



Van Arty Association and RUSI Van Members News 5 May, 2015

Wednesday Lunches

The 15 Field Officers Mess holds weekly lunches, serving 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.

The dress for Wednesday lunches is suit/blazer/sports jacket and tie. Dress for ladies is the equivalent. Your guests are always welcome but don't forget to tell them about dress requirements BEFORE they come.

From the Journal of Capt Fred G Coxen RFA - 1915

April 29th: Was impossible to fire from observation, as we could not get to [the] observing point and the wire was broken in many places by the continual shelling. We fired by map and wireless from aeroplane. Hostile aeroplanes were very active and one must have spotted us, for they gave it to us warm in the afternoon and evening. The officers had made a bivouac beneath a large tree, a few yards on my left. A few shell[s], and they were real coal-boxes, burst very near. They moved over to the left and lucky they did, [for] a few minutes later a shell hit the tree and snapped it off like a match. Other shells followed and we had to leave the guns for a while. When it was over we went back; the officer's huts had been blown to pieces. Two coats that hung on a tree were absolutely in ribbons; almost everything there was irrevocably ruined. One of them had been sitting on a box of biscuits; this box was blown yards away and not even a biscuit that was inside remained. The tin box was like a piece of twisted tin. Everything was almost unrecognisable. Dowling, one of the servants got both arms badly splintered. [They were] continually shelling roads to our rear and right all night.

April 30th: [We] fired in the morning by wireless, bombardment to support attack by the French, which was said to [be] successful. In the afternoon, we were again heavily shelled as we expected. The 57th got it worse than us, about 50 yards on our right. One shell pitched into a dugout, killed 4 telephonists and several men were wounded. They got it so fiercely that they were compelled, as we were yesterday, to desert their guns, but they were soon back again. One 17" dropped by the French guns and they nipped (as per usual). Several fell in front of us and one 30 yards to, and in direct line with, our left gun, just where I was. It is impossible to describe these monsters coming through the air. The nearest it is like an express train going through a tunnel and the burst is like a terrific clap of thunder. The earth sways as if it were an earthquake. We measured this hole at night and it was 25 foot deep and 43 foot across; great lumps of earth, like rocks, had been scattered many yards. It seems impossible, even to one who understands artillery that this great eruption could have been made by a shell. We picked up

several splinters going anything from a few ounces to several pounds. The attack was repulsed and towards dark it became a little more quiet, just the usual nightly dozen per hour. The 17th must have put the wind up the French, for they had moved during the night and never came back.

May 1st to 4th: [We were] still in same position. The hostile shelling never ceases, day or night. We fire mostly by aeroplane wireless – attacks and counter attacks twice daily. Batteries on our left seem to get it jolly hot, but in spite of the gases and their preponderance of artillery, we are informed that we have stopped the march on CALAIS. [We] were ordered to move with Lahore Division, (which was now sadly depleted in numbers) to move on [the] night of [the] 4th. I was billeting and Mr Donahue and I left about 5pm, eventually, after a hard ride, found billets some 1.5 miles from Ypres in a village I never knew the name of. I left at midnight to conduct the Battery. It was raining all night and I tied my horse to the railings of a churchyard, determined to get a drink somewhere and something to eat. After a while I came on an establishment and vigorously knocked, which was opened by a Staff Officer. I told him I wanted something to eat and drink. He was very good and took me inside and fixed me up. I left refreshed, [While it was] still raining and cold; I eventually met the Battery about 6 o'clock. I got some breakfast from the Officer's cooks of the Ammunition Column and then had a sleep about 10am.

World War 2 - November 1940

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

May 1940. General: *The Allies lose 101 ships of 288,400 tons, but introduce their first Flower Class Corvettes this month. These crowded uncomfortable ships will be the mainstay of the war against the U-Boats.*

May 1st: The British ship 4,400 men out of Andalsnes, but most equipment remains behind.
May 2nd: 5,400 British and French troops depart Namsos before the Germans enter the town. His Majesty's Trawler Arab has been tied up in Namsos Harbor for five days, and has endured 31 air attacks directed on the tiny ship herself "Throughout this time her commander, Lt Richard Been Stannard, has repeatedly displayed the highest standards of leadership, cunning, and personnel courage in preserving his ship and her crew. One of the last ships to leave Namsos, HMT Arab shoots down a He-111 bomber which had ordered the vessel to return and surrender. Lt Stannard is awarded the Victoria Cross. **May 5th:** Polish Troops and a regiment of the French Foreign Legion arrive in Tromso as the Germans resume the advance towards it. The RN submarine HMS Seal is limping for Sweden after recovering from being sunk in shallow water by a German mine off Norway, when two German aircraft force its surrender.

Historic Plane Makes Stop in Saskatoon

DC-3 built in 1942 saw service in D-Day. Reported by Bryn Levy Mar 18, 2015

From war hero to television star, it's been quite a ride for a special plane that stopped in Saskatoon on Wednesday. The DC-3 plane is owned by Yellowknife-based Buffalo Airways. It's been featured prominently in History Television's Ice Pilots. But Buffalo Airways' general

manager Mikey McBryan said work on the show is really the least of this particular plane's accomplishments.



A Buffalo Airways DC-3 plane. Made in 1942, it's the last working commercial aircraft to have seen service in the D-Day landings during the Second World War.

Bryn Levy/CKOM News

"Originally, it was KJ-330 for the Royal Air Force and it was in D-Day. It was in 512 squadron and it was part of the first 32 airplanes across the line," he said. McBryan said that beyond D-Day, it saw extensive service during World War II. It was also used to drop paratroopers during Operation Varsity, which saw Allied forces cross the Rhine River in Germany in an operation even larger than the original landings on the beaches of Normandy. McBryan said no one at Buffalo Airways knew of the planes pedigree before the show. "We didn't even know about it that much until a 15-year-old kid from England did the research and actually sent us all the logbooks to confirm," he said.

The discovery had everyone at Buffalo pretty fired up. It makes the plane the last operating commercial aircraft to have been used in D-Day. "It's like a Shelby Mustang, and then you learn that actually Carroll Shelby raced the Mustang," said McBryan. McBryan said they brought the plane to Saskatoon to help out the Canadian Forces. They'll be flying to Edmonton Thursday morning to use it for a paratrooper jump commemorating the 70th anniversary of Operation Varsity.

Denel Demonstrates Truck-Mounted T5-52 Gun

Helmoed-Römer Heitman, Pretoria - IHS Jane's Defence Weekly 27 April 2015



A DLS 155 mm T5-52 gun fires a projectile during a demonstration at the company's Overberg Test Range in South Africa in April.

Source: Denel Land Systems

Denel Land Systems (DLS) took the opportunity to demonstrate its truck-mounted 155 mm T5-52 artillery system during an event held at South Africa's Overberg Test Range in April. The company wanted to highlight the system's superior range when firing rocket-assisted projectiles (54.8 km at sea level), rate of fire (six rounds in the first minute, with a sustained rate of fire of 2 per minute),

and its ability to fire six rounds that land simultaneously on the same target. The gun can also be elevated from 3° to +72°, allowing it to be used in the direct fire role: a capability that was demonstrated when it put two rounds into the same impact point at 1,000 m.

The T5-52 system essentially comprises the DLS 155 mm/52-calibre gun mounted on an 8x8 Tatra truck, with a gross system weight of around 38 tonnes. Its 300 kW turbo-charged diesel gives it a speed of 85 km/h, while the road and cross-country ranges are 600 km and 300 km, respectively. The vehicle with the gun mounted is 10.1 m long, 2.9 m wide, and 3.48 m high. It has a ground clearance of 41 cm and can ford to a depth of 1.4 m. The 40% gradient and approach and departure angles of 32° and 39° give adequate mobility off-road for an artillery system. The system carries complete rounds in a container behind the cab so they are adjacent to the breech of the rearward-firing gun. The vehicle is stabilised by hydraulic jacks, with the hydraulic power for them and the other systems being taken from the truck or another vehicle if necessary. The crew comprises four on-mount and two ammunition handlers off-mount when additional ammunition is used. The time into and out of action is 60 seconds, and loading is assisted by a semi-automatic rammer, automatic primer loading, and an optional three-round magazine and three-round crane.

The system is offered with a completely integrated command and fire-control and communications system, and can be supplied with the related observation, meteorological, and other equipment. It fires the full range of ballistically matched ammunition using base-bleed units that can be fitted in the field and a modular charge system with combustible cases.

Opposition Parties Blast Boost to Defence Spending

Plan doesn't kick in for 2 years. *Murray Brewster, The Canadian Press April 21, 2015*



Members of the media and the Canadian Forces tour Canada's brand new CC-17 Globemaster III plane at CFB Trenton in Trenton, Ont., on Monday, March 30, 2015. (THE CANADIAN PRESS/Lars Hagberg)

OTTAWA -- The Harper government is promising to spend more on the day-to-day-upkeep of the military, but the cash does not kick in for two years and is short of what the parliamentary budget office says is necessary to maintain the status quo. The new federal budget also confirms previously announced improvements to veterans' benefits and programs -- \$1.6 billion in spending booked in the last fiscal year in order to avoid a deficit this year. Finance Minister Joe Oliver's fiscal plan sets aside \$11.8 billion over 10 years to increase the baseline defence appropriation beginning in the 2017-18 fiscal year. At that time, National Defence will see a \$184-million increase and the cash ramps up gradually to \$2.3 billion by 2026-27.

The parliamentary budget office, however, warned a few weeks ago that the Conservatives need to spend up to \$3 billion extra a year in order to keep the existing military. The budget also sets aside a one-time, \$360.3 million payment this year for the fight against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant and an additional \$7.1 million for the recently announced mission to train the Ukrainian army. "Our government understands the present dangers -- and is determined to respond responsibly, without ambiguity or moral equivocation," Oliver said in his budget speech to the Commons. In recent weeks, Veterans Affairs Minister Erin O'Toole has announced a series of initiatives to care for ex-soldiers, including a retirement benefit for soldiers without a military pension, a fund to help the caregivers of wounded veterans and more staff to handle cases and process claims.

The budget reflects all of those initiatives, but shows they were paid for in the fiscal year that ended on March 31, 2015. That decision contributed to last year's deficit, but also helped keep the Conservative promise of a surplus this year. The Conservatives have been under pressure, most notably at last fall's NATO summit, to increase defence spending, but analyst Dave Perry, of the Canadian Foreign Affairs and Defence Institute, says the impact of Oliver's funding increase will be small. It just begins to make up for the \$2.1 billion that was stripped from the military's annual budget during the battle to rein in the deficit. "So, they're essentially starting from a hole and this is going to provide some moderate, year-over-year help to get them where they need to be to keep the forces they have," he said. "But it's not actually going to close the gap that's emerged over the last couple of years." That means the next government will face tough choices and possibly have to cut either the number of troops or planned equipment purchases, Perry said.

The last federal budget removed \$3 billion in planned spending on ships, planes and vehicles with the promise it would be spent in future years, but there is no sign of that in the budget or in the multi-year projections tabled Tuesday. Come this fall, the Conservatives are expected to campaign as champions of the military, but Perry says the budget demonstrates that their record is mixed. "It's fair to say they championed them for three years" between 2007-10, Perry said. "Since then, defence has been treated like any other department and faced a period of austerity. It doesn't appear that age of austerity has ended." NDP defence critic Jack Harris said the budget strains the government's credibility. "They're clearly kicking the problems, the issues and the decision-making down the road to the next government," Harris said. Liberal defence critic Joyce Murray said the dearth of near-term defence spending is unforgivable when the country faces a hot war in the Middle East and an emerging cold war in eastern Europe. "The idea that Canadians can trust this government when it comes to defence is a myth," she said. The budget also contains \$23 million to improve security on military bases across the country -- a direct response to events last October when two Canadian soldiers were murdered by homegrown extremists.

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Unveiling of the Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae Statue

OTTAWA – War poet John McCrae, who helped make the poppy an enduring symbol of the sacrifices of the First World War, has received his own enduring monument. On May 3, 2015, a larger-than-life bronze statue of Lt.-Col. McCrae was unveiled next to the National Artillery Memorial on a hillside overlooking the Ottawa River, about a 15-minute walk east of Parliament Hill. The site is apt: before he was a physician, McCrae was an artillery officer and his heart remained with the gunners, even as he tended to the wounded.



Col Stu McDonald, Hon col of 5(BC)Fd Regt and former CO of 15 Fd Regt, at the newly unveiled statue of Lt Col John McCrae.

The statue, by renowned sculptor Ruth Abernethy, imagines McCrae at the moment he looks up from the notebook where he has just signed his name to what would be published as “In Flanders Fields.” He is sitting on a broken tree branch, his cap perched on his medical bag in front of him, with a scattering of poppies at his feet. The Royal Regiment of Canadian Artillery commissioned the work and spearheaded the private fundraising that financed it.

Retired General Mike Jeffery, a former commander of the army and himself an artilleryman, said it is important to remind people that McCrae was a gunner. Jeffery said McCrae’s role as a Artilleryman has been largely forgotten, overshadowed by the famous poem and his medical work. “I think it’s time that minor glitch in history is corrected.” He also said he knows of no other statue or monument to McCrae, except for a small one at a museum in Guelph, ON, McCrae’s home town.

Jim Selbie, a retired general who now holds the honorary post of Colonel Commandant of The Royal Regiment of Canadian Artillery, said McCrae was a renaissance man who exemplified the concept of the citizen-soldier: “He had two professions, both of which he had a great commitment to, that of a physician but equally that as a gunner,” Selbie said.

Who is it?



Last Week: 15 Fd certainly has had its share of rollovers but this was not one of them. The Hon Col of the 5th Fd (and one of our former COs) Stu McDonald, confirmed that the truck and gun, shown on the parking lot of the Yakima Firing Center, belong to our comrades in arms on the Island, 5th (BC) Fd Regt. The driver fell asleep and rolled the pair on the Snoqualmie Pass enroute to Yakima for an Easter School break week long Exercise in 1981 or 82. There were no serious injuries. The soldier in the picture is Warrant Officer (later RSM) Mark

Jackson, who was in 15 Fd at that time.

This Week: This past Sunday was the 70th anniversary of the Battle of the Atlantic, and it reminded us that we have been remiss in showing anything that floats in this quiz. One of the reasons is obvious: the archive is that of the 15th Field Regiment, RCA. As some of you know, the Regiment's task in World War Two was to render the "floating" part of vessels inoperative. However, that does not mean that we do not have some shots of naval and other floating objects, some of which were used to supply the position at Yorke Island.



However, there are some naval shots from the collection of an as-yet-unidentified (but we are getting close) member of the unit in the 1930s and 1940s. This person was possibly the BSM or RSM, and is almost certainly an Australian. As such, he seems to have served in the Middle East in the previous war, and had some shots of that part of the world. Most of these photos show "Diggers", possibly of the Australian Light Horse of Allenby's army. One, however, shows a very interesting warship, shown here. It is very much a "pre-Dreadnought", and

possibly not one of His Majesty's. However, we don't know, so we are asking you Jolly Jack Tars to help us out. What is it?

Answers may be sent to the editor, or to the author, John Redmond. Thanks (johnd.redmond@telus.net). For a picture you can enlarge email bob.mugford@shaw.ca

From the 'Punitentary'

What roof covers the noisiest tenant? The roof of the mouth.

Murphy's other Laws

Anything that happens enough times to irritate you will happen at least once more.


Quotable Quotes

Age is no barrier. It's a limitation you put on your mind. - Jackie Joyner-Kersey

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The 2nd Edition of the digital version of FrontLine Magazine has now been published online. To view go to: http://www.frontline-defence.com/contents/15_DEF2_html.php
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RECONNECT... WITH NATURE, FRIENDS, AND OUR 1 AIR DIVISION HERITAGE



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- \$160 early bird before May 31st 2015 (\$175 after May 31st)
- Full Registration (Friday meet and greet buffet + Saturday breakfast + Saturday banquet and dance)
- Friday Only (Meet and Greet and buffet): \$90
- Saturday Only (Banquet and Dance) \$110

Activities

- Day trips on Saturday (Comox Air Museum, Little Qualicum Cheeseworks, Cathedral Grove)
- Memory Room: a gathering place for attendees to reconnect with our heritage as 1 Air Division. Chat, look at pictures, and reminisce
- Photographer: affordable portrait sittings and a group photo

Accommodation

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