able to provide ready land forces to meet combatant commanders' global requirements; develop leaders for the 21st century, while maintaining the bonds of trust with Soldiers and Families. To ensure Army readiness at these reduced budget levels, we must make the best and maximum use of every single dollar provided to the Army.”

And all this has to be fleshed out in the next two weeks.

US, Chinese Navies Exercise Counterpiracy in Gulf of Aden

By Donna Miles American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Aug. 26, 2013 - After concluding an ambitious counterpiracy exercise yesterday with the Chinese navy, members of the US 5th Fleet expressed hope it will lay groundwork for closer future cooperation in ensuring freedom of movement in the Gulf of Aden, other regional waters, and beyond. An MH-60S Seahawk helicopter assigned to the "Swamp Foxes" of Maritime Helicopter Combat Squadron 74 departs the guided-missile destroyer USS Mason during a US-China cross-deck landing exercise with the Chinese navy destroyer Harbin in the Gulf of Aden, Aug. 24, 2013. The operation was part of a two-day counterpiracy exercise between US 5th Fleet and the Chinese navy.

The guided-missile destroyer USS Mason joined the Chinese destroyer Harbin and Chinese auxiliary replenishment oiler Weishanhu for the two-day exercise in the Gulf of Aden, Navy Capt. Joseph Naman, commander of Destroyer Squadron 50 and Task Force 55, said during a

phone interview from Bahrain. The Chinese oiler played the role of a pirated vessel, as crew members from the Mason and Harbin conducted a combined visit, board, search and seizure drill that included a night boarding, reported Navy Cmdr. D. Wilson Marks, Mason's commanding officer. Simulated medical emergencies and hostage scenarios required the sailors to work together to provide a coordinated response. In addition, the crews demonstrated synchronized manoeuvre techniques during a live-fire proficiency exercise, engaging an inflatable target with the 5-inch MK-45 lightweight gun and 3.9-inch ENG deck guns, Marks said. Another "significant milestone," Naman said, was the landing of a helicopter from each country aboard the deck of each other's ship.

The exercise represented a big step beyond the first counterpiracy exercise between 5th Fleet and the Chinese navy, conducted in September near the Horn of Africa, Naman said. The 2012 exercise, which involved the USS Winston S. Churchill and the Chinese frigate Yi Yang, lasted only about six hours and was limited to a basic visit, board, search and secure exercise, follow-on discussion and crew lunch. Throughout this week's mission, Marks said, he was struck by how similarly the two navies operate. "What my crew found out is they are sailors like we are," practicing many of the same techniques as they confronted the same challenges, he said.

Both the United States and China recognize the importance of freedom of access and movement in the maritime environment, uninhibited by piracy or other illicit activity, Naman noted. "I think both China and the US share the common goal to make that happen," he said. Both navies, for example, regularly conduct counterpiracy operations in the Gulf region. The United States is part of a multinational coalition task force that works collaboratively in and around the Gulf of Aden, Arabian Sea, Indian Ocean and the Red Sea. China, in contrast, operates independently. Naman said he would like to see that change, and that he hopes exercises like the one conducted over the weekend will encourage China to consider joining the coalition.

International cooperation and measures taken by the civilian shipping industry to discourage pirates have brought a dramatic drop in piracy compared to just three to four years ago, he reported. "The sum of the parts is greater than the one, which is what the coalition brings in," Marks said. "You can share best practices, build on each other's strengths [and] capitalize on those strengths. ... We are all working toward that shared goal of freedom of movement in the maritime [domain]. So if we all share the same goal, we ought to be working together, and that is what we are really trying to do." In the meantime, he said, exercising together helps to increase interoperability between the US and Chinese navies that they can draw on in the future, anywhere in the world. "As we have learned in the past, military-to-military engagement pays big dividends, because we operate in the same environment and ... share the same common goals for that maritime environment," Naman said.

Marks, who called the exercise "one of those once-in-a-career experiences," said he and his crew hope for more opportunities to work with the Chinese navy. For one of the participants, Navy Seaman Yi An, the exercise was particularly memorable. A naturalized US citizen, the culinary specialist was born in China's Quingdao province -- which the Harbin's crew calls

home. Yi served as an interpreter during the exercise, generating a lot of excitement among the Chinese sailors as he shared hometown stories, Marks said. He was treated as an honored guest aboard the Harbin during a luncheon yesterday that concluded the exercise. But exercising with their Chinese counterparts gave the entire Mason crew new insights, Marks said.

"Watching US and Chinese sailors working side by side was amazing," he said. "We may come from different places and speak a different language, but at the end of the day, we all share a common interest in protecting the maritime environment."

Who is it?



Sergeant Bill Amos inspecting, Corporal Tony Lawrence looking at the recruit's boot, Gunner Claude Elazam - his face behind Amos' shoulder, Gunner Randy Procop is the tall man on the right. René Bischof believes he took the picture and says this was a recruit course, with the CWAC sent down from Jericho for the course. He can't remember her name but thinks she had an Italian name.

"We are now up to Quiz Photo No. 10, a landmark. Thanks to all the eager quizophiles out



there who continue to help us preserve the legacy of the regiment. This week's photo continues our CWAC-related theme from last week with a picture found in Vic Stevenson's unsorted pile of photos, many of which were taken by him, but some of which were

donations, he always being the man to go to for history.

Here we have a fine body of men and women of 15 Field Regiment, obviously at a Remembrance Day salute (the other photos in the series show the salute taking place, and the deuce-and-a-halves (halves?) towing the guns. Mobile Command flashes are worn with battledress and CWAC dress. Most officers are properly kitted out with brown boots, but the times they are a-changin' if one goes by the sideburns. So, can you date the photo, and id the people (but don't try to date the CWACs, it's not allowed)?

From the 'Punitary'

Einstein developed a theory about space, and it was about time too.

Murphy's Laws

Everything you read in a newspaper is absolutely true – except for that rare story of which you happen to have firsthand knowledge.

Quotable Quotes

Experience is not what happens to a man; it is what a man does with what happens to him.

- *Aldous Huxley*



YOU AND YOUR GUEST
ARE CORDIALLY INVITED

TO A

"NATIONAL SECURITY PRESENTATION AND
NO HOST LUNCHEON"

TO BE HELD ON

SATURDAY, 7TH OF SEPTEMBER 2013

10:00 A.M. UNTIL 3:00 P.M.

AT

THE CANTON GARDEN RESTAURANT,

BANQUET ROOM,

45595 YALE ROAD, CHILLIWACK, B.C.

GUEST OF HONOR: COLONEL STEPHEN P. HUBBLE USMC (RET)

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'REMEMBERING 9-11'