

Van Arty Assoc and RUSI Van Members News Oct 2, 2013

Wednesday Lunches

Lunches are back in full swing, although it will be much better once the kitchen project is completed. Still no start date, but I understand all approvals have been given and financials are now in order.

If you haven't been to one of our lunches, they happen (almost) every Wednesday from 1130-1400hrs in the 15 Field Officers Mess, Bessborough Armoury, 2025 West 11th Ave, Vancouver. Guests and visitors are always welcome. People these days, especially civilians, don't think about dress much and, if not pre-warned, will show up in very casual dress so, to avoid embarrassment, please make them aware of the dress requirements (suit/blazer and tie, equivalent for ladies) before they come.

St Barbara's Day Dinner

A quick 'heads up' to all. The St Barbara's Day Dinner will be held on Dec 7th. Mark your calendars. Invitations will be in the mail soon.

Canada lost Afghan war, says author

By Murray Brewster The Canadian Press



OTTAWA – It may yet serve as the epitaph to Canada’s nearly 12-year involvement in Afghanistan.

In his long-awaited book about the Afghan war, Graeme Smith writes what others have long thought but rarely said out loud about the violently poor, landlocked south Asian country where some say empires go to die. “We lost the war in southern Afghanistan and it broke my heart,” Smith – a former foreign correspondent with the Globe and Mail – writes in the opening sentence of his intense, unflinching memoir. Many, particularly those who run in military and political circles and whose reputations rest on history’s judgment of that nasty, never-ending guerrilla war, would disagree. The army never lost a battle, they say.

And now, Afghanistan – and Kandahar in particular, which once burned at the centre of Canada’s national interest – have all but disappeared from the public conscience since the Canadian combat mission ended in 2011, Smith said in an interview. “Nobody likes to fail, especially if you’re trying to do something good,” said Smith, who now works in Kabul as an analyst for the International Crisis Group, a non-governmental agency that monitors the world’s hot spots. Asked what it was all for, Smith was philosophical: “I take Canadians at their word. We said it was for peace and security and democracy. And you could still argue about democracy in southern Afghanistan, but peace and stability we did not achieve.”

Smith is currently on tour promoting the book, entitled “The Dogs are Eating Them Now” – a reference to one Canadian soldier’s frank assessment of the fate of Taliban bodies that were left on the battlefield in 2006 in hopes of drawing more enemy fighters out into the open. His assessment of what happened, along with what sort of war the Afghans will inherit next year when the lingering Canadian soldiers finally leave, is sobering. “We’re leaving behind a great big mess. That should inspire us to clean up the mess in some new and creative way and it’s not. It’s inspiring us to give up and walk away,” he said.

“I think it’s really, really disappointing for the Canadians who’ve been involved in the mission and probably also for the people back home, I’m guessing, to see all of our good intentions collide with reality in such a spectacular way. It is very tempting in that kind of situation to just throw up your hands and give up, but the problem is, you know, that we really need to be learning from our mistakes.” But instead, Smith contends, Canada is going the other way.

Starting next month the first of 950 soldiers, who’ve been training the Afghan army, will begin a phased withdrawal heading towards a final mission close-out in March next year. The Harper government has already trimmed aid. Yet statistics compiled by Smith’s organization, as well as the Centre for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, show that unlike Iraq following its troop surge, the level of violence in Afghanistan is increasing, not decreasing. NATO’s commander recently expressed his fear that fledgling Afghan security forces were suffering an “unsustainable” level of casualties – a sentiment backed up in a report last month by Afghanistan expert Anthony Cordesman.

On average, over 100 Afghan troops and police are being killed every week, and another 300 wounded. Smith, who still travels throughout Afghanistan, said that despite the carnage, the rural districts don't seem ready to "roll over" and continue to fight the Taliban with increasing determination. But the bitterness of the fighting has led to reports of gross human rights violations. The West, he says, is leaving behind an unfinished war when it completes the withdrawal of most combat troops. The big question in his mind is whether war-weary governments will continue to back the administration in Kabul.

"It is a tough sell sometimes, persuading people to care," he said. "In some ways, Afghanistan's future depends on how guilty we feel. If we feel responsible for the mess we're leaving behind, then we'll remain engaged."

Throughout the Canadian mission in Afghanistan 158 soldiers, one diplomat, two aid workers and a journalist were killed. The country spent between \$11 billion and perhaps as much as \$18 billion on the war effort and aid.

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Wife of Former Navy Man Fighting Veterans Affairs for Compensation

September 29, 2013 By DAN ARSENAULT Staff Reporter

Her husband, a former Royal Canadian Navy member, has been dead for more than a year and Dawn Collins lost in her third attempt to secure compensation from Veterans Affairs Canada this summer.

"I think they owe Wayne something," the Beaver Bank native said in a recent interview. "I have no money to legally fight it."

Wayne Collins, her husband of 47 years, was a stoker in the engine room of several ships during a five-year stint in the navy in the 1960s. He later went into the grocery business, managing a Halifax Superstore and then running the Foodland in Chester. He got sick in 2001 and the couple believe that his multiple system atrophy, or MSA, arose from his time in the navy, when he used carbon tetrachloride as a degreasing agent. Because of his illness, the couple had to give up their Foodland business and spent \$30,000 on a stem-cell treatment in Germany in 2009. It provided him increased mobility for a year.

He eventually became confined to a wheelchair, unable to speak. In January 2012, pneumonia put him in hospital for months. He didn't have coverage for that \$99-a-day stay in hospital, but Dawn said she could not care for him at home alone. He was able to go home five weeks before his death at age 69 in July 2012. "He was glad" to be home, she said, adding it meant he could be with his dog and other comforts.

She has paperwork from Veterans Affairs that offers to cover his expenses for that home care, but claims she hasn't received any of that money yet. She hasn't started paying for his hospital stay yet and doesn't want to. She believes her husband is due compensation through a special

pension because of how he became sick. Now that he's gone, she thinks she should have those pension benefits extended to her. She currently receives a pension of \$160 a month because of the hearing loss he suffered while in the navy.

Collins said she is a low-income earner, working at a nearby Wal-Mart. "I'm angry because I think Wayne would still be alive if he didn't serve his country. I feel ripped off. Wayne got this disease and I honestly, in my heart, believe that it was from exposure to the chemicals." She takes issue with Veterans Affairs' dismissal of her claim. In essence, they argue there is no record to show her husband was exposed to carbon tetrachloride and there is no evidence to prove that is what made him sick.

She said paperwork from the decommissioning of the ships claims that dangerous chemicals were found. Also, a recent court decision in England accepted that someone there had come down with MSA because of exposure to carbon tetrachloride. She also says that her friend's stepfather contacted MSA from carbon tetrachloride use. And she argues that members of the Veterans Affairs appeals board didn't have medical experience. Halifax lawyer Ray Wagner has been monitoring Collins' attempts to win compensation. He said Veterans Affairs provided counsel to the family free of charge. He agrees that proving Wayne Collins was exposed to carbon tetrachloride and proving it led to MSA is very challenging.

In addition, it is difficult to get the federal government to work hard to find their own records, which would confirm carbon tetrachloride usage. "The records, sometimes, are not available," he said. "Compassion is not the law." Losing three Veterans Affairs appeals essentially ends that part of the legal battle and Wagner thinks a civil suit is unlikely because of the costs involved and the unlikely chance for success. He thinks a civil suit would need experts, such as epidemiologists and toxicologists, and could cost up to \$150,000. The best plan would be to find other people who worked alongside Wayne Collins and can support the claim that he was around carbon tetrachloride. Another big help would be to find people who suffered from MSA because exposure to the chemical.

Wagner and Collins have been in touch with one former navy man who supports her claim that carbon tetrachloride was used on ships. Now 74, Ron Laronde lives near Saint Andrews, N.B. He was in the navy in the late '50s and worked as a stoker in an engine room. He contacted the Beaver Bank couple after seeing them on a television news show once. Back in his navy days, he said one of his first duties in the morning was to grab a scrub bucket, pour out a half gallon of solvent, take some scrubbing brushes and go to work. He said he'd get the chemical all over his hands and breathed it in without a second thought. He's sure it was carbon tetrachloride. "They had a big sign right over the barrels." His health isn't very good, but he can't be sure if it has anything to do with his time in the navy. He went on to other seafaring work, much of which involved the use of chemicals.

"We had it in aerosol cans. We used to spray it for cleaning motors and things."

VAC Responds to Ombudsman’s Reports on the New Veterans Charter

Ottawa – The Honourable Julian Fantino, Minister of Veterans Affairs, responded today to two reports on the New Veterans Charter (NVC), *Improving the NVC: The Report and Improving the NVC: The Actuarial Analysis*, released this morning by Guy Parent, Veterans Ombudsman.

“I would like to offer my thanks to the Veterans Ombudsman for his ongoing work on this important file,” said the Minister. “His reports highlight how the assistance and services delivered through the New Veterans Charter are providing real and meaningful support to Veterans and their families. The recommendations will also serve as an important starting point for the upcoming parliamentary review.”

Last week, the Minister announced that the Government is supporting a comprehensive parliamentary review of the New Veterans Charter which will start when the legislative session begins later this month. The Minister has called for the comprehensive review to place a special focus on the most seriously injured, support for families and the delivery of programs by Veterans Affairs Canada. Through the NVC, Veterans Affairs Canada offers support to Veterans and their families through programs and services that include disability benefits, case management services, rehabilitation services, and financial benefits.

Dozens of improvements have been made to the support and services provided by Veterans Affairs Canada since 2006, including:

- establishing a minimum pre-tax income for Veterans who can no longer work and for those who are in rehabilitation;
- reducing wait times by eliminating hundreds of unnecessary forms;
- launching the Hire a Veteran initiative to open doors to new career opportunities for Canadian Veterans;
- doubling the financial benefits available to Veterans’ families through the Funeral and Burial Program, under Economic Action Plan 2013;
- streamlining our processes, using plain language, offering greater e-services, simplifying our forms and eliminating them where they are not needed; and
- establishing a partnership with Service Canada to provide Veterans with approximately 600 new points of service across the country.

“Going forward, we are committed to taking a responsible approach in reviewing the options to ensure Veterans have the support they need, when they need it,” added the Minister. “We have already made a number of improvements in the areas highlighted by the Ombudsman, and will continue to look at measures that will help to better support those who served Canada in uniform.”

Lab experiment may lead to possible change in target engagement

By Pfc. Eric T. Keenan | Headquarters Marine Corps | September 27, 2013

MARINE CORPS BASE QUANTICO, VA -- The Field Testing Branch from the Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory's Experiment Division began testing techniques for engaging moving targets during the Moving Target Technique Limited Objective Experiment 2 at Marine Corps Base Quantico, VA, Sept 16.

The experiment, which ends Sept 27, tests the most effective technique and method to engage moving targets with the M-4 carbine and M-27 infantry automatic rifle. "This experiment is fundamentally about — how do I make an individual Marine more lethal," Capt Benjamin Brewster, project officer with the field testing branch at the Warfighting Lab, said. The experiment is also using and evaluating Robotic Moving Targets. The robots are treaded moving targets developed by an Australian company named Marathon to help train service members in marksmanship.



The CEOs of Marathon set and prepare Robotic Moving Targets for use in the Moving Target Technique Limited Objective Experiment 2 at Marine Corps Base Quantico, VA, Sept 24, 2013. The robots, developed by the Australian company Marathon, present a target the size of an average person, fall over when shot and can simulate average walking and running paces from four to eight miles an hour. The experiment tests the most effective technique and method to engage moving targets with the M-4 carbine and M-27 infantry automatic rifle. (US Marine Corps photo by Pfc Eric T Keenan)

Marines from The Basic School and Weapons Training Battalion, Quantico, Va., fired the M-4 and M-27 at the robots using three techniques: tracking, ambush and swing through. The Marines tested each technique using semi-automatic, burst and automatic fire in the standing, kneeling and prone positions. The shooters engaged targets moving perpendicular to them, at both a 75-meter and 150-meter distance, firing thousands of rounds throughout the experiment. The robots simulate an enemy crossing a road. "Much like hitting a baseball, moving target engagement is a skill that has to be trained, honed and maintained in order for someone to be proficient with it," Brewster said.

For the ambush technique, the shooter picks a pre-designated point and fires when the target comes into their sight. For tracking, the shooter follows the target in their sight and takes the shot when they feel ready. For the swing through, originally a skeet shoot method, the shooter sights in behind the target, follows its direction of travel, and fires through it. "We are trying to validate if one of those techniques is more effective than the others," Brewster said. The data collectors measured hit ratio by technique, method, shooting position, distance, and by the equipment of each shooter, either wearing full combat gear, or not wearing gear.

In nine years of being an infantry Marine and after five combat deployments, Sgt Phillip Sanz, a combat marksmanship trainer with Weapons Training Battalion, said he has only trained on one range that focused on moving targets. If the results of this experiment help to change how Marines train, “There is no where we can go but up.” Out of 110 rounds fired during the annual rifle qualification, only eight are fired on moving targets. The moving targets currently used are frontal silhouettes about 19 inches wide by 40 inches tall. They are exposed for 10 seconds, and move at a pace of one to two miles an hour.

“The current marksmanship tables in the annual rifle qualification are completely unrealistic to train a Marine to shoot a moving target,” Brewster, an infantry officer with two Afghanistan deployments, said. The robots present a target the size of an average person. They fall over when shot and can simulate average walking and running paces from four to eight miles an hour. With the more realistic features of the robots, training on them provides a more difficult but accurate portrayal of a combat scenario, the makers of the robots said.

“You throw in something unpredictable and it totally changes the dynamic,” Alex Brooks, CEO of Marathon, the company responsible for developing the robots, said “Rather than just training moving marksmanship, you’re training judgment, rules of engagement and situational awareness.” Soldiers from the Asymmetric Warfare Group supported the experiment by helping with data collection and operation of the robots. Brewster hopes the experiment will lead to alternative training for moving target marksmanship, ultimately making Marines more efficient in combat, leading to lives saved and mission accomplishment.

“As it stands right now, there is no training for a Marine to shoot moving targets that he is realistically going to encounter in combat before he deploys,” Brewster said.

Mess Meeting

Just a quick reminder about the 15 Fd Officers **Mess meeting Wednesday at 2130hrs** in the Mess. All Associates are invited to attend.

Who is it?

Last Week.



One of our sharper eyed members identified the soldier as Mike Goldie, probably a Capt here, but retired in the early 60s as a Major. Mike, who passed away a year or so ago, was a prominent local QC lawyer. He was head Counsel for the BC Electric Company and when that company was taken over by the Provincial government in the early 60s, he lead their legal team in a long fight against the takeover, which kept him so busy he had to retire from the Regt. He eventually became an Appeals Court Judge.

He has just arrived at Fort Lewis after the long drive from Vancouver and obviously stopped at the duty free store to buy a bottle of Lambs White Rum (probably the 151proof). The car is a Packard, but not his normal car. He had a very old Rolls Royce he inherited, that he used for driving around Vancouver.

I didn't recognize him immediately as I met him when he was 20 years older.

This week we go forward a decade from our previous Second World War shot. This is a group



of brown-booted officers, all artillery, but wearing the grenade as a cap badge, something seen on many photos from Vic Stevenson's archives. Many have rows of ribbons, and in the original photo it is just possible to make out some as being of WWII vintage. What isn't visible is the shoulder flashes showing which particular RCA regiment these men represent. Also not clear is where the photo was taken, or when. However, others in this short series indicate that the

location is on Vancouver Island, and, from the cars, sometime in the early 1950s.

So, can you help your museum identify these men, the location, and the date? If so, contact your editor, or John Redmond (johnd.redmond@telus.net). Congratulations to last week's winners, who are now enjoying their cruise on the Queen Mary II. We hope to see them in six months when the cruise ends. Buy the way, bonus points will be awarded if you can identify the car."

From the 'Punitary'

The butcher backed into his meat grinder and got a little behind in his work.

Murphy's Laws

If your next pot of chili tastes better, it probably is because of something you left out, rather than added.

Quotable Quotes

We are motivated by a keen desire for praise, and the better a man is the more he is inspired by glory. The very philosophers themselves, even in those books which they write in contempt of glory, inscribe their names. - *Marcus Tullius Cicero*



VANCOUVER WELSH MEN'S CHOIR



Inspirational

Guest Organist
Michael Murray

Music Director
Jonathan Quick



TWO FEATURE CONCERTS

Sat, Oct 5, 7:30pm
Ryerson
United Church
2195 West 45th Ave.,
Vancouver, B.C.

Fri, Oct 11, 7:30pm
Queens Avenue
United Church
529 Queens Ave. (at 6th),
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