



## Van Arty Association and RUSI Van Members News Feb 5, 2019

Newsletters normally are emailed on Monday evenings. If you don't get a future 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](mailto:bob.mugford@gmail.com) to let me know you didn't get a copy.

**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 -** We need your support to keep the lunches going. Hope all you regular attendees can keep coming. The Mess serves a great 5 course buffet meal for only \$20. Hope to see you all there. Guests are always welcome, and we encourage members to bring their significant others and friends. Dress - Jacket and tie, equivalent for Ladies. For serving personnel, uniform of the day is always acceptable at lunch.

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

**Feb 13** RUSI Speaker - The Charge of Flowerdew's Squadron

**Mar 01** 15 Fd & 78<sup>th</sup> FH Scotch tasting

### RUSI Speaker Series for 2019

The popular RUSI Speaker Series resumes on Wednesday, February 13 in the 15Fd Officer's Mess from 5:00 to 7:00 pm with Bob Mackay entitled 'The Charge of Flowerdew's Squadron: 100 Years Later'. In this three-part presentation Bob will tell the story of the famous Battle of Moreuil Wood by Lord Strathcona's Horse led by Lt Gordon Flowerdew VC, in March 1918. Bob Mackay is the author of 'Soldier of the Horse'. The series continues March 13 with special guest speaker Dr James Boutilier who will provide insights on the current and future relationship between China and Canada. This is followed on April 10 with a presentation on Canada's role in Bomber Command during WW2 with Col (Ret'd) Keith Maxwell. RUSI Vancouver thanks the Commanding Officer of 15Fd RCA and the Officer's Mess for their cooperation.

## **World War 2 – 1944**

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

**Feb 6<sup>th</sup>:** 3<sup>rd</sup> Ukrainian Front comes closer to encircling Nikopol. See-saw fighting continues in the hills north of Cassino.

**Feb 7<sup>th</sup>:** Hitler allows the troops in the Korsun pocket to stage a breakout. As 1<sup>st</sup> British Division gets pounded on again in Anzio, 56<sup>th</sup> British and 45<sup>th</sup> US Divisions arrive to reinforce the beach-head. This means that instead of drawing off German reserves to weaken the Gustav Line, the Anzio beachhead is now drawing off formations meant to crack the line. Hereafter, the landing can truly be considered a failure.

**Feb 8<sup>th</sup>:** The Soviets own Nikopol (and its Manganese) again, but most of the Germans manage to slip out.

**Feb 9<sup>th</sup>:** German aircraft fly in more ammunition and evacuate more wounded from the Korsun pocket, as the occupants muster for a desperate breakout battle. 1<sup>st</sup> British Division is pushed out of Aprilia at the Anzio beach-head.

**Feb 10<sup>th</sup>:** Australian and US troops completely clear the Huon Peninsula on New Guinea.

**Feb 11<sup>th</sup>:** The Factory in 1<sup>st</sup> UK Division's area at Anzio changes hands three times today. The gallant 34<sup>th</sup> US Division has done excellent work around Cassino, but it simply cannot close the last few hundred metres into the monastery. On its flanks, the Texans of the 36<sup>th</sup> US Division and the 4<sup>th</sup> Indian Division (of II New Zealand Corps) fare no better. III Panzer Corps has nearly broken into the Korsun Pocket and has captured a vital bridge; the Germans inside the pocket start their breakout late in the day.

**Feb 12<sup>th</sup>:** The Marines on New Britain pick up some new gains today and are 40 km from their original landing sites. The fighting at the Korsun pocket is turning out to be some of the most ferocious in the history of the Eastern Front. US II Corps is replaced by the New Zealand Corps around Cassino and heads off for a badly needed rest and refit. Wendell Willkie announces his bid for the Republican candidacy and MacArthur's name is being tossed around for the same role; the Democrats look to be sticking with Roosevelt.

## **A Potential Mobile Artillery Dynamic Duo: 'Hawkeye' And 'Brutus'**

*Todd South November 6, 2018*

Recent Army artillery testing could give the FIRES community its first-ever ability to airlift self-propelled artillery in both small and large packages. One piece of gear has been tested before and showcased in recent years, but another comes as a bit of an Internet surprise after soldiers posted photos to social media websites.



*The Hawkeye, a 105mm artillery piece mounted on a Humvee by AM General, using Mandus Group's "soft recoil" technology, makes for a more mobile, transportable artillery piece. (Todd South/Staff)*

The Hawkeye is a 105mm, Humvee-mounted artillery piece that's made by AM General and Mandus Group. AM General makes Humvees, while the Mandus Group makes the a soft-recoil howitzer, which allows the cannon to fire from a lighter platform. That

same technology has been applied to the "Brutus," a 155mm Howitzer that soldiers recently fired for the first time from the back of a flatbed 5-ton cargo truck at the Maneuver Fires Integration Experiment, or MFI, in late October at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. Monica Guthrie, spokeswoman at Fort Sill, confirmed that the current MFI does include the Hawkeye testing, along with other initiatives that include counter-drone technologies and directed energy, or laser, use. She could not comment further on specific pieces of gear. But, soldiers with the 75th Field Artillery Brigade posted photos and brief notes on the Brutus firing at MFI. "1LT Monika Lewandowska served as the Fire Direction Officer for the first ever round fired from the Brutus, an experimental 155mm forward recoiling howitzer mounted on an FMTV," read the caption accompanying the social media post. "CPTs Keith Purdy and Phillip Sutton served as battery commander and battalion FDO during the Maneuver and Fires Integration Exercise at Fort Sill, OK." The photos and comments have since been removed from the brigade's Facebook and Twitter pages.

*The Brutus is a 155mm artillery piece mounted on a 5-ton truck by AM General, using Mandus Group's "soft recoil" technology. It was recently fired at the Fires Center of Excellence Maneuver Fires Integration Experiment at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. (Army)*



But this isn't the first Army mention of either the Hawkeye or the Brutus. The Hawkeye was tested at a MFI late last year. It was lauded as a more mobile light artillery platform by Capts. Joseph Schmid and Adam Wilson in the May-June issues of "Fires," the professional journal of the artillery community. The pair of captains detailed lessons learned from artillery use in their article, "U.S. artillery on

the Korean Peninsula, Then and Now.” “For example, we can reasonably assume a brigade will perform large amounts of artillery air assaults to move guns over non-trafficable ridgelines, high peaks and dangerous valleys,” they wrote. They compared the transport options with the current M119A3 for light artillery versus using lighter platforms such as the Hawkeye. “... a battery commander can sling-load two full howitzer sections (one towed M119A3 and one prime mover per section) with four CH-47 Chinook helicopters. However, with the Hawkeye platform, a brigade can double its ability to project indirect Fires forward in support of a maneuver formation by sling-loading one Hawkeye SPH under each CH-47,” they wrote. The authors then referenced similar soft recoil work being done by Mandus on the Brutus, which has actually been in development by the company since at least 2012, according to its website. Neither AM General nor Mandus Group responded to immediate requests for comment.

The Brutus moniker is a curious one, as there is a truck-mounted 155mm Howitzer in current use by the French military called the CAESAR. The acronym in French translates to “truck equipped with an artillery system.” CAESAR has been used in Afghanistan and Mosul, Iraq. It was developed in the 1990s in a six-wheeled variant. An eight-wheeled version was showcased in 2015. The Army does have a self-propelled 155mm howitzer platform in the armored M109 Paladin, which has been undergoing its own improvement program. But it lacks the transport options of a Humvee-strapped howitzer. Both the Hawkeye and Brutus fit, in part, descriptions laid out by Army Contracting Command back in February that looks for a “Next Generation” howitzer for the infantry brigade combat team and Stryker BCTs. “The Government is interested in a single system replacement for the M119 and M777 towed howitzers currently fielded ...,” the fbo.gov posting noted. They laid out some areas in which they were seeking new concepts or changes. Those included modifications to the existing artillery fleet, a short-tube 155mm Howitzer, “integration of existing/developmental armaments into existing/developmental vehicle,” and a ground up wheeled howitzer.

## **Starting First Phase of CH-146 Griffon Upgrade and Life Extension**

David Pugliese, Ottawa Citizen January 27, 2019



*Royal Canadian Air Force CH-146 Griffon helicopters fly to pick up supplies to transport to troops deployed further north during Operation NANOOK, August 21, 2017.*

*Photo Credit: Mona Ghiz,  
MARLANT PA NK50-2017-223-047*

Bell Helicopter Textron Canada will start the process to upgrade and extend the operating life of the Canadian Forces Griffon helicopter fleet with initial work needed to determine how to proceed with technology improvements. The firm, based in Mirabel, Que., will be conducting design work needed to extend the life of fleet of 85 CH-146 Griffon helicopters to at least 2031. The

definition work, valued at up to \$90 million, will be performed under the existing support contract for the CH-146, which was awarded to the firm in 2011, according to the Department of National Defence. The company, which is the original manufacturer of the helicopter, will develop design changes to upgrade the aircraft's avionics systems, engines, and cockpit displays, as well as to integrate sensor systems.

The Griffon Limited Life Extension project is estimated to be valued at approximately \$800 million, the DND noted. Once the definition phase is complete, a separate contract is expected to be awarded in 2022 for implementation of the upgrades. Canada's fleet of CH-146 Griffons entered service between 1995 and 1997. The helicopters are used for a variety of functions, including special forces support, tactical troop transport, reconnaissance, escort and surveillance, casualty evacuation, disaster relief, and search and rescue. The CH-146 can carry up to 15 people (two pilots, a flight engineer, and 12 passengers), has a maximum gross weight of nearly 5,400 kilograms, and can reach speeds up to 260 kilometres per hour, according to the Canadian Forces.

## **Why America is an Aircraft Carrier Superpower**

and Russia Is Not? - It comes down to a simple thing.

*Dave Majumdar National Interest January 22, 2019*



Ultimately, it is not the age of its ships or the capabilities of its hardware that makes the U.S. Navy the globe-spanning titan that it is. It is the quality of its training and the soundness of its procedures that make the service what it is. Russia has long way to go before it ever comes close to matching American naval aviation prowess. The Russian Navy has lost two carrier-based fighters onboard its sole remaining carrier *Admiral Kuznetsov* in the span of only a few weeks. On both occasions, technical problems with *Kuznetsov*'s arresting gear played a central role in the accidents—which have cost the Kremlin a Mikoyan MiG-29KUBR Fulcrum-D and a Sukhoi Su-33 Flanker-D. While *Kuznetsov*'s hardware is old, the bigger issue is Russia's relative lack of experience in naval aviation and insufficient proficiency with launching and recovering combat aircraft onboard a carrier at sea.

In the case of the first crash on Nov.14—where a MiG-29KUBR ran out of fuel and crashed into the Mediterranean—the aircraft was orbiting while deck crews attempted to fix a broken arresting cable that had become entangled with one of the three remaining wires. The cable had snapped when another MiG-29KR had landed safely onboard *Kuznetsov*—however, that aircraft had caught the fourth and last cable on deck. Meanwhile, the second crash on Dec 5—this time involving a Su-33 Flanker—was also due to a snapped arresting gear cable. Naval aviation is an inherently dangerous business, but many of Russia's naval aviation mishaps are due to a lack of experience and proficiency in carrier-based operations. While some of the Russian Navy's problems can be attributed to the elderly *Kuznetsov*'s many

inherent flaws, the Russians have not developed the proper procedures or practices to operate carrier-borne aircraft safely at sea. *Kuznetsov*—commissioned on Dec. 25, 1990—is an older ship, but the vessel’s age is not the real issue. There are a good number of US Navy carriers that are far older than *Kuznetsov* that operate perfectly well. *Nimitz*, *Dwight D Eisenhower*, *Carl Vinson*, *Theodore Roosevelt* and *Abraham Lincoln*—are all older than the Russian ship. Moreover, USS *Enterprise* (CVN-65)—which was retired on Dec 1, 2012, after more than 50 years in service—was just as ready to launch and recover aircraft on the day she was pulled out of service as she was the day she was first deployed in 1962.

The reason the US Navy can operate a carrier for more than half a century is because the service maintains the material condition of its ships and has superbly trained crews. The Russians—especially over the past 25 years since the collapse of the Soviet Union—have not always properly maintained *Kuznetsov*. Nor has *Kuznetsov*’s crew been given enough of a chance to gain the requisite proficiency to safely conduct carrier operations at sea. Cables break—it happens even onboard the US Navy’s fleet of supercarriers. Indeed, one particular incident I recall was when an old acquaintance of mine was nearly killed when a cable snapped onboard USS *Kitty Hawk* (CV-63) in 2005. His Boeing F/A-18F Super Hornet fell into the water and the ship nearly ran him and his weapons systems officer over. Meanwhile, there was chaos onboard *Kitty Hawk* as the ends of the cable thrashed across the flight deck—damaging aircraft and injuring crew members. Accidents happen—but a broken cable leading to a mishap is exceedingly rare onboard US Navy carriers. Two accidents in less than three weeks is indicative of serious problems onboard. “Cables separate/break at some interval—and that’s big news usually leading to injury, death or mishap. The cable system breaking does happen regularly, and they usually just remove it and work with less wires—two or three now with the new design,” one senior naval aviator told me. “The bottom line is that it’s very rare, sometimes preventable (settings, maintenance, etc.) and it’s big news when it happens.”

Meanwhile, the earlier loss of the MiG-29KUBR is indicative of poor decision making on the part of the Russian commander—who should probably have diverted the jet to a shore base in Syria. US Navy carriers—when operating close to shore—will designate divert airfields in case there is a serious emergency where the ship cannot recover its aircraft. Indeed, the carrier usually launches recovery tankers—airial-refueling-configured Super Hornets—to ensure that jets have enough fuel to operate safely. While *Kuznetsov* does not have the ability to launch a tanker—or even buddy-refueller configured fighters—the Russians should have designated a divert field for emergencies. “When the carrier and air wing team first put to sea they are considered to be in divert ops until they pass their Combat Operations Efficiency (COE) evaluation, which is also called ‘blue water certification.’ We also use divert ops if there is an engineering casualty on the carrier, for example if we’re only using one reactor... whether by necessity or by choice,” another senior U.S. naval aviator told me. “Typically, a ship-based limitation that could put the recovery of fixed-wing aircraft at risk leads to a

divert ops situation, so we'd need to be in relatively close proximity to land—say, 200 nautical miles or so.”

As a force designed to project American power across the globe, the U.S. Navy has designed its procedures to enable safe carrier operations even in the middle of the ocean—far from any land bases. “Blue water ops enable the carrier and air wing to conduct flight operations anywhere, anytime,” the second naval aviator said. “We utilize tankers to provide the required gas — ‘front side’ gas to give us more to train with, with ‘back side’ gas available as required when an aircraft’s fuel state gets low.” Ultimately, it is not the age of its ships or the capabilities of its hardware that makes the U.S. Navy the globe-spanning titan that it is. It is the quality of its training and the soundness of its procedures that make the service what it is. Russia has long way to go before it ever comes close to matching American naval aviation prowess.

## **Vancouver Artillery Association Yearbook Updates**

Regimental Centennial glassware is now on sale! Check out what’s available on this page.

<http://www.vancouvergunners.ca/quartermaster-stores.html>

Here’s some more recent updates on the website:

2019 – passing of Lieutenant-Colonel Bill Jackson CD

<http://www.vancouvergunners.ca/obituaries-2019.html>

1982 – Yakima <http://www.vancouvergunners.ca/yakima-1982.html>

1982 – Shilo <http://www.vancouvergunners.ca/shilo-1982.html>

1976 – St Barbara’s Dinner [www.vancouvergunners.ca/st-barbara-1976.html](http://www.vancouvergunners.ca/st-barbara-1976.html)

1976 – Soldiers Christmas Dinner <http://www.vancouvergunners.ca/christmas-1976.html>

1942 – Letter from Yorke

<http://www.vancouvergunners.ca/1942---15th-vcr-coast-bde-rca-af.html>

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

[president.vcrgunners@gmail.com](mailto:president.vcrgunners@gmail.com)

## **Who Is It**



**Last Week:** The photo comes from a BC Hussars album, and shows them training somewhere near Kamloops in 1938. The first three cars (and possibly the 4<sup>th</sup>) are Hudson Terraplanes. The first two are 1937 models, the 3<sup>rd</sup> a 1938 and the 4<sup>th</sup> possibly a truck model from the early 30s. The Terraplane was a car/truck brand and model built by the Hudson Motor Car Company of Detroit, Michigan, between 1932 and 1938. In its maiden year, the car was branded as the Essex-Terraplane; in 1934 the car became simply the Terraplane. They were

inexpensive, yet powerful vehicles that were used in both town and country, as both cars and trucks bore the Terraplane name.

**This Week:** Dear reader, please forgive us if we once more return to the air, from the dusty environs where we have been the past couple of weeks, but we have come across a photo in the vast 15<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment (RCA) archives, in the south-west wing, third basement, that might interest some of you. The image in question is of an aircraft, but not of an aeroplane, if you get the point. It is of a type from the distant past, when men wore moustaches and wore polyester, as did some women. But that is another story.



This tale needs your help. Although the shape of the flying machine may be familiar to older readers, something about it is of historic import, as it was something fairly short-lived in our military. Unlike in a military-controlled totalitarian regime where anything fun can be obtained for the services at short notice, our armed forces are sometimes subject to decisions that military members find not to their liking, and the history of this machine might be a case in point. If you know something we don't, please make us aware by telling us the name of this whirly thing, and the tale of the unit that flew it. Answers may be sent to the editor, [bob.mugford@oulook.com](mailto:bob.mugford@oulook.com) or to the author, John Redmond [johnd. redmond@telus.net](mailto:johnd.redmond@telus.net) .

### From the 'Punitary'

What happened when 2 silk worms started to race? It ended in a tie!

### Murphy's Other Laws

Material will be damaged in direct proportion to its value

### Quotable Quotes

This is the precept by which I have lived: Prepare for the worst; expect the best; and take what comes. - *Hannah Arendt*



**JOIN US**  
**RUSI VANCOUVER SPEAKER**  
**SERIES**

---

Wednesday, 13 February 2019

From 5:00 to 7:00 pm

Officers Mess – Bessborough Armoury

Subject: “The Charge of Flowerdew’s Squadron: 100 Years Later”

Speaker: Robert Mackay

---

**Upcoming Topics & Speakers**

13 March 2019 – “Canada - China Relations: Predatory, Promising or, Problematic”

Speaker: Dr. James A. Boutilier – Advisor to MARPAC Command

10 April 2019 – “Canada & The WW2 Bomber Command Campaign”

Speaker: Colonel (Ret’d) Keith Maxwell, OMM, CD

**EVERYONE IS WELCOME**

**RSVP TO [LHCCATHCART@GMAIL.COM](mailto:LHCCATHCART@GMAIL.COM)**

Hosted by RUSI Vancouver with the cooperation with LCol. Pierre LaJoie, Commanding Officer, and President and Members of the 15Fd Officers Mess.

## 15 Fd and 78<sup>th</sup> Fraser's Highlanders Scotch Tasting

### THE ANNUAL 2019 15<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Regiment RCA & The 78<sup>th</sup> Fraser's Highlanders Fund Raiser and Scotch Tasting Night

The 15<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Regiment RCA and the 78<sup>th</sup> Fraser's Highlanders invite you, and any like-minded guests of your acquaintance, to attend our annual fund raising and whisky tasting event at the historic Bessborough Armoury. There will be food, draw prizes, and music. There will be whisky!

For the Full 'Whisky Fleet', Tickets are **\$55.00** per person by Credit Card, Cheque, or by exact change, otherwise your \$60 in bills will be gratefully accepted towards our good cause. Bernard Rowe, who will be relieving you of your burden of carrying cash will meet you at the front door and will be most appreciative. For those who are driving, or prefer the options from the No-Host bar, you pay a meager **\$25.00**.

**Only 50 tickets will be sold for the full whisky fleet! Bring guests!**

Dress is business casual. Kilts and highland dress, of course, are most welcome.

**DATE:** Friday – March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019

**TIME:** 1800 hrs – 2300 hrs

**LOCATION:** 15<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Regiment RCA  
2025 West 11<sup>th</sup> Ave Van, BC V6J 2C7

**DO NOT MISS OUT!  
TO RESERVE YOUR TICKET CONTACT:**

Major James Barrett

Cell: (604) 916-1766

E-Mail: [barrettjd007@gmail.com](mailto:barrettjd007@gmail.com)

All profits raised by the 15th Field Regimental Society and the 78<sup>th</sup> Fraser Highlanders Fort Fraser Garrison will go towards supporting the 15 Field Centennial Projects next year in 2020.

Tax receipts will be issued for all donations upon request.