



Van Arty Association and RUSI Van Members News Dec 5, 2017

Newsletters normally are emailed on Monday evenings. If you don't get a newsletter on time, check the websites below to see if there is a notice about the current newsletter or to see if the current edition is posted there. If the newsletter is posted, please contact me at bob.mugford@gmail.com to let me know you didn't get a copy.

Note: I had some computer problems over the weekend and almost lost the complet mailing list so, if you don't get a newsletter, please follow the instructions above. This is the **last full edition** of the newsletter for 2017. I will continue to publish an abbreviated edition, mainly to keep the ww2 diaries current. First full edition for 2018 will be on Jan 9, 2018

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 - We serve a great 5 course buffet meal for only \$20. Hope to see you all there. Attendance has been down recently. Most of our regular attendees, who are retired, are slowly fading away and the next generation seems, by and large, to be too busy to attend. Guests are always welcome and we encourage members to bring their significant others. Dress - Jacket and tie, equivalent for Ladies

Renovations in the Officers Mess are ongoing although we have move the lunches back to the Mess.

Upcoming events – Mark your calendars See attached posters for details.

See poster Vancouver Welch Men's Choir Christmas Concerts
Dec 10 CO's Christmas Tea
Dec 13 Last Lunch of 2017
Jan 01 New Years Levee – starts at 1100hrs in the Officers Mess
Jan 10 First Lunch of 2018

World War 2 - 1942

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

Dec 6th: Allied troops in Tunisia are pushed back near Medjaz al Bab. Only minor gains are made by the Americans at Buna and the Australians at Gona. Father Grigol Peradze is a

Georgian exile, a scholar and a priest of the Greek Orthodox Church. Today, he substitutes himself for a Jewish prisoner who is desperate to live for his family, and enters into the gas chamber at Auschwitz instead. In the Orthodox Calendar, this is the feast day for the Holy Saint Father Grigol Peradze, scholar and martyr.

Dec 7th: The Soviets make several attempts to cross the Chir River and advance on the German airbases supplying Stalingrad -- 11th Panzer fends these off, but at considerable cost. In New Guinea, a determined Japanese counterattack is barely fended off at Buna.

Dec 8th: A supply run by a Japanese destroyer group is aborted when US torpedo boats intervene. The British lower their age of conscription to 18. German troops occupy the Tunisian port of Bizerta – capturing 16 minor French warships at the docks.

Dec 9th: 21st Australian Brigade storms the Japanese defences at Gona on New Guinea in a savage fight. The 1st Marine Division on Guadalcanal starts embarking for badly needed rest in Australia as XIV US Corps lands.

Essential Reading: One early memoir of the war from the perspective of a man in the ranks was Robert Leckie's *Helmet for my Pillow*, first published in 1957. A Marine machine gunner in the 1st Division, he fought on Guadalcanal, on New Britain, and Peleliu, before spending most of the rest of the war in and out of hospitals. From his accounts, his own Marine Regiment appeared in Melbourne Australia, largely clad in the ragged clothes they had been fighting in on Guadalcanal to a very warm welcome and a badly needed rest.

Dec 10th: German counterattacks near Stalingrad and in Tunisia gain some ground.

Dec 11th: The 8th Army resumes its advance towards Tunisia. A supply run by IJN destroyers to Guadalcanal goes sour as US torpedo boats sink 1000 of 1200 supply containers with machinegun fire.

Dec 12th: Italian minisubs sink four merchant ships in Algiers harbour. Manstein sends Hoth with 15 divisions (including 3 panzer divisions) to bust open a corridor to Stalingrad. The depleted ranks of the Soviet's 51st Army lie in front of them.

The War Diary of C31 L/Sgt Charles D Phelan, A Battery, RCHA 1939 - 1945

Edited by BGen (ret'd) Robert P (Bob) Beaudry CD

Chapter 37. Inspections, Training, and the Secret Move to Florence

13 Jul 1944. Spent the morning cleaning guns and vehicles for Maj Mitchell's inspection which passed off OK in the afternoon.

14 Jul. Nothing much doing except trying to look busy.

15 Jul. Went to a range where I acted as GPO while the officers did course shooting. Very hot.

16 Jul. Went to Mass at Melfi Cathedral. Beggars outside reaped their usual Sunday harvest from the Canucks.

17 – 18 Jul. Scabbing for a big inspection by the CRA, and rehearsed for the March Past.

19 Jul. The big inspection by Brig Zeigler. We were told we'd soon be going back into action – and in Italy. The Brig found everything up to scratch. Swim parade in the afternoon.

20 Jul. Getting ready for a scheme tomorrow. In the evening an excellent Minstrel Show from the US Army visited the camp and played to a very appreciative audience.

21- 22 Jul. We did six troop deployments and two battery deployments. After supper we did a night occupation and bivouacked for the night. The next morning the battery set off on foot to practice "Battle Patrols". We had to cross and clear an area about 2 miles square, which was very rough and hilly. It took us three hours. Then we did a battery deployment followed by another troop deployment. After this we drove to a river near the camp and washed the vehicles and ourselves, and then we returned to camp.

23 – 24 Jul. The carriers left on a long trip. I went to 5 CCS for a complete medical check-up. To my satisfaction I was told I was perfectly OK and in A category.

25 Jul. During a Security lecture we were warned of the possibility of spies watching us for signs of an impending move. That evening I was 2 i/c of the Regt'l Guard. How I hate that stuff! I'd never make a parade ground soldier!

26 Jul. At about noon we had orders to pick up any suspicious Italians. They all looked suspicious, so in three hours we had twenty prisoners in the guardroom, including three small boys and two mules. I was ordered to take our crop to the Field Security Police (FSP), and herded them into a truck. We disposed of the mules by turning the kids loose with them. We drove to the FSP, but their office was closed. Anxious to get rid of my motley collection, we went on to Div where I found Lt Church, who was acting as IO, and told him the story. He soon got a Security Officer and a truck. We loaded the crew into the Div truck. The officer said they would be jailed for the night, questioned, and turned loose. We returned to camp.

27 Jul. We got a new Tp Commander, Capt Howard, as Capt Saunders was promoted to Bty Capt (BK). We spent the whole day on maintenance, preparing for a move. All Div signs were removed from the vehicles, and our shoulder badges, medal ribbons, etc., were removed from our tunics.

28 Jul. We spent the day packing and getting ready for tomorrow's move.

29 Jul. At about 0800 hrs we rolled out along Route 6. We passed through Casino and got a good view of the almost complete destruction. A road had been bulldozed through the town, and the rest was wired off with signs warning of mines and booby traps. We rolled on until 1700 hrs, when we parked for the night. We were about 20 kms from Rome.



The situation south of Rome showing German prepared defensive lines.

30 Jul. We moved off at 0600. We skirted the outskirts of Rome, which looked good. We saw that the Tiber was a muddy creek, and far from impressive. Travelling into the mountains we passed the rusting remains of many German vehicles and guns. A few miles beyond Spoleto we passed into our area, up a narrow twisting road several miles from the highway. In a small vineyard guns and vehicles were placed close together and camouflage nets erected over them. Tents were erected under small trees and vines – so vanished 1 Cdn Fd Regt RCHA. Almost immediately there were troop parades on which we were warned again about Security and Malaria protection. Even a casual conversation with a passing Italian means a Field General Court Martial. There were to be no fires, and slit trenches are to be dug, as recently the Poles nearby were dive-bombed six nights in a row. Despite strictness of the lighting order, there was a movie at RHQ at night!

31 Jul. Maintenance all day. We are to replace the RAF rondels on the truck roofs with the US star, which lends support to the rumor that we are to work with the Yanks for awhile. Rain.

1 Aug. In the morning we were on two hours notice to move, but this was cancelled, and the move postponed till tomorrow. We were told that 1 Cdn Corps is now attached to 13 Corps for the big operation.

2 - 3 Aug. We moved off early in the morning, travelling along Hwy 263 and minor winding roads. The farms in the area are more like Ontario farms. The people seemed better dressed north of Rome, and seemed glad to see us. We travelled to a concentration area a few miles beyond Siena.

4 - 5 Aug. Recce was cancelled. We did maintenance, and had a lecture on the "Polish Mine Detector". We had a two-hour route march. Then we put our Div red patches and unit titles back onto our uniforms. I was warned that I will go on recce tomorrow.

6 Aug. Tracy Huggins and I left in GA to recce a new position. We drove 50 miles through country that was practically untouched by war. We halted at noon in a small village about six kms south of Florence, and waited while the 2 i/c went forward on recce. B Tp area was in a small field reached by a narrow dirt track down a steep hill. We were told to dig slit trenches but not gun pits. The guns came in at 2200 hrs and went into action. We worked out DFs at ranges of 7000 to 13800 yards. We were not to fire into Florence.

7 Aug. No firing all day. We removed our Div patches again. Sitrep: 1 Cdn Div relieved a South African and a New Zealand Div. Our infantry is along the south bank of the River Arno, south and west of Florence. Facing us are 29 Panzer Gren, 4 Para, 356 Inf, and 715 Inf Divs.

8 Aug. Fired a couple HFs around 0100 hrs. It was very quiet all day – rumors are that the Jerries have withdrawn from Florence, leaving only some Fascist troops. We are warned of a recce tomorrow - to go back! I don't get it!

9 Aug. Left on Y at 0830 hrs. After 20 miles the fuel pump gave out. I got a truck to pull us to the nearest village, and after lunch the driver, Drumgoole, set out to scrounge a fuel pump. He returned after a few hours with one he'd got from the New Zealanders. We reached Siena about 1700 hrs and waited at the RV. Eventually the RQM, Capt Allen, found us and directed us to our area, which was a few miles south of Siena. The Regt arrived around midnight.

10 Aug. Advance party took off at 0200 hrs. Rained all night. We reached our area about three miles south of Perugia. The guns arrived about 1700 hrs.

11 -13 Aug. Maintenance for two days, then Mass on Sunday at 2 Fd Regt.

14 Aug. Maintenance. Personal observation: We travelled about 350 miles with all distinguishing signs removed. Then moved 50 miles with signs and patches replaced. We took up a position near Florence, and B Tp fired exactly 16 rounds. We then removed our patches and drove back 150 miles. Why did we move? Why didn't we stay in action? Where are we

moving next? I've given up guessing. Some would-be prophets say we are finished in Italy. Everyone figures the war is just about over, maybe Sept or Oct. It's a cinch nobody knows!

15 – 16 Aug. A detail was sent to Div HQ, where Mr Churchill was visiting. We heard that a new landing had taken place in the south of France. A report states that 1 Cdn Corps will join with the rest of 1 Cdn Army. Possibly we will be sent to southern France. Quiet both days.

17 Aug. Left on recce and drove 112 miles, to a Regt'l area about 16 miles from Jessi. I found a good troop area under good shade trees.

18 Aug. Guns arrived at 0500 hrs. We were told to catch up on our sleep. Quiet next 3 days.

21 Aug. We are to occupy an area a few miles south of Pesaro, and moved off at 2200 hrs.

US Army's Powerful New 7.62mm Service Rifle is Officially Dead

Jared Keller November 30, 2017 GEAR & TECH

The Army has officially canceled its search for an off-the-shelf 7.62mm Interim Combat Service Rifle (ICSR) meant to replace the standard-issue M4 carbine — a major setback in the branch's search for a new infantry rifle to augment soldier lethality. Army Contracting Command announced the cancellation of the ICSR program on Nov. 28, citing a “reprioritization” of funding for the commercially made service rifle to the Next Generation Squad Weapon (NGSW) as a replacement for both the M4 and M249 Squad Automatic Weapon and “a long-term solution to meet the identified capability gap instead of the ICSR, which was an interim solution.” The announcement did not disclose the scope of the funds involved, and PEO Soldier and US Army Contracting Command did not immediately respond to inquiries from Task & Purpose. The saga of the ICSR has been a turbulent one. In May, Army Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Milley told lawmakers that the current 5.56 mm rounds chambered in the M4 and M16 assault rifles ubiquitous among infantry troops (namely the M855A1 Enhanced Performance Round) cannot penetrate modern enemy body armor; the same month, he told Senate Armed Services Committee members that Maneuver Center of Excellence officials at Fort Benning, Georgia, had engineered a new 7.62mm round capable of defeating plates similar

to U.S. military-issue Enhanced Small Arms Protective Inserts.



Spc Ethan Esposito, Joint Multinational Training Command, fires an M4 carbine rifle during US Army Europe's Best Warrior Competition in Grafenwoehr, Germany, July 31, 2012.

Photo via DoD

Vice Chief of Staff Gen Daniel Allyn translated Milley's testimony into a directed requirement for a new 7.62 mm rifle. Shortly after his appearance before SASC, the Army issued a request for information to "identify sources for a combat rifle system" that could deliver up to 50,000 weapons over a truncated timeline; in August, the branch issued a formal solicitation with a simple objective: "to acquire and field a 7.62mm ICSR that will increase soldier lethality." On paper, the ICSR looked like a sweet little rifle upgrade. The Army's original RFI detailed needs for a rifle platform with either a 16 or 20-inch barrel with collapsible buttstock, a 20 to 30-round magazine in support of the standard 210 loadout, noise and flash suppression, compatibility with the Family of Weapons Sights-Individual system that connects rifle sites to a soldier's night-vision goggle, a standard Picatinny rail system for optics, and other accessories. Had the Army moved forward with the program, the ICSR would've chambered either the new M80A1 or XM1158 Advanced Armor Penetrating rounds. Unfortunately, the cancellation of the ICSR has been rumored for months: Military sources told The Firearm Blog on Sept. 20 that the program had become subject to a "massive review of U.S. Army small arms programs." That review coincided with a three-month continuing resolution on the federal budget in Congress that Secretary of Defense James Mattis, in a Sept. 8 letter to Sen John McCain obtained by Defense News, warned would jeopardize the ICSR effort along with 17 other Army programs. While the Army's 7.62mm M110A1 Compact Semi-Automatic Sniper System program is still in the works, the ICSR simply wasn't as lucky.

While PEO soldier program executive officer Army Brig Gen Brian Cummings in early October rebutted cancellation rumors, telling Military.com that the ICSR program "is not dead" and a decision "[had] not been made." But sources told Military.com that Milley had already opted to ditch the requirement detailed by Allyn in May and formally established in the August solicitation. At the same time, the ICSR's demise was always meant to be, y'know, "interim." In an Oct. 3 update on the Army's Modular Handgun System, Cummings noted that the "long-term way ahead" for the branch's focus on lethality was always the NGSW. And Cummings hinted that if any program would get the axe, it would be the ICSR: of the two Army programs focused on "[getting] a 7.62 inside the squad," he said, the squad-designated marksman role addressed by the CSASS sniper rifle trumps the ICSR as a equipping priority.



The Heckler & Koch M110A1 7.62mm semi-automatic sniper rifle selected for the Army's Compact Semi-Automatic Sniper System (CSASS) program on display at AUSA on Oct. 11, 2017. Photo via Heckler & Koch

Don't worry, though: the NGSW is no peashooter. After conducting a two-year comprehensive Small Arms

Ammunition Configuration examination of ammo and fire control systems, the Maneuver

Center for Excellence plans on using the NGSW as the primary platform for the next-generation small arms systems that Army researchers are pursuing in accordance with Milley's laser focus on infantry lethality. The final vision for the weapon includes a heads-up display embedded in a conventional rifle scope, and, as Cummings told Marine Corps Times on Oct 8, is "a wireless fire control system that senses wind, calculates distance and compensates for ballistics, all while being able to spot heat signatures through thermals." Speaking at the annual Association of the U.S. Army convention in October, Milley promised that the NGSW would provide "10 times improvement" in individual Army soldiers' small arms capability "over any other system in the world," a bold promise given his dire warnings delivered to Congress back in April. And while the NGSW may not see action downrange until 2022, the Army's six-month emotional roller-coaster ride over the ICSR may just indicate how focused the branch is on trying anything and everything it can to make America's soldiers deadlier than ever as soon as possible.

Ageing Veterans Face Lack of Support

According to Ombudsman's Report

Photo via @VetsOmbudsman on Twitter



Ageing Veterans are facing a lack of adequate support between at home and Long-Term Care, according to a report released by the Veterans Ombudsman Guy Parent. The report, released in October, *A Continuum of Care: A Journey from Home to*

Long-Term Care, suggests that while the Veterans Independence Program (VIP) assists Veterans in remaining independent and self-sufficient while at home, those same Veterans are faced with limited options when remaining at home is no longer an option. This is especially critical as there is a demographic shift in the makeup of those served by Veterans Affairs Canada. The report also found that programs are too complex, and eligibility is often based on service type rather than needs and this complexity is making it more difficult for Veterans and their family members to fully access programming.

The Veterans Ombudsman noted that Veterans Affairs Canada should create one simple "Continuum of Care" Program that covers all the needs of Veterans and their families as they age or require more care. In total, the ombudsman has made seven recommendations.

The report is calling on the Minister of Veterans Affairs and the department personnel to remain in contact with the recipients of VIP to monitor their changing needs; eliminate inconsistencies of the program for spouses and survivors; adjust the eligibility criteria of the Caregiver Recognition Benefit; introduce additional financial support that can be used to subsidize living

options for Veterans; and make general changes to the way these programs are delivered and how they are communicated about. Parent has advised VAC to implement these changes within two years' time. "The timing is right to make these changes. The demographic shift – both in Canadian society and within VAC's client base – has opened up a unique window of opportunity to make changes to the continuum of care for injured Veterans. Implementing my recommendations will make a positive difference by helping to ensure that ill or injured Veterans and their families receive the lifetime of care and support they need and deserve as a result of their service and sacrifice to Canada," said Parent. The Report is the fourth in a series on the continuum of care for Veterans. It follows three Reviews published by the Office of the Veterans Ombudsman in 2013 and 2014 on Long Term Care (LTC), the Veterans Independence Program (VIP) and Assisted Living Options.

Vancouver Artillery Association Yearbook Updates

Yorke Island war diaries from December 1939 are now on-line.

<http://www.vancouvergunners.ca/war-diaries---december-1939.html>

Photos of the unit firing a salute for the visiting warship USS Iowa.

<http://www.vancouvergunners.ca/1948.html>

Additional member added to the Distinguished Conduct Medal page.

<http://www.vancouvergunners.ca/dcm.html>

New Vancouver Gunner T-shirts now available. <http://www.vancouvergunners.ca/whats-new/quartermaster-stores5973659>

A new "Support the Troops" page has been added displaying benefits available to soldiers and veterans. <http://www.vancouvergunners.ca/support-the-troops.html>

New photos added to the 2017 yearbook including the Officers' Mess Special Guest Night.

<http://www.vancouvergunners.ca/2017.html>

Keep those stories, calendar events and pictures coming! Contact Leon Jensen at

president.vcrgunners@gmail.com

Who Is It

Last Week We had several replies, most from our Navy readers. The country is



Manchukuo. The ships are the gunboats Shun Tien and Yang Min, of the Shun Tien Class, built in Japan and commissioned in 1934. Main guns were the twin 120mm dual purpose gun similar to that shown in a Newsletter snowy Kiska photo some months ago. The vessels were part of the Manchukuo River Defence Force based in Harbin on the Sungari

River, and patrolled the Amur and Ussuri Rivers adjacent to the USSR. In 1944, the guns were removed from the ships and used as land based AA.

This Week It has sometimes been said that we ignore both the Brylcreem Boys (aka RCAF), and their American cousins (who we once jokingly referred to as “You Alls”, at least, that’s the slang from my youth, vaguely remembered through the haze of time). So, this week we hit both marks. The image this week is artwork found in a scrapbook of a former pilot of the famous 8345th Pursuit Squadron, United States Army Air Corps, who wishes to remain anonymous. Captain “Butch” Buzzard, of 213 Winsome Drive, Sarasota, FL (phone number is available upon request), was one of the very few to successfully pilot this fascinating craft.

Regretfully, Butch suffered head injuries in an unrelated accident, involving two young women, several sheep, and an ice rink “somewhere in England”, so doesn’t remember anything of this aircraft, other than the fact that he might have piloted it. He also stated that it was called Edna and Doris, but that apparently wasn’t the case, as they are named on his medical discharge certificate as being involved in the ice rink incident. Whether they were the women or the sheep is not specified.



So, dear reader, can you help us in clearing up this mystery, and bringing a few fond (maybe) memories to our friend, the anonymous American pilot (or rear gunner; he’s not quite sure)? Send your guesses to the editor, or to the author, John Redmond ([johnd. redmond@telus.net](mailto:johnd.redmond@telus.net)). All responses are confidential. We promise.

Send your ideas to the editor, bob.mugford@outlook.com or to the author, John Redmond (johnd. redmond@telus.net).

From the ‘Punitary’

Why did the banker retire? He lost interest.

Murphy’s Other Laws

A little ignorance can go a long way. ... in the direction of maximum harm.

Quotable Quotes

Start with what is right rather than what is acceptable. - Franz Kafka

Vancouver Welsh Men's Choir

SOUNDS of CHRISTMAS

Thurs, Nov 30th, 7:30pm *Downtown Vancouver*
with Burnaby Central Secondary School Choir
and guest fiddler Cam Wilson
St. Andrew's-Wesley United Church
Corner of Burrard/Nelson Streets
Tickets from www.vwmc.ca

Sat, Dec 2nd, 2:30pm *White Rock*
with Johnston Heights Secondary School Choir
and guest fiddler Cam Wilson
White Rock Baptist Church, 1657-140th Street
Tickets at www.vwmc.ca or
Tapestry Music 604-538-0906

Sun, Dec 3rd, 2:30pm *New Westminster*
with *Winter Harp* at **Massey Theatre***, 735 8th Ave.
Tickets only from www.ticketsnw.ca 604-521-5050

Where to Buy Tickets:

Online: vwmc.ca (no fees)
In person: from any choir member
By phone: VWMC 604-878-1190
From theatre box offices
At the door

Wed, Dec 8th, 7:30pm *North Vancouver*
with Argyle Secondary School Choir
and guest fiddler Cam Wilson
Centennial Theatre*, 2300 Lonsdale
Tickets only from Box Office 604-984-4484

Thurs, Dec 16th, 7:30pm *Vancouver*
with Magee Secondary School Choir
and guest fiddler Cam Wilson
Shaughnessy Heights United Church
1550 West 33rd Ave.
Tickets at www.vwmc.ca

Ticket Prices:

\$29 **\$27** **\$12***
ADULT SENIOR STUDENT with ID

MASSEY THEATRE* Good \$28.50, Better \$34.50,
Best \$39.50 (includes fees)

CENTENNIAL THEATRE* \$32, \$29, \$12
(includes fees)

