

Van Arty Association and RUSI Van Members News – 11 Feb 2025

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 to let me know you didn't get your copy.

Newsletter online. 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>

Upcoming events – Mark your calendars – see poster section for details.

- Feb 12 **No Zoom Lunch meeting**
- Feb 19 **Zoom Lunch meeting 1200-1240hrs**
- Feb 24 Service for BGen Bill Wickett at Armoury – details when available.
- Feb 26 **Lunch & Speaker in Mess – no Zoom meeting**
- Mar 01 **Concert for the Padre – Christ Church Cathedral**
- Mar 28 **AFOA Annual RCAF Anniversary Mess Dinner-** See poster section

RUSI Vancouver and 15 Fd Regt Society Lunch and Presentation – 26 February 2025

Join us for another great lunch and presentation on February 26th at Bessborough Armoury. Our presenter is a well-known face to RUSI - Vancouver members and a member of the Society. Bob Mackay will speak to us about his latest publication, the novel is, “The Forgotten – A Novel of the Korean War.”



Robert Mackay joined the Royal Canadian Navy after graduating from North Surrey High School. He spent four years at UBC while training at sea during the summers. He was then commissioned and spent six years at sea in destroyers and submarines, followed by service at HMCS DISCOVERY, Vancouver's Naval Reserve establishment. Besides RUSI Vancouver, Bob is a member of the Legion, the Naval Association of BC and a national director of the Canadian Authors Association. Bob retired from his law

partnership in Cloverdale to research and write *Soldier of the Horse*, a novel based on his father's time in Canada's World War One cavalry. *Soldier* was followed by *Terror on the Alert*, his novel set during the Cuban Missile Crisis and based on his time in Cold War submarines, both British and Canadian. His most recent novel is *The Forgotten – A Novel of the Korean War*, which was published in October 2024.

Menu

Chicken Florentine (chicken breast with a spinach cream sauce)

Brown buttered squash with cranberries

Herbed rice pilaf

Garden salad

Dessert: apple crumble tarts and maple walnut butter tarts

Lunch starts at 1200hrs, and the presentation will take place in the lecture room at 1315 hrs.

Cost is \$35 per person. **Reservations and payment in advance are required.**

Those wishing to attend must RSVP to HCol Don Foster - dgfoster60@gmail.com

Prepayment for lunch tickets required by 23 Feb.

E-transfer may be made to: 15rca100th@gmail.com

If you cannot make an e-transfer, please make payment arrangements with HCol Don Foster. There will be no cash or credit card option available at the door.

For further information, contact HCol Don Foster at (604)809-6242 or dgfoster60@gmail.com

Or - Colonel (Retired) Keith Maxwell at (604) 865-0612 or kdm Maxwell@gmail.com

The Forgotten: A Novel of the Korean War – Oct 15, 2024

by [Robert W. Mackay](#). On Amazon – ebook \$7.99 paperback \$26.95



The Forgotten is the story of nineteen-year-old Charlie Black who, in 1950, desperate to prove himself to his father, joins the Canadian Army's Special Force as part of the United Nations forces defending South Korea from an attack by the North. Leaving his family and girlfriend behind, Charlie trains hard, but is soon separated from his battalion, the 2nd Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry. He manages to catch up with the Patricias at the last minute as they prepare to ship out, but not before witnessing the aftermath of a fatal rail disaster. Onboard, Charlie is assigned to 13 Platoon, a group of misfits and adventure-seekers under the leadership of Frenchy, their menacing corporal. Charlie's comrades are young, only partly trained, but eager to get into battle. When the battalion arrives in Korea, however, their role has changed significantly. China has entered the war on the other side, and allied forces are struggling to survive. What the Canadian government conceived as a semi-peacekeeping role for their troops has changed into an all-out war, and after a brief period of additional training, the Special Force—including Charlie's battalion—goes on the offensive against terrible odds. A harrowing story of war and survival, *The Forgotten* helps shed a light on a brutal conflict in our nation's history, and those brave souls willing to step into the breach.

CAF Contribution to the Defence of Latvia and NATO's Eastern Flank

The President and Executive of RUSI NS would like to invite you to our second presentation of 2025 on our contribution to NATO forces in Latvia.

On 19 February 2025, from 1600 to 1800 hours **Atlantic Time** (Halifax), we will have a presentation by Colonel Jim Smith, the current Commander of Task Force Latvia on MS Teams. His biography is attached (**See Poster section**). Please note the timing is different than normal, to accommodate Colonel Smith over a relatively large number of time zones. The subject is: Canada is leading a NATO Multinational Brigade made up of 14 NATO countries to defend and deter Russia or any adversaries from encroaching on Latvia or NATO's eastern flank. This is the Canadian Armed Forces' main effort, with over 1700 persistently deployed soldiers and involves complex coordination and a steadfast commitment to sustain.

The MS Teams instructions for the event will be sent out to registrants on 16 February 2025, NLT 1600 hrs. This will be hosted by the staff of TF Latvia and sponsored by RUSI NS. RUSI NS will be responsible to create and keep the list of registrants. Attendees are requested to register at rusinovascotia@gmail.com. Please include the Header Distinguished Speaker – Col Jim Smith 19 February 2025 with your preferred name, your email and the organization that you represent NLT 1600 hrs, 15 February 2025.

I look forward to hearing from you.

John E McLearn CD Major (Ret'd) Canadian Army
Vice President RUSI(NS) Cell: 902 441-5164

CAF Losing the Battle of the Bulge

Cape Breton Post Scott Taylor 8 Feb 2025



Defence Minister Bill Blair answers questions from reporters following an announcement at the Irving Shipyard in Halifax in June. RYAN TAPLIN

As a combat formation, the Canadian Armed Forces are woefully understrength. Due to a lengthy period of recruitment failing to keep pace with the number of personnel releasing from the CAF, there are 16,500 vacancies from a combined regular and reserves authorized strength of 105,000 personnel. This phenomenon has been called a death spiral by none other than Defence Minister Bill Blair. Now comes word that for those personnel remaining in uniform, those uniforms are getting a little tight. A recent Ottawa Citizen headline read “Almost three-quarters of Canadian troops are overweight or obese: documents.” That is a staggering statistic and one that defies logic. One would think that the very nature of the occupation would require a high level of physical fitness. Yet according to a series of briefings presented to senior military leaders in June 2024, 44 per cent of personnel in the CAF are overweight and another 28 per cent are classified as obese. For those of you thinking that this simply reflects Canadian society, think again. The CAF statistics are actually worse than that of

the general population. Roughly 78 per cent of military men are considered overweight or obese while 68 per cent of Canadian civilian males are in that category.

Canadian military women did better than their male comrades, with 57 per cent considered to be overweight or obese. However, the national average among Canadian civilian women is only 53 per cent in the overweight or obese category. This was not always the case. Back in 1989, a CAF survey recorded that 22 per cent of military members were considered overweight or obese at a time when over 30 per cent of the Canadian public was in that category. However, back in that era, 22 per cent of service personnel being “overweight and obese” was considered unacceptable. Should any service member fail to pass an annual fitness test, it would result in a strictly enforced six-month stint on remedial physical training. Any subsequent failure to meet the standards could result in administrative action being taken to have the individual released from the CAF. That is no longer the case. In her response to Ottawa Citizen reporter David Pugliese, Defence Department spokesperson Andrée-Anne Poulin said that the Canadian Forces does not track data “on the number of members who have been subject to administrative action or release in relation to physical fitness issues that may cause medical employment limitations.”

And therein lies the rub. With the current existential threat of the shortage of personnel, the CAF cannot exacerbate that shortage by releasing, or threatening to release, members who have lapsed into obesity. For those who want to heap all blame for the CAF’S shortcomings on the “toxic leadership” and lack of political will, I’m afraid that the state of physical fitness among service members is the responsibility of those service members. Peer support and encouragement would also work better than the threat of career termination. One could argue that the recent experiment in relaxing the CAF’S regulations on hairstyles, facial hair, hair colour, tattoos and piercings may have eroded the esprit de corps of the institution. However, when it comes to a member’s personal fitness, there is no excuse for relaxing standards. To have a worse fitness record than the general population should be an embarrassment to the CAF. Unlike the failure of the government to purchase new equipment and weapons, this latest CAF media storm is on the members themselves.

Davie in Talks to Buy US Shipbuilder Amid Trade War Talk

Elisabeth Gosselin-Malo Defense News Feb 5, 2025

MILAN — Davie, a Quebec shipbuilder set to play a key role in a joint icebreaker production agreement between Canada, the United States and Finland, is moving forward with plans to expand its operations south of the border despite a looming trade war threatening the continent. As part of the expansion, the Canada-based multinational shipbuilder has set out to acquire an American shipyard, which would secure an initial and important footprint in the US for the company. “Right now it’s business as usual with our US entry plans. ... We are also making progress with the acquisition of an established US shipbuilder – if we are successful, we plan to upgrade as we are at the Quebec site,” Davie spokesman Paul Barrett told Defense News. Davie has envisioned transforming its Lévis, Quebec, shipyard into North America’s largest, most versatile shipbuilding center.

In 2024, it signed two contracts to this end, one with the American firm Pearlson & Pearlson Inc., and another with the Canadian construction leader Dinamo, to modernize the site in order to deliver seven heavy icebreakers and two hybrid ferries under Canada's National Shipbuilding Strategy. The project is supported by nearly CAD \$519 million in investments from the Quebec government and will deliver in part six new buildings and machinery, a new assembly hall and launch pad, and waterfront upgrades. Davie has positioned itself as a crucial industry partner in the trilateral Icebreaker Collaboration Effort, or ICE Pact. The agreement, signed last summer, seeks to bring together Finnish, Canadian and US know-how, resources and expertise to build best-in-class ice boats capable of operating year-round in the Arctic.



The CCGS Amundsen, Canadian research ice-breaker, navigates near Devon Island in the Canadian high Arctic in September 2015.

(Clement Sabourin/AFP via Getty Images)

Recent remarks made by US President Donald Trump suggesting that Canada and Greenland could become American states as well as the imposition of 25% tariffs on Canadian imports – tabled, for now – have casted doubts on the future of partnerships like the ICE Pact. However, both the Canadian and Finnish government have told Defense News that the tense climate witnessed as of late between the two neighboring countries has not compromised cooperation amongst the parties involved. “We continue implementing it as planned and look forward to cooperating with our allies and partners, the US and Canada – we believe all parties are committed to Ice Pact efforts, as there is a need to strengthen the capabilities,” Reko-Antti Suojanen, senior ministerial adviser and ICE Pact coordinator at the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland, said. All three countries are in relatively urgent need of bolstering their icebreaker fleets, as many are outdated or will soon be, while China and Russia have ramped up their shipbuilding efforts. “The West’s competitors and adversaries are rapidly expanding Arctic ice breaking fleets to exert control in the region – despite ambitious shipbuilding programs, the US and its allies remain far behind,” Barrett, the Davie spokesman, said. Through the acquisition of Helsinki Shipyard in 2023, Davie gained access to Finland’s leading icebreaker intellectual property, having produced much of the world’s ice boat fleet. It is not yet clear to what extent the knowledge will be shared with the US under the agreement. Barrett noted that Davie company expects to play a lead role in discussions on how their IP will be properly protected and applied within this framework. Once the Canadian manufacturer finalizes the purchase of the American shipbuilder, which the company declined to name, it will become the only one in the ICE Pact with a footprint in all three member nations.

Severed Undersea Cables Raise Legal Challenges for NATO

Elisabeth Gosselin-Malo Defense News Feb 3, 2025

MILAN — The increased frequency of underwater infrastructure damage across Europe has raised legal challenges related to the jurisdiction and ownership of undersea cables, which may limit NATO’s ability to respond. The majority of critical undersea infrastructure is located in international waters, which means would-be saboteurs can take advantage of oversight gaps. “If you go outside territorial waters, in principle there’s not much regulation – this makes the area attractive for those who want to operate outside the jurisdiction,” Capt Niels Markussen, director at NATO’s Maritime Centre for Security of Critical Underwater Infrastructure, said at the recent Arctic Frontiers conference in Norway, as reported by Arctic Today. Matters become even more complex in having to determine and prove whether damage is accidental or deliberate. In addition, unlike when a crime is committed above the surface, where authorities can rely on fingerprints and DNA as evidence, attributing responsibility under water is tricky.



An operator works during the mooring of an undersea fiber optic cable at Arrietara beach near the Spanish Basque village of Sopelana on June 13, 2017. Facebook and Microsoft have paired up to run a giant underwater cable dubbed Marea (tide) that will stretch from Virginia in the US to Bilbao, Spain, crossing some 6,600 kilometers of ocean.

(Ander Gillenea/AFP via Getty Images)

A recent report by the Atlantic Council highlighted that different laws are applicable to assess who is responsible for sabotage depending on where the severed cables are laid. For example, it noted that coastal states like Norway or Sweden possess sovereign rights in their territorial waters, according to Article 21 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and may further exercise that authority to repair and maintain submarine cables in their exclusive economic zones. Things get murky, however, in cases of undersea infrastructure damaged in international waters. “If cables are willfully or accidentally damaged by a ship or person, the jurisdiction to determine appropriate punishment for the perpetrator lies with the state under whose flag the ship operates or that of a person’s citizenship,” the document said. Another element to consider is that much of the underwater communication infrastructure is now owned by private firms, including big telecommunication carriers or content-delivery providers, that often band together to operate cables.

According to the network monitoring platform Kentik, companies like Google, Meta and Amazon have increasingly invested in the development and installation of new cables, leaving only about only 1% of submarine cables fully or partly owned by governments. At a joint press conference in January, Adm Pierre Vandier, NATO's Norfolk, Virginia-based commander for concepts and transformation, outlined his plan for the alliance's unmanned surface vessel initiative – in essence, having drones keep tabs on undersea infrastructure in hard-to-reach places. The idea will entail deploying a fleet of naval drones as part of NATO's maritime patrol mission in the Baltic Sea for the constant surveillance of the strategic area. These systems, as noted by the official, will operate alongside other drones to be provided by member states. "We will bring some new vehicles at the speed of light in less than a few weeks, as well as the eight Baltic Sea states will give to NATO their own drones, and we will federate into a single network all the pictures and videos to spread [information] out to all stakeholders," Vandier said on Jan 20.

US Destroyers in the Red Sea Defeated Enemy Weapons

Without firing a shot, changing the way warships fight.

Jake Epstein Business Insider Feb 6, 2025



The Arleigh Burke class destroyer USS Mason sailing in the Red Sea in January 2024.

US Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Chris Krucke

US Navy destroyers fended off Houthi drones in the Red Sea last year without firing a shot, demonstrating alternative ways for warships to battle these threats. Documents obtained by Business

Insider detail multiple incidents throughout the Navy's counter-Houthi mission in which US destroyers used "non-kinetic" capabilities, engagement methods not dependent on munitions and physical destruction, to defeat the hostile drones launched by the Iran-backed Yemeni rebels. Between November 27, 2023, and March 9, 2024, sailors aboard the USS Mason "successfully executed the engagements" of a drone using undefined "non-kinetic effects" to intercept the uncrewed system. These actions prevented damage to Navy and coalition warships and commercial vessels, one of the documents said. And on February 19, 2024, sailors aboard USS Gravely used an unspecified "Non-Kinetic Weapon system" in multiple successful non-kinetic engagements against drones in combat, according to another document. It said these non-kinetic

engagements were "not only proving non-kinetic weapon systems work underway, but changing the way the Surface Navy fights wars at sea."

The document said these engagements trained the rest of the Navy on how to use non-kinetic weapon systems successfully — which other US warships went on to do. The Mason and Gravelly spent months deployed to the Middle East last year as part of the US military's counter-Houthi mission. Navy officials declined to comment on the non kinetic capabilities of US warships, but destroyers have several ways to defeat enemy drones without firing a shot. A kinetic means of interception would be something like launching a surface-to-air missile at the drone, hitting it with the ship's close-in weapons system, or blasting it out of the sky with rounds from a 5-inch deck gun. Bryan Clark, a former Navy officer who's a defense analyst at the Hudson Institute, explained to BI that US destroyers are equipped with the AN/SLQ-32 electronic warfare suite, commonly referred to as Slick-32. The SLQ-32 is a destroyer's electronic ears, capable of detecting the transmissions of a foreign jet or identifying the seeker on an incoming missile. Through its electronic attack systems, the SLQ-32 can also blast electronic noise at frequencies used by a missile guidance system to confuse it. A warship's electronic warfare systems also include the Ship's Signal Exploitation Equipment system, an information warfare/electronic warfare and tactical cryptologic signals intelligence system. This system has documented electronic warfare non-kinetic capabilities.

USS Gravelly launching Tomahawk Land Attack Missiles in the Red Sea in January 2024.

US Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Jonathan Word

The documents BI obtained showed that the sailors from the Mason and Gravelly who received combat awards for their roles in defeating the Houthi drones during the non-kinetic engagements worked with the SSEE. Electronic detection and jamming have long been part of the Navy's doctrine, but US warships had never faced as intense a drone threat as the one brought on by the Houthis. American forces have eliminated nearly 500 drones launched by the rebels since they first started their attacks against ships in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden in October 2023. "This is really the first time we've seen airborne drones used in anti-ship attacks against US and allied navies," Clark said. Proving the effectiveness of non-kinetic capabilities is significant for the Navy. Not only are these solutions much cheaper than taking out drones with surface-to-air missiles, but they also spare a ship from depleting its magazine, requiring it to leave the battlespace to rearm. This is critical to sustaining warships during a high-tempo operating environment like the Houthi conflict. Clark said these non kinetic engagements underscored how the Navy had developed a better sense of how to match a warship's defensive systems with threats that it's facing — one of many lessons the sea service is taking away from the Houthi conflict.



Russian and Ukrainian Vehicle Attrition Rates

should be keeping our defence planners awake all night every night.

Richard Kemp 04 Feb 2025



A Lada is seen just before a drone strike in Ukraine

As international car makers like Mercedes, Nissan and Volkswagen pulled out of Russia, President Putin told top businessmen and officials to drive a Lada instead. It looks like he has now given the same orders to his armed forces fighting in Ukraine. According to American journalist David Axe: “the Russian military is normalising assaults in civilian cars”. There are many videos on the internet

showing Ladass attacking Ukrainian positions, some with military markings and anti drone grills fitted. I remember in the Balkan wars how the opposing military factions pressed civilian vehicles into combat and of course Toyota pickups have long been the preferred battle wagons for jihadists across the Middle East and Africa. But why Russia, with the second most powerful armed forces in the world? Oryx, the Dutch open-source analysis website, estimates Putin’s forces have lost more than 15,000 armoured vehicles and heavy combat equipment since the invasion began.

Vladimir Putin inspects a new Lada e-Niva Travel electric SUV car.
Vyacheslav Prokofyev/AP



Axe says that, while Russian industry was unable to come anywhere near replacing an annual loss rate of 6,000 combat vehicles, until recent months it was able to make up the shortfall by fielding aged equipment from Cold War long-term storage parks. The state of those vehicles can only be imagined. I recall seeing rusting tanks and infantry fighting vehicles at Russian bases in East Germany at the height of the Cold War – and they were supposed to be ready to roll across the inner German border at a few hours’ notice. In any case, stocks of what remain of them now appear to be running low, hence the apparently common use of Lada assaults. Imagine how it must feel for a young Russian soldier driving into the teeth of Ukrainian artillery, anti-tank missiles, drone swarms and landmines jammed inside a family car. Not to mention rifles and machine guns that would have no problem tearing through the Lada’s paper-thin steel shell. I took part in the invasion of Iraq in 1991 in a Challenger tank. Despite being encased in state-of-the-art Chobham armour, we felt far from invulnerable, although we had air supremacy and our Challengers seriously outgunned the Iraqis’ obsolete Russian tanks.

Even Russia, with its vast population, cannot afford to keep throwing away its soldiers’ lives, so the use of Ladass must be a last resort. Despite Moscow’s steady advance further into Ukrainian territory, the shortage of combat resources this indicates must be influencing Putin’s apparent desire for a ceasefire, even if only to draw breath while his forces re-arm. We might well scoff at the Russians’ growing dependence on Ladass. But remember how at the height of the Global

War on Terrorism we sent our own troops into action in unarmoured Land Rovers Snatch death-traps, vulnerable to land mines, improvised explosive devices and any other weapons the jihadists decided to fire at them. They had been useful for patrolling and riot control in the most benign areas of Northern Ireland, but in Iraq and Afghanistan provided no more protection than a Lada. It took the Ministry of Defence's Byzantine procurement system nine years and dozens of dead and wounded soldiers to field a half-decent replacement vehicle.

That's because, while our troops were fighting two intensive wars, the home front was still working on a peace-time footing. The situation is even worse today. Our Armed Forces continue to be run down in the face of the largest war in Europe since 1945. We claim to be able to deploy a single armoured division, compared to three divisions during the Cold War. But even from those, we were only able to cobble together one under sized division for the 1991 Gulf War. Our efforts to support Kyiv have again exposed the alarming state of our ammunition stocks, armoured vehicle numbers and the spares to keep them running. Last year the House of Commons Defence Committee warned that, fighting in a Ukraine-type war, the Army would exhaust its capabilities within just two months. That may be optimistic. Both Russian and Ukrainian vehicle attrition rates, not to mention casualty statistics, should be keeping our defence planners awake all night every night. Putin's Lada assaults may show his forces have been to some extent blunted, but they will not stay blunt. Moreover, unless significant impetus and financial resources are ploughed rapidly into our defences, neither he nor any other potential enemies will have much to fear from our Armed Forces.

Vancouver Gunners Website Update

Your website updater has run off to Australia for a month so the updates may be somewhat tardy and infrequent. So far, all is well. A successful travel leg was accomplished through the Excited States and the jet lag is abating somewhat. We have established connectivity but rather than a simple sim card replacement, it turns out we needed to purchase a new phone as the Aussies had deleted some frequencies that had been used by Canadian phones. We were also a little surprised that the Super Bowl was so popular, but it turns out there's an Aussie on the Philadelphia Eagles Roster.

Stabilization Force (SFOR)

Bombardier Martinez deployed with SFOR from September 1999 until September 2000 in a non-artillery role. The stated mission of SFOR was to "deter hostilities and stabilise the peace, contribute to a secure environment by providing a continued military presence in the Area Of Responsibility (AOR), target and co-ordinate SFOR support to key areas including primary civil implementation organisations, and progress towards a lasting consolidation of peace, without further need for NATO-led forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

<https://www.vancouvergunners.ca/sfor-2000.html>

King Charles III Coronation Medal

Congratulations to Lieutenant Colonel (Ret'd) Jim Barrett, Captain (Ret'd) Doug Gayton, CD and Maj (Ret'd) Peter Moogk for their receipt of the King Charles III Coronation Medal.

<https://www.vancouvergunners.ca/whats-new/105th-birthday>

Junior Trade Board Members Tour Bessborough Armoury 17 Feb 1939

The Province newspaper reported on a tour provided to the Vancouver Junior Board of Trade. <https://www.vancouvergunners.ca/whats-new/junior-trade-board-members-tour-bessborough-armoury-17-feb-1939>

Artefact Guide

Receiving some great comments. Keep them coming!

<https://www.vancouvergunners.ca/whats-new/warrant-officers-and-sergeants-mess-arteifacts>

<https://www.vancouvergunners.ca/whats-new/officers-mess-arteifacts>

Photos

Have you got any photos of past regimental activities? Send them to president.vcrgunners@gmail.com and we'll post them to the website.

Who (or What) Is It?

Last Week: The **1st Chinese Regiment** (also known as the **Weihaiwei Regiment**) was a British Colonial Auxiliary Forces Regiment raised in British Weihaiwei. The Regiment, which was praised for its performance, consisted of Chinese enlisted men serving under British officers. It was formed in 1898 and wore Sikh style turbans as part of their official uniform. This unique unit showed remarkable courage during the Boxer Rebellion. Their story, though often overlooked, is an intriguing example of cultural crossover in military history. It's a tribute to these unsung heroes who played a pivotal role in safeguarding British interests in China. It was created in 1898 from men of Shantung Province led by British officers and Colour Sergeants. Army Order No 2 of 1899 approved the raising of a Chinese regiment of 1,000 men. Major Hamilton Bower of the Indian Staff Corps was given the local rank of lieutenant colonel and appointed Commandant of the new regiment. British officers started to arrive in late 1898 and the regiment first appeared in the Army List, preceded by the Hong Kong Regiment (not to be confused with the later Royal Hong Kong Regiment), in January 1899. The Regiment was highly regarded for its drill, military appearance and marksmanship. By 1900 the Regiment consisted of 420 men organised into seven companies.



This Week: We are back to the sky this week with a flying machine that seems to defy certain engineering principles. It is obviously a helicopter (pronounced “heeliicopter” in some regions of our southern eleventh province). This kind of aircraft is quite common these days, although the personal, atomic-powered model is still being eagerly anticipated by those of us promised such in 1950s boys’ magazines. These machines were first developed in China, in around 400 BCE, but were not capable of carrying humans. They consisted of a propeller on a simple shaft, which was spun between the hands of tiny children, amusing them greatly by rising into the air. Why the Chinese did not develop them into gunships is a mystery. Possibly it was because they were awaiting their own invention of gunpowder.

The devices, which now disturb our solitude by flying over remote parts of National Parks, have their origins in the 20th Century. While Igor Sikorsky is often given credit for the development of the modern helicopter, it was actually a German one, the Focke-Wulf FW61 is considered the first to fly successfully enough to not kill anyone or end up in an amusing film of failed aircraft. In fact, it was even flown indoors by the infamous Hanna Reitsch in 1938, two years after its first successful flight. This led to the development of larger craft, some of which entered limited production, and eventually served in World War II, such as the Focke-Achgelis Fa 223. Nonetheless, Sikorsky's first successful model, the VS-300, led to the only Allied helicopter to enter service in that war, the R-4. Although tiny, and fabric-covered, it still looks like most



modern Western helicopters, having a large main rotor, and smaller tail one. This is a formula still used by the majority of helicopters produced by properly-civilized nations in the world.

However, our subject this week does not conform to that stereotype, nor does it follow the twin-rotors of the aforementioned evil Nazi machines. It goes into uncharted territory by having three main rotors. It

is quite impressive, albeit a bit weird. So, what on earth is it? If you know, please contact the editor, Bob Mugford (bob.mugford@gmail.com) or the author, John Redmond (johnd.redmond@telus.net). Happy hovering!

From the 'Punitary'

What was wrong with the man who had a photographic memory? He never developed it.

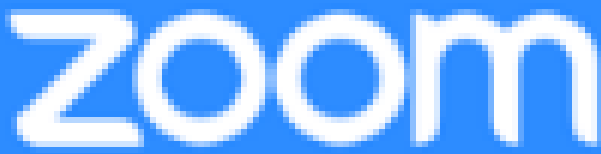
Murphy's Other Laws

Don't look conspicuous; it draws fire. (This is why aircraft carriers are known as bomb magnets.)

Quotable Quotes

Never let the fear of striking out keep you from playing the game. - *Babe Ruth*

Wednesday Digital Video Lunch

The Zoom logo is displayed in white lowercase letters on a solid blue rectangular background.

No need to worry about COVID-19 when you go digital. Pop into our video lunch **at noon** on Wednesdays and say hi. All you need is a laptop, tablet or smartphone. These sessions are being hosted by the Vancouver Artillery Association

and are **open to all** – especially those who attended our **Wednesday lunches**.

NO Zoom Meeting on Feb 26

Join us to check up on your old lunch buddies. Click on this link:-
(this link will take you **straight to the waiting room** – no password needed)
<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/72758359360?pwd=XE0y7bIBCNvTYsIFcFlZ6g1e1pfzMP.1>

or use Meeting ID 727 5835 9360 **and the secret passcode is pFPey6**
Bring your own lunch and beverage of choice.

CAF Contribution to the Defence of Latvia and NATO's Eastern Flank

Colonel (OF-5) J Smith, CD
Commander Task Force Latvia



Colonel Jim Smith enrolled in the Canadian Armed Forces in 1996 and graduated from the Royal Military College of Canada with a degree in Computer Engineering. He was privileged to command 2 Combat Engineer Regiment from 2016 to 2018. As a young officer he qualified as a combat diver and spent many years commanding Sappers at all levels in both Combat Engineer and Engineer Support Regiments. He has instructed at Canadian Army Engineer, Leadership, and Tactics Schools. Col Smith has served on staffs for the Deputy Chief of Defence, Expeditionary Forces Command, Assistant Deputy Minister (Infrastructure & Environment), and the Canadian Army.

Col Smith has multiple deployments to Bosnia, Afghanistan, and Iraq. Promoted to his current rank in 2019, he has served as Chief of Staff to 1st Canadian Division and led the Canadian Army Land Warfare Centre. As Director of the Land Warfare Centre, he led the capability development for Canada's next generation land combat force.

Col Smith is a licensed Professional Engineer and certified Risk Management Professional. He holds master's degrees in both Military Art and Science and Business Administration. He is a graduate of the Canadian Land Forces Command and Staff College, the US Army Command and General Staff College, the US Army School of Advanced Military Studies and the Canadian Forces College Security Studies Program. Currently, he is a doctoral candidate in Business Administration focusing on Information Systems and Enterprise Resource Management with graduation anticipated in 2024.

His wife, Michelle, and their two boys, Ryan and David, are excited to explore Latvia, the Baltic region, and Europe.

Concert for the Padre – 2025

15th Field Artillery
Regiment Band

BC Regiment
Irish Pipes & Drums

Concert for the Padre

Net proceeds to support the Dean's pastoral
work with the men and women of the military

Saturday, March 1, 2025
Christ Church Cathedral
7:30 pm
690 Burrard Street

Tickets by donation
thecathedral.ca



AFOA Annual RCAF Anniversary Mess Dinner



AIR FORCE OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION

VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA

Since 1920

NOTICE

ANNUAL RCAF ANNIVERSARY MESS DINNER

FRIDAY, 28 Mar 2025

1700 HOURS for 1800 HOURS

AT

THE UNIVERSITY GOLF CLUB

LOCATED AT 5185 UNIVERSITY BOULEVARD, VANCOUVER

A MESS DINNER IN CELEBRATION OF THE 101st ANNIVERSARY OF THE
ROYAL CANADIAN AIR FORCE

AND

THE 85th ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN

- *** Dress: Formal - Mess Kit, Tux or Dark Suit - miniature medals should be worn
Ladies - cocktail dress
- *** Cost: TBA(includes wine and port)(expected in \$ 130/140 range)
- *** Reception: 1700 Hours (no host bar)
- *** Dinner: 1800 Hours - Salad
Roast Beef (full dinner details TBA)
Dessert, Coffee and Teas

*** Guest of Honour: Our speaker once again will be renowned author Ted Barris, who will speak on his latest book "The Battle of Britain - Canadian Airmen in Their Finest Hour"

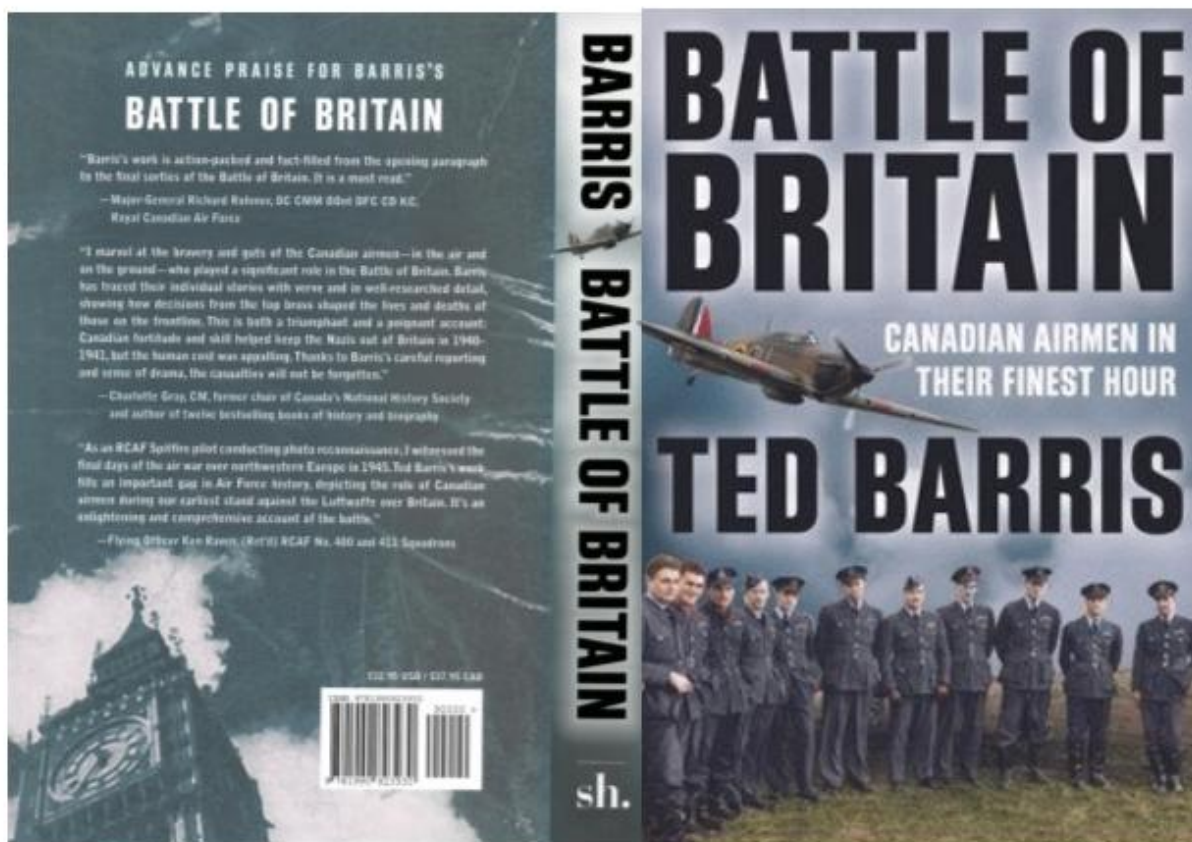
Copies of the book will be available for purchase and signing after he has spoken. The price of the book will be \$ 40.00(cash, cheques or e-transfers), but he will not be set up for electronic square for debit(??) or for credit cards. If you advise me in advance, it **may** be possible to have some of his other books there.

Please bring your spouse and guests to this event. Names are needed please for the seating plan.

We must firm up our attendance for the club a week in advance so we will need to hear from you **no later than Noon on Friday, 21 Mar 25**. Please advise the Secretary, Jerry Vernon, at jevernon@telus.net or phone him at (604) 420-6065. If your plans change later, also please advise us of this, for catering purposes. No shows are no-nos and may be charged!!

Also please advise the Secretary of any special dietary needs, as the caterer can provide an alternate to roast beef and/or the salad and dessert.

Note that we will be starting the event at 5 PM for 6 PM again this year.



ABOUT AUTHOR TED BARRIS

Ted Barris is an accomplished author, journalist and broadcaster. As well as hosting stints on CBC Radio and TV Ontario, and regular contributions to the Globe and Mail and the National Post, Barris has authored 21 non-fiction books, including a dozen bestsellers on Canadians in the Great War, the Second World War, the Korean War and the War in Afghanistan. Since completing his Bachelor of Applied Arts at Ryerson in 1971, Barris has pursued a freelance career across Canada and the United States. His broadcast work has been heard and seen on CBC Radio & Television, the CTV Network, TV Ontario, ACCESS in Alberta, as well as on National Public Radio in the United States. His writing is regularly published in periodicals such as Legion magazine, esprit de corps and Zoomer. He also writes a weekly newspaper column - the Barris Beat - and recently retired as professor of journalism at Toronto's Centennial College. Among the awards Ted Barris has received: the international Billboard Radio Documentary Award, the Yorkton Film Festival's Golden Sheaf, as well as numerous ACTRA nominations. In 1993, he received the Canada 125 Medal "for service to Canada and community." In 2004, the Remembrance Service Association of Halifax recognized him with its Patriot Award. In 2006, the renowned 78th Fraser Highlanders (Canadian) Regiment presented its annual excellence award, the Bear Hackle Award. In 2011, the Ontario (116th) Regiment awarded him the Medallion of Excellence for his work in documenting military history. Also in 2011, he was recipient of the Minister of Veterans Affairs Commendation. In 2012, the Air Force Association of Canada selected Ted Barris to receive Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee Medal. His book **The Great Escape: A Canadian Story** won the 2014 Libris Non-Fiction Book of the Year. In 2018, his book **Dam Busters: Canadian Airmen and the Secret Raid Against Nazi Germany**, was awarded the RCAF Association NORAD Trophy. His 19th book **Rush to Danger: Medics in the Line of Fire** was long listed for the 2020 RBC Charles Taylor Non-Fiction Prize. In 2022, at the time his book **Battle of the Atlantic: Gauntlet to Victory** was published, Ted Barris was recognized with Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee Award. In December 2022, he was appointed as a Member of the Order of Canada.

\$32.95 USD / \$37.95 CAD

BATTLE OF BRITAIN

*Canadian Airmen in
Their Finest Hour*

“Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few.”

In the summer of 1940, Prime Minister Winston Churchill's words set the 113 days of the Battle of Britain apart as the greatest aerial battle in history. As the German Luftwaffe sought to destroy the Royal Air Force, gain air superiority, and invade the British Isles, Commonwealth fighter pilots scrambled from UK airfields day after day, flying Hurricane and Spitfire fighter aircraft to thwart Hitler's plan. They won, but paid dearly.

Among the 2,937 aircrew in this first test of Allied skill, resilience, and courage were more than one hundred pilots who flew with the “Canada” patch on their shoulder, while another two hundred ground crew kept their fighters in the air.


In his twenty-first book of non-fiction, Ted Barris has assembled unknown stories of these Canadian airmen, ground crew, engineers, aeronautical designers, and medical officers. Drawing on meticulous and in-depth research, and written in lively, engaging prose, *Battle of Britain: Canadian Airmen in Their Finest Hour* introduces the Canadians who helped secure victory in this Second World War life-and-death struggle by turning back the very real threat of Nazi invasion.





TED BARRIS has now published twenty-one works of non-fiction, mostly wartime histories. *The Great Escape: A Canadian Story* won the 2014 Libris Award as Best Non-Fiction Book in Canada. *Dam Busters: Canadian Airmen and the Secret Raid Against Nazi Germany* received the 2019 NORAD Trophy from the RCAF Association. And *Rush to Danger: Medics in the Line of Fire* was long-listed for the 2020 Charles Taylor Prize for Non-Fiction in Canada. His twentieth book, *Battle of the Atlantic: Gauntlet to Victory*, enjoyed weeks on national bestseller lists. In 2022, Barris was appointed a Member of the Order of Canada.

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