



**Vancouver Artillery  
Association News**



**RUSI News  
Vancouver**

## Van Arty Association and RUSI Van Members News June 7, 2016

**Newsletter on line.** This newsletter, and previous editions, are available on the Vancouver Artillery Association website at: [www.vancouvergunners.ca](http://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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.

**NOABC Lunch – 29 June** - Lieutenant Commander Lucas Kenward, RCN will speak on "Operation Caribbe"

## RUSI Vancouver Hosting a Defence Policy Review Session

On **Saturday the 11th of June 2016**, the **Royal United Services Institute Vancouver** is hosting a Defence Policy Review session at the Langley Events Centre from 0900 until 1600. We're hoping to attract the citizens of Langley, Maple Ridge, Chilliwack and other parts of the Lower Mainland to come, learn some more about the Canadian Armed Forces and give their input into the future of the Canadian Armed Forces. See more at end of newsletter.

## World War 2 - 1941

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

**June 8<sup>th</sup>:** British and Free French forces invade Syria and Lebanon; the Vichy defenders have 45,000 men while the British force is much smaller, consisting of the 7<sup>th</sup> Australian Division, the 4<sup>th</sup> Indian Brigade, some police cavalry from Palestine and a few Free French units.

**June 9<sup>th</sup>:** A destroyer battle occurs between the Royal Navy and French Vichy vessels off Lebanon; while Tyre, Marjayoun and El Queneitra are taken by the British attackers.

**June 10<sup>th</sup>:** Australian troops in Lebanon force a crossing of the Litani River near Tyre. The Italian's last port in East Africa, Assab, is captured by Indian troops after an amphibious landing.

**June 13<sup>th</sup>:** RAF Beauforts put a brace of torpedoes into the pocket battleship Lutzow, which then limps off for lengthy repairs; it will not be available again until January of 1942. The Soviet News Agency TASS observes that a frost is descending between Germany and the USSR, but states that there should be no reason for this. The Australians start attacks on Sidon in Lebanon. The Vichy government rounds up 12,000 Jews because of a ‘plot’ to hinder Vichy-German cooperation; presumably by not being willing to be arrested or have their property confiscated without compensation. Another 25,700 Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians are arrested by the Soviets with another round-up planned for 27-28<sup>th</sup> June.

**June 14<sup>th</sup>:** All German and Italian assets in the US are frozen on Roosevelt’s order. HMS Ark Royal and Victorious fly off 43 Hurricanes to join Malta’s defences.

## **Ottawa Imposes Unequal Increases in Benefits for Injured Veterans**

Gloria Galloway Ottawa — The Globe and Mail Jun. 01, 2016

The federal government is increasing the amount it pays to veterans who are so incapacitated they can no longer work, but many of those who currently make the least will get raises of just a couple percentage points while those at higher ranks will get 20 per cent more. The unequal adjustments are part of a deliberate attempt by the Liberal government to ensure that those who are discharged from the lower ranks after being injured in the line of duty make less money than soldiers who are still actively serving. To do that, the government will essentially demote some veterans to a rank below the one they held when they left the military – something that the veterans say is not only unfair but humiliating. “And they are only doing it for the bottom ranks,” said Don Leonardo, the founder of the advocacy group Veterans Canada who, because he retired 20 years ago as a master corporal, will be among those affected. “Why would you pick on the most vulnerable?”

The Earnings Loss Benefit pays those veterans who are “totally and permanently incapacitated” 75 per cent of what they were making on the day they were released from the Armed Forces until they reach the age of 65. In 2011, the then-Conservative government said no one who is entitled to that benefit would receive less than \$40,000 annually, which was then 75 per cent of the salary of a basic corporal. That provided a substantial boost, especially to those who were injured in places such as Bosnia, Somalia and Yugoslavia and who were discharged at salaries far below what their successors were making as a result of significant raises in the late 1990s and over the past decade. But for years, veterans advocates and politicians have said 75 per cent is insufficient.

The Liberals promised during last year’s election campaign to invest an additional \$40-million annually to provide the permanently injured veterans with 90 per cent of their prerelease salary. It was a commitment they kept in their first budget, with changes that are slated to take effect in October if the budget legislation passes without amendments. But there is a hitch. The Liberals say the minimum payments will be based on the current salary of a senior private, even if the

disabled soldier left the military at a higher rank. The government says on its website that this is being done in the interest of fairness. “To do otherwise,” it explains, “would mean that some veterans receiving the benefits could be making more than their comrades on active duty.”

When asked to explain why it is so important to ensure that injured veterans do not make the equivalent of serving members of the Canadian Forces, the Veterans Affairs officials did not offer a direct response. “What is of paramount importance is that injured veterans have access to benefits that allow them to focus on their recovery,” they said in an e-mail. Those former members of the Armed Forces who were discharged at salaries higher than the \$49,449 that is currently paid to a senior private – the majors, the colonels, the generals and even the high-ranking non-commissioned officers – will not be affected by the rank reductions. Their Earnings Loss Benefits payments will climb by 20 per cent under the government’s plan, which, in some cases, will amount to tens of thousands of dollars. But those at lower ranks, the mid-range non-commissioned officers who departed the military decades ago, and the reservists who were paid by the day, will get much less. Mr. Leonardo, who was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder related to his service as a peacekeeper in the former Yugoslavia, and who makes \$42,426 annually through the Earnings Loss Benefit, will get an increase of less than 5 per cent. “If you can’t provide for your family, eventually you are going to give up,” said Mr. Leonardo. Politicians “keep talking about mental health. Well, if you can’t provide for your family, why would you even stick around. You feel like you’re not worth anything any more and they demote you a rank to private. It just gets worse and worse and worse.”

Veterans advocate Sean Bruyey said one of the harshest aspects of the government’s plan for veterans such as Mr. Leonardo is the loss of esteem. “I know intellectually this is humiliating,” said Mr. Bruyey, a former captain and military intelligence officer who was also diagnosed with PTSD. “What’s Don’s value as a Canadian civilian now? His value is his memory of being honoured by Veterans Affairs. How do they honour him? They say, ‘We are going to demote you for no reason whatsoever other than to save money.’” Cathay Wagantall, a Conservative MP who is her party’s deputy critic for Veterans Affairs, said she is trying to amend the budget bill to protect the lower-income disabled veterans. “I don’t have an answer for why they are choosing to do it this way,” Ms. Wagantall said of the government. Irene Mathysen, the NDP critic, said it is clear that the higher ranked officers will benefit the most. “And those poor guys at the bottom get very, very small increases,” Ms. Mathysen said. “When you start to crunch the numbers, it’s Liberal voodoo.”

## **Nazis Killed Her Husband So Mariya Oktyabrskaya Bought a Tank**

May 17, 2016

When the Nazis killed a young Red Army officer in 1941, they had no idea that they had just dug their own grave. Mariya Oktyabrskaya was the wife of the dead Red Army officer and hearing about her husband’s death two years later made her really angry and eventually made her a distinguished hero. Mariya Oktyabrskaya is not a name that you can find in every history book, but she is an epitome of a fearless and heroic woman and this is her fascinating story. She was born into a peasant family on the Crimean Peninsula as one of ten children. When in

1925 Oktyabrskaya married a Soviet army officer, she began to show interest in military matters and became involved in the 'Military Wives Council' where she was trained as a nurse in the army. She also learned how to use weapons and drive vehicles.



With the outbreak of WWII, two-thirds of the Reich's forces marched on Oktyabrskaya's homeland, destroying much of it in their wake. Oktyabrskaya was evacuated to Tomsk, Siberia, but her husband was required to stay behind and fight and eventually, he got killed. Since Mariya was in Siberia, it took her two years to find out about her husband's death. When she finally did, she was furious. She wrote to her sister, "I've had my baptism by fire. . . Sometimes I'm so angry I can't even breathe" and

made plans to get even. There was nothing that could heal the pain for her husband lost, except

one thing: Revenge! Oktyabrskaya, was determined to avenge her husband's death. Here is what she did: sold everything that she ever possessed and wrote a letter to Stalin. *"My husband was killed in action defending the motherland. I want revenge on the fascist dogs for his death and for the death of Soviet people tortured by the fascist barbarians. For this purpose, I've deposited all my personal savings – 50,000 rubles – to the National Bank in order to build a tank. I kindly ask to name the tank 'Fighting Girlfriend' and to send me to the front line as a driver of said tank."*



Eventually, Stalin wrote back in approval and she begun her quest. Initially, the army had doubts of her ability to handle a tank, but eager for revenge as she was, she prove them in training that she could drive, shoot, and throw grenades with the best of them. Whatever doubts Soviet officers had about Oktyabrskaya's combat skills, quickly dissipated following her first Nazi encounter. On her first outing in the tank, she outmaneuvered the German soldiers, killing around thirty of them and taking out an anti-tank gun. Fascinated by the heroic performance of the 38-year-old widow, the army promoted her to sergeant. She proved herself again as a hero during a night raid in November 1943 when a bazooka team blasted the tracks of her tank. Instead of hiding in her machine's cockpit, she risked life and limb by hopping out. As her peers covered for her, Oktyabrskaya was able to fix the tread and climb back into the tank to continue her war path.

The following year was her final battle. The vengeful Soviet Solider led the unit into the Nazi's line of fire with skills so perfect, that she made it across two enemy trenches before her tracks were blasted by enemy guns. Once again she hopped out to fix "The Fighting Girlfriend. "As

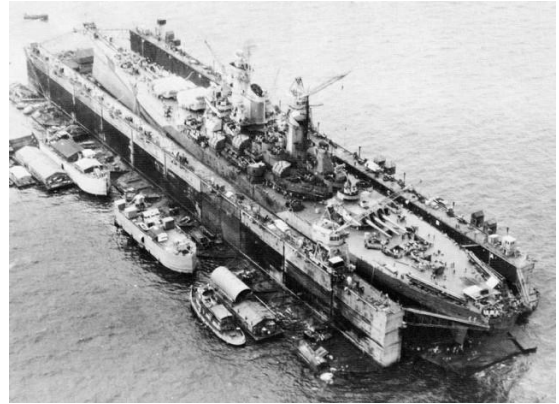
she was working, a German artillery shell exploded close by and the widow was struck with shrapnel that sent her into an immediate coma. Two months after her last battle, the fearless sergeant succumbed to her injury and joined her husband in death. Mariya Oktyabrskaya was posthumously awarded with the highest honor in the Soviet Military-Hero of the Soviet Union award.

## **The Massive Floating Dry Docks of the Pacific Fleet**

They Could Carry Battleships and Aircraft Carriers

Mar 29, 2016

*USS Iowa at a floating dry dock at Ulithi.*



During WWII the US Navy created temporary forward base using Service Squadrons, they allowed the US Navy to operate across the vast reaches of the Pacific Ocean for extended periods of time. These Service Squadrons essentially created a major naval base at a location relatively near the area of operation. With a temporary naval base to refit, repair and resupply, many ships were able to deploy and operate in the western Pacific for a year or more without returning to a major port facility. They provided diesel, ordnance, aviation fuel, food stuffs and all other supplies. Equally important at these places were the portable piers and floating dry docks which allowed many ships damaged by enemy action or Pacific storms to undergo repair without having to travel the thousands of miles back to a major US naval base. Ulithi was as far forward from the US naval base at San Francisco as the San Francisco base was from London, England. To have a fully functional major port in the middle of the Pacific was a significant aid to U.S. Navy operations.



*A partly submerged ABSD allowing a battleship to sail in, the lifting capacity of the floating dry-docks is dramatically shown, but battleships had to have their ammunition and most of their fuel off-loaded before entering*

The official term for a floating dry dock was: ABSDs, Advance Base Sectional Docks and they were built in sections. The individual sections were small enough to withstand the stress of being towed in heavy seas and were welded together once they arrived at the advanced base.

The docks came in two sizes, with the largest ones built out of ten sections, each 256' long and 80' wide and with a lift of 10,000 tons. These were welded

together side to side to produce an assembled dock 927' long and 256' wide that could lift a warship 827' long, 133' wide, and displacing up to 90,000 tons. This was sufficient for any ship in the fleet. The smaller version came in seven sections, each 204' long and 101' wide and capable of lifting 8000 tons. When assembled, it could lift a ship 725' (221m) long, 120' (37m) wide, and displacing up to 55,000 tons.

The sections were given a rough hull form that allowed them to be towed at 6 to 8 knots, with the side walls folded down to reduce wind resistance and lower the center of gravity. They had their own diesel generators and crew quarters. Each assembled dock had two cranes with a lift of 15 tons that ran on rails atop the assembled walls of the dock. A total of 58 ABSD sections were constructed during the war, sufficient for three of the larger docks and four of the smaller docks. The first ABSD was assembled at Noumea in 1943 and a second was being assembled at Espiritu Santo at the end of the year. Total Navy floating dry dock capacity was 108,000 tons by the end of 1942 and 723,000 tons at the end of 1943.

## **Beer-Carrying Spitfires**

In the lighter moments of World War II, the Spitfire was used in an unorthodox role: bringing beer kegs to the men in Normandy.



*[All images Crown Copyright]*

During the war, the Heneger and Constable brewery donated free beer to the troops. After D-Day, supplying the invasion troops in Normandy with vital supplies was already a challenge. Obviously, there was no room in the logistics chain for such luxuries as beer or other types of refreshments. Some men, often called “sourcers”, were able to get wine or other niceties “from the land” or rather from the locals. RAF Spitfire pilots came up with an even better idea. The Spitfire Mk IX was an evolved version of the Spitfire, with pylons under the wings for bombs or tanks. It was discovered that the bomb pylons could also be modified to carry beer kegs. According to pictures that can be found, various sizes of kegs were used. Whether the kegs could be jettisoned in case of emergency is unknown. If the Spitfire flew high enough, the cold air at altitude would even refresh the beer, making it ready for consumption upon arrival.

*A staged shot of the Mod. XXX tank being filled.*



A variation of this was a long range fuel tank modified to carry beer instead of fuel. The modification even received the official designation Mod. XXX. Propaganda services were quick to pick up on this, which probably explains the “official” designation. As a result, Spitfires equipped with Mod XXX or keg-carrying pylons, were often sent back to Great-Britain for “maintenance” or “liaison” duties. They would then return to Normandy with full beer kegs fitted under the wings.



*With the larger beer kegs attached to the bomb pylons, the Spitfire had very little ground clearance.*

done with the unofficial approval of higher echelons.

Typically, the British Revenue of Ministry and Excise stepped in, notifying the brewery that they were in violation of the law by exporting beer without paying the relevant taxes. It seems that Mod. XXX was terminated then, but various squadrons found different ways to refurbish their stocks. Most often, this was

In his book “Dancing in the Skies”, Tony Jonsson, the only Icelancer pilot in the RAF, recalled beer runs while he was flying with 65 Squadron. Every week a pilot was sent back to the UK to fill some cleaned-up drop tanks with beer and return to the squadron. Jonsson hated the beer runs as every man on the squadron would be watching you upon arrival. Anyone who made a rough landing and dropped the tanks would be the most hated man on the squadron for an entire week. In his book “Typhoon Pilot”, Desmond Scott also recalls Typhoon drop tanks filled with beer but regretted that it acquired a metallic taste. Less imaginative techniques involved stashing bottles wherever space could be found on the aircraft, which included the ammunition boxes, luggage compartment or even in parts of the wing, with varying results. Champagne bottles in particular did not react well to the vibrations they were submitted to during such bootlegging trips.

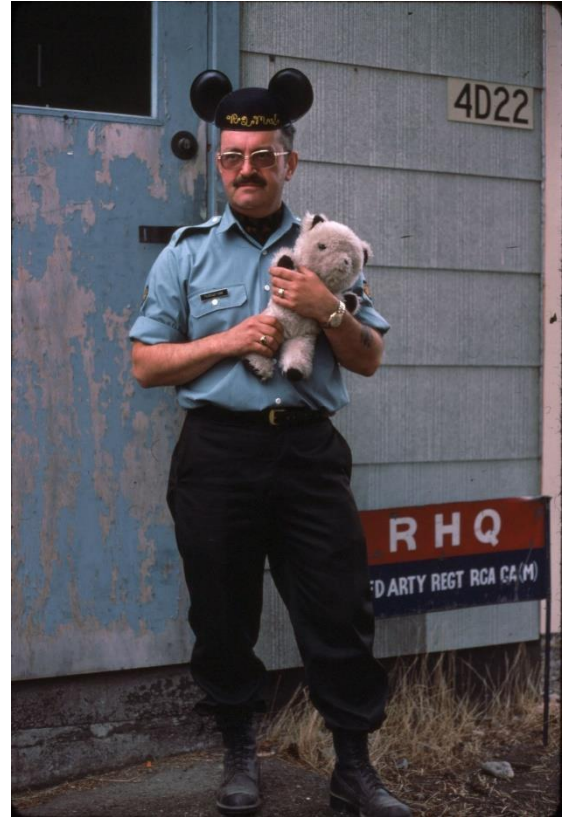
## **Who is it?**

**Last Week:** The gun in question is an 18/25 pdr with box trail. Some sources mention them being used by the Canadian Army early on, when first training in the UK, but they were not used in action by us. However, it was the main gun used by the BEF in the Battle of France, where all were lost at Dunkirk. The photo was taken at "Firepower", the RA museum in Woolwich, which is closing on July 16<sup>th</sup>. The RA long ago left Woolwich for Wiltshire, where the museum will re-open in about three years.



**This Week:** We now turn the clock back to that distant year, 1975, before most of you were even born. That decade was one of serious change for the Canadian Armed Forces, or, as they became, the Canadian Forces (the “Armed” bit possibly deemed not in keeping with both our peacekeeping profile and the lack of new arms). It was an era that saw the end of the fabled battledress and service dress, the former being replaced both by “combats” and a series of other green items, for all three environments of the CF. Our maritime element never looked, well, greener.

This photo, from Vic Stevenson’s collection, illustrates some of the challenges of that era, with the long-forgotten attempt at wooing younger citizens to the colours through the introduction of more “youthful” (or “groovy”, as we once said) headgear, and the issue of unit mascots. All that exists in Library and Archives Canada (LAC) is a heavily “redacted” (viz. censored) report on the failure of these two initiatives. For the latter, two teddy bears, “Brad the Bear” and “Hypolite l’ours” were to have been test-issued to the South Spuzzum Light Dragoons and les Voltigeurs de Chibougamau, but were each sent to the wrong unit. As no one in either regiment could read the “other” official language, both bears ended up as objects of bayonet and musketry practice.



So, dear readers, we ask you to recall this odd order of dress, and regale us with a story attached to this photo. Likewise, if you went from navy or air force blue to CF green, or from khaki (and you remember the correct pronunciation) to the same, let us know of your thoughts and experiences. It is the little things such as this that get lost in the big histories. Help us make our history a story that can enlighten the future generations of service personnel. Stories and thoughts can be sent to the editor, or to the author, John Redmond ([johnd.\\_redmond@telus.net](mailto:johnd._redmond@telus.net)).

### **From the ‘Punitentary’**

Condoms should be used on every conceivable occasion.

### **Murphy’s other Laws**

If you come up with a plan that you are sure will meet with everybody’s approval, somebody won’t like it.

### **Quotable Quotes**

Television has changed the child from an irresistible force to an immovable object.

*Laurence J. Peter*





**The Royal United Services Institute – Vancouver  
invites you to attend a community meeting to discuss the  
Defence Policy Review**

**When: Saturday, 11 June, 2016**

**From 0900 to 1600**

**Where: Langley Events Centre  
7888 200 St, Langley, BC V2Y 3J4**

Stay for the whole day or watch for our soon to be released speaker list and just attend those that may be of interest to you.

Volunteers will be on hand to assist in collecting your input on the future of your Canadian Armed Forces.

For further information:  
Check out our Facebook page at  
<https://www.facebook.com/DPR.Langley/>

or contact  
Leon Jensen  
LeonInLangley@gmail.com



## **RUSI Vancouver Defence Policy Review Questions**

There are ten specific questions that the Minister of National Defence is looking for input on:

### **The Security Environment**

1. Are there any threats to Canada's security that are not being addressed adequately?
2. Are there particular regions or issues that you are most concerned with?

### **Canadian Approach to Defence – Canada, North America and International**

1. What roles should the Canadian Armed Forces play domestically, including in support of civilian authorities?
2. How should Canada-United States cooperation on defence of North America evolve in the coming years?
3. What form should the Canadian Armed Forces contribution to peace support operations take? Is there a role for the Canadian Armed Forces in helping to prevent conflict before it occurs?

### **Defence Capabilities and the Future Force**

1. Should the size, structure, and composition for the Canadian Armed Forces change from what they are today?
2. How can the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces improve the way they support the health and wellness of military members? In what areas should more be done?
3. Should Canada strive to maintain military capability across the full spectrum of operations? Are there specific niche areas of capability in which Canada should specialize?
4. What type of investments should Canada make in space, cyber, and unmanned systems? To what extent should Canada strive to keep pace and be interoperable with key allies in these domains?
5. What resources will the Canadian Armed Forces require to meet Canada's defence needs?

Tables are available at no charge for defence related organizations such as the Juno Beach Centre to utilize the event to increase the awareness of Canadians. A schedule of speakers will be provided in the near future.

Care to get involved? You can spend the day listening to guest speakers. You can take an hour out of a busy Saturday to assist in answering the questions that have been posed. You can even offer to assist by being a guest speaker, a question facilitator or a volunteer (email Leon at [LeonInLangley@gmail.com](mailto:LeonInLangley@gmail.com))



The 78<sup>th</sup> Fraser Highlanders  
&  
The Vancouver Garrison Officers  
Association



A Commemorative Dinner



In the summer of 1916 the British launched a major offensive against German lines.  
The battle lasted five months, killed or wounded approximately 1.2 million men.

Saturday, 11 June, 2016  
1830hrs for 1930hrs  
the Officers' Mess, Bessborough Armoury  
2025 West 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Vancouver, B.C.

Dress: Short sleeve summer dress

Tariff: \$45 pp

**LEST WE FORGET**



Note: This is a mixed dinner so feel free to bring a guest or your significant other. **RSVP to [scand@shaw.ca](mailto:scand@shaw.ca) by 06 June**

# FUNDRAISER

Please help John Horton return his boat,  
the Steveston Lifeboat, to volunteer service!



The Vancouver Maritime Museum, *BC Shipping News* and The Canadian Fishing Company are hosting this event to assist famed lifeboat commander and marine artist, John Horton. For 36 years John has volunteered his *Steveston Lifeboat* into SAR and prevention service, but in December 2014 it was involved in an unfortunate training accident, requiring a major refit. John's support of the marine industry is legendary, but now he needs help to complete the repair as his financial resources have run out.

The evening will feature some of John's art in the silent auction. He will also present a brief version of his highly popular illustrated talk on Captain Vancouver's Voyage of Discovery of this coast.

*Please come and support John.*

**Where** Vancouver Maritime Museum  
1905 Ogden Ave, Vancouver,  
BC V6J 1A3 (604 257-8300)

**When** Wednesday, 15 June, 2016

**Time** 5pm to 8pm

**Entry by donation**  
**Distinguished Guest Speaker**  
**Fundraising Goal: \$40,000**  
**Silent Auction**  
**Light Refreshments**

*If you are able to donate funds  
or an item for the silent auction  
or for any questions, please contact:  
Mary Horton at [mary@johnhorton.ca](mailto:mary@johnhorton.ca)  
or at 604 943-4399.*