

## Van Arty Association and RUSI Van Members News – 12 Dec 2023

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 your copy.

**Newsletter online.** 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>

## Upcoming events – Mark your calendars

**Commemoration Cyprus 2024 – see poster section**

**80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Liberation of Holland Battlefield Tour – see poster section**

**Dec 13** Wed 'Zoom' lunch meeting.  
**Dec 20** Wed 'Zoom' lunch meeting  
**Jan 01** New Year's Levee (details TBA)



**Canadian Gunner News / Les Nouvelles des artilleurs canadiens  
30 Nov 2023 / 30 Nov 2023**

Click here to (Open in your browser)

<https://rca-arc.org/canadian-gunner-news-30-november-2023/>

## Looking For a Christmas Gift?

Check out Hal Skaarup's great series of books about Cannon in Canada  
(see list in poster section)

## Did You Serve in CYPRUS Under OP SNOWGOOSE?

See also poster in poster section.

2024 is the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Canadian involvement on the island, and the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1974 conflict. If you did serve in Cyprus you may be interested in taking a trip down memory lane by joining us for a **November 2024** reunion. The reunion is open to all CAF Veterans who served under the United Nations banner in Cyprus **and family members** of those who served. The linked brochure provides the background to the tour and all the detail that you need to make a decision on participation.

Here is the Link to **the Brochure**: <https://drive.google.com/.../1kM00Mw46oBo5xkoifDB.../view...>

The tour enjoys the full support of Global Affairs Canada, the Department of National Defence and Veterans Affairs Canada and it promises to be the trip of a lifetime. Registration through our travel agents, Special Travel International, is now open with an early sell out of the 200 available seats anticipated.

Here is the link to the Special Travel International **Signup Form**:  
<https://sticanada.com/cyprus24>

You can **preview** the form for interest, just don't fill in any of the answers, and don't submit. Just close your browser. If registering, make sure to fill in all the detail and note the dates installments are to be paid.

## Avez-vous servi à CHYPRE sous OP SNOWGOOSE?

Voir aussi l'affiche dans la section des affiches.

Il s'agit du 60<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de l'engagement canadien sur l'île et du 50<sup>e</sup> anniversaire du conflit de 74. Si vous l'avez fait, vous pourriez être intéressé à faire un voyage dans la mémoire en vous joignant à nous pour une réunion de **novembre 2024** à Chypre. La réunion est ouverte à tous les vétérans des FAC qui ont servi sous la bannière des Nations Unies à Chypre **et aux membres de la famille** de ceux qui ont servi. La brochure ci-jointe fournit le contexte de la visite et tous les détails dont vous avez besoin pour prendre une décision sur la participation.

**Voici le lien vers la brochure :**

<https://drive.google.com/.../1kM00Mw46oBo5xkoifDB.../view...>

La visite bénéficie du plein appui d'Affaires mondiales Canada, du ministère de la Défense nationale et d'Anciens Combattants Canada et promet d'être le voyage d'une vie. L'inscription par l'intermédiaire de nos agents de voyages, Special Travel International, est maintenant ouverte avec une vente anticipée sur les 200 sièges disponibles prévus.

**Voici le lien vers le formulaire d'inscription spécial à Travel International :**

<https://sticanada.com/cyprus24>

Vous pouvez **prévisualiser** le formulaire, il suffit de ne remplir aucune des réponses et de ne pas soumettre. Fermez simplement votre navigateur.

## **Trudeau Govt's Beatdown of Disabled Veterans Hits New Legal Low**

Robert Smol, Special to Toronto Sun Dec 10, 2023

Just how low can a Canadian prime minister go when dealing with the needs of military and RCMP veterans? Certainly, I once thought it was then-prime minister Paul Martin's decision in 2005 to eliminate disability pensions in favour of meagre lump sum payments. A policy since reversed after much public complaint. Or maybe Stephen Harper's choice to continue disallowing disability pensions while closing down Veteran Affairs offices. Perhaps! Well, there are also Justin Trudeau's Liberals, the self-styled champions of publicly funded health care, deciding last year to privatize veteran rehabilitation services to a company owned by Loblaw Companies Ltd. Already, the Liberal's veteran health-care privatization experiment is becoming the service delivery disaster that all who truly cared predicted it would be. But all this pales compared to the Liberal's latest bureaucratic edition of "disabled veteran beatdown."



*Prime Minister Justin Trudeau talks with soldiers during a visit of the Adazi military base, northeast of Riga, Latvia, on March 8, 2022. (Photo by Toms Norde / AFP)*

Recently, the Justin Trudeau Liberals chose to go after the one thing that, I'm sure, all veterans hold more precious than any assessed level of disability pension, health care, vocational or rehabilitation services. That is their Charter Rights as Canadians. Specifically, their right to retain their own legal counsel when

appealing their cases before Veteran Affairs. Yes, you heard me right, it appears that Trudeau and Veteran Affairs Minister Ginette Petitpas Taylor think those who were willing to fight for our freedoms should be denied the corresponding freedom, as private citizens, to hire their own lawyer when dealing with the appeals process at the Department of Veterans Affairs. Frankly, at first glance, I almost did not believe it myself! But case T-2213-23 May Machoun vs Canada (Attorney General) filed on Oct 20, 2023, makes it shockingly clear where disabled veteran Charter rights may be heading under the prime minister whose father's government brought in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982. The question this disabled veteran, May Machoun, through her lawyers, is bringing before the federal court should be a no-brainer "yes" to anyone outside of Trudeau's cabinet and veteran affairs executive apparatchiks. It reads: "Do disabled veterans, seeking appeal of a disability benefit decision, have the right to act through legal counsel

before VAC/Veterans Review and Appeal Board?” The Trudeau government, it would appear, seems to think we veterans don’t have the right.

Say it ain’t so, Trudeau! The filing, parts of which I will quote verbatim here so that there is no misconception, reads: “The applicant is a Canadian Armed Forces veteran with a complex medical history. In addition to other physical injuries, the applicant suffers from a serious brain injury resulting from a major concussion she suffered in 2016. At least nine (9) separate service-related injuries have been recognized and compensated by VAC, who are providing benefits to the applicant in her retirement.” Wanting to stay in her home as long as possible, Machoun is seeking additional “specialist home care services” which had been previously denied at the ministerial level and at the National First Level Appeal. However, when she chose to further appeal, through legal counsel, to the National Second Level Appeal she was informed by an A Savoie at Veterans Affairs (who would not give their full name or contact information) that “request for review must be made in writing and signed by clients or power of attorney.” Furthermore, the same unidentifiable, unreachable A Savoie wrote that VAC will not accept a submission from the applicant’s lawyer.

The Department of Justice has recently moved to strike May Machoun’s application on the grounds that it was not a decision and that the federal court has no power to intervene and decide on the question. That is, does this disabled veteran have the right to legal counsel? Say it ain’t so, Trudeau! Before I go any further, I need to point out, for the sake of full disclosure, that I serve on the board of directors for the Veteran Legal Assistance Foundation. This is a registered charity which is helping May Machoun with part of her legal bills. What would a government win mean in this case? In my humble opinion, it may further weaponize Veteran Affairs miserly-paternalistic approach to veterans in need. Perhaps, the government is waking up, in a most draconian way, to the fact that disabled veterans are increasingly becoming more legally savvy, aware of their Charter rights, and not afraid to assert them. Instead, the government seems to want to make us veterans believe that the politicians and the executive of Veteran Affairs are always working in our best interests. Why then, would you need independent legal counsel, in applying for and appealing your case? Say it ain’t so, Trudeau!

## **Dispersed Command**

A field experiment proves a command post can be decentralized and mobile, yet digitally connected. *Canadian Army Today - Digital Army, News Oct 2, 2023*

In the early days of the war in Ukraine, one of the more startling figures was the casualty rate of Russian command posts (CP). In the two months following Russia’s February 2022 invasion, Ukrainian forces located and destroyed “no fewer than 31 Russian command and communications posts,” according to a *Forbes* article that April. Within the first three months, reports emerged of the loss of more than 40 battle group, brigade, and division CPs. “That was pretty much a wake-up call,” Major Nicolas Gonthier, the commanding officer of 2 Canadian Mechanized Brigade Group Headquarters and Signal Squadron (2 CMBG HQ & Sig Sqn), acknowledged. “The concept of employment of the signal squadron and the way we deploy our CP would simply not survive.”





The current structure of Canadian command posts is a holdover from the conflict in Afghanistan, where “everything was extremely centralized and focused on providing high digitization,” he noted. Most have gotten bigger and take longer to deploy and move. With the plethora of drones, sensors, electronic warfare, and the resulting high-resolution imagery, those large CPs, with their high digital signature, would be an easy target. Gonthier, who assumed command of the squadron

in July, and Colonel Jay MacKeen, commander of 2 CMBG, also newly arrived that summer, discussed the problem and quickly agreed, “we need to change this.” In seeking greater mobility for CPs, the signal squadron had in the past wrestled with the conundrum of speed and mobility versus digitization. Would they have to compromise on connectivity to achieve increased survivability? Last October, during Exercise Hermes Reach, they were challenged to try both — develop a highly interconnected but decentralized brigade CP that could deploy in under 30 minutes. And, as an added wrinkle, do so with less than half the normal complement of staff. Gonthier, a signals officer with a degree in computer engineering, who spent six years with Canadian Special Operations Forces Command, set out three primary objectives for the team: Split the normally large CP of over 50 staff into smaller units, or nodes, that could deploy independently in the battlespace; have each of those nodes deployed and fully connected with all their normal applications functioning within 20 to 30 minutes; and, due to the ongoing struggles with recruitment and retention, especially in the signals trade, do it with far fewer operators. “It was a pretty challenging objective,” he said. “How do you distribute the network at the same time as you deploy your various commands, and with less people.”

As with any complex problem, the squadron quickly determined that “we had to completely change our mindset.” As per the Army digital strategy aim of expanding “participative force development,” 2 CMBG HQ & Sig Sqn turned the two-week exercise into an experiment with the defence industry, inviting both current suppliers of the Army’s Land Command Support System and companies whose capabilities had caught their attention to participate. “We have some capabilities within the unit that we use at maybe five percent of their capacity,” Gonthier noted, “so we reached out to industry and said, ‘We have your equipment, we know we can do more with it, but we need your help.’”

*Working with defence companies, 2 Signals Squadron employed a combination of military software and open-source tools to allow the CP to remain networked.*

*Photo: Cpl Sarah Morley*



With no blueprint for such a decentralized CP concept, the squadron first confirmed the ability of existing equipment and capability that had been validated the previous May on Exercise Maple Resolve, and then began generating a prototype. Within 45 days, they had a solution to trial. Over three days on Ex Hermes Reach, members of the squadron worked alongside Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) technical experts and industry engineers, with reach-back to others in their companies, to experiment and integrate various capabilities before testing the concept in a five-day scenario-based “deployment” in the 4<sup>th</sup> Canadian Division Support Base Petawawa training area. Employing a combination of the Tactical Assault Kit (TAK) suit of tools, including WinTAK (Windows) software and mapping frameworks and ATAK (Android) applications, as well as open-source tools to track information and communicate, the team was able to build a suite of applications to allow CP staff to collaborate virtually, sharing a common operating picture (COP) and accessing the battle management system.

They employed a mix of military and commercial SATCOM solutions and integrated mesh network radios to share data among the command “nodes.” The squadron set aside its cumbersome array of antennas and trialled “different types” of more automated masts that could be deployed in minutes, rather than hours, to extend their signals. That included static, high-altitude drones, tethered to a generator. “We had various technical capabilities being integrated,” said Gonthier. “It gave us a whole new C4ISR architecture, as a first prototype, that could bring value to the staff and the commander.” They were able to show that a CP staff could maintain access to the COP, track troops, and plan and manage the battle, talking without disruption to enablers and, critically, communicate without using the tactical radios that emit a strong signal. “This allows us to reduce our footprint, to hide within the noise,” he said. “It’s not like in the past, where we’d have our antennas in one location, like the sun in the sky where it’s evident to find and target. We were able to distribute emissions across multiple locations.” While dispersing the CP to reduce its signature was a driving objective, signature reduction was not a primary aim for this first trial. “Every time you put reducing emissions as a core requirement, you always end up with pen and paper,” Gonthier observed, so the focus was on “building the best architecture possible and then, in a future iteration of the concept, focusing on how we make this more resilient and less detectable.”



*Researchers with DRDC trialled a newer and lighter 30-meter high-capacity line of sight tower.  
Photo: Cpl Sarah Morley*

Ultimately, the experiment was able to show that a normally centralized CP could disperse and move, while remaining connected and highly digitized. And do it quickly. “Instead of taking hours, like six hours plus, we can do it within the first 30 minutes of deploying,” he said. While the results were important, so too was the journey for the squadron and brigade.

Innovation can be a slow-moving process in the military. The signal squadron had a prototype

within two months and a follow-on iteration a month later. The process has continued to evolve as more companies have engaged. From five at the outset, the squadron has now discussed technical solutions with 10 and counting. Gonthier credited the collaboration between the military and industry for much of the momentum. “Initially, the expectation was, ‘Let’s do our best, let’s try to build a decentralized CP.’ But that concentration of industry engineers and members of the Sigs squadron was so effective, that within days we had a concept that was viable and achieved high digitization and integration of the various capabilities from the various vendors. “Sometimes industry has the engineering capacity to build equipment and prototypes rapidly, but they don’t necessarily know exactly what problems to tackle,” he added. “With this pairing, one of our corporals might say, ‘I wish that radio would do this.’ The engineer would make a phone call back to the company, and a firmware upgrade would be built, and then sent back the next day. It was beneficial to both — for us to be able to influence the type of product we received and how it was integrated, and for industry to see and hear problem sets from the troops themselves.”

The experiment could also inform Army acceptance of contracted services. The digital strategy recognizes the impact of Everything as a Service and the need to use it where applicable. There will always be a debate about what the Army needs to own and what can be provided by a third party, especially at the tactical edge, Gonthier observed, but “there are definitely some things that only industry can provide. “There are some tasks that are very military specific, workflows that are very military specific, that the best solution we can have is a small software development team that builds a custom tool for ourselves,” he said. But for services like battle management suites and radios with large military markets, “there’s no value for [us] to build a custom solution.” The CP experiment has generated strong interest among Army and CAF leadership and will likely transition at some point into a framework for a brigade command post on Operation Reassurance in Latvia.

What began as a unit initiative has now become part of the Army’s modernization effort, Gonthier said, injecting a lot of energy into 2 Signal Squadron’s future digitization goals. “Lots of the lessons learned from our experimentation now feed into the bigger institutional capability development. And that is the goal for the future. We’re looking at having experimental units, where they’re going to keep doing innovation and experimentation as a permanent line of effort. “I think from an institutional standpoint, we have perfect synchronization. We have bottom-up ideation and experimentation for a problem that affects us directly as practitioners and operators. At the same time, we have a digital strategy that gave us the leverage and the support we needed to conduct this. It was the perfect alignment ... and now we have the perfect example of everything coming together.”

## **Training the C22 Trainers**

*Ken Pole CanadianArmyToday.com Nov 18, 2023 | Equipment, News, Training System*

Considering firearms controls and setting aside the law enforcement community, the first time most Canadians encounter pistols is likely when they join the military. The Army is the most common vector since its approximately 44,000 Regular and Reserve personnel account for two-



thirds of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) overall. Training personnel on pistols, especially new models that break with tradition, can be a challenge. That's currently the case as the Army introduces its new SIG Sauer P320, officially designated the C22 Modular Full Frame Pistol (MFFP). Selected in September 2022 — five years after the US Army — it replaces the vintage 9mm Browning Hi-Power that the Army began using in January 1944. Conceived by an American, John Browning, and refined at Fabrique Nationale in Belgium, the Hi-Power — named for its large magazine capacity at the time — is no longer supportable. Until their retirement from service, the Army had to plunder unusable Brownings for parts to keep others operational. But the advent of the C22 begs a question: who trains the trainers on the new pistol? Even experienced infantry does not simply pick one up and start shooting.

That's where Warrant Officer Roy Ritch comes into the picture. Posted to the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, The Royal Canadian Regiment, in Petawawa for most of his career, Ritch is a Master Sniper who deployed twice to Afghanistan and is now assigned to the Directorate of Land Requirements (DLR). "My main role at DLR is to provide support to the small arms project team," he explained in an interview with *Canadian Army Today*. His involvement with the C22 began with the precision testing of the pistol in late July 2022, followed in February by assembling a team of CAF personnel, including instructors from the Combat Training Centre in Gagetown — many of them Afghanistan veterans — for an instructor training program. They gathered at the SIG SAUER Academy in Epping, New Hampshire, a 25-minute drive from the company's headquarters in Newington. The academy cycles through tens of thousands of shooters on courses every year on its picturesque 57-hectare site, replete with state-of-the-art indoor and outdoor ranges, as well as tactical training areas, urban environments, a shoot house, a maritime training area, and a force-on-force village layout.

In addition to the Canadian Army and other military customers, the academy trains special forces operators, police and security personnel, as well as sports shooters and other rigorously vetted civilians. "All of our initial training was in the indoor range facilities," Ritch said. "However, we could build customized ranges with barricades and obstacles for more dynamic training."



Their two week-long session was intense, beginning with quick lessons on how to dismantle and reassemble the new pistol and how it operates, immediately followed by live-fire range practices. The course focus was split between tactical pistol training — the draw sequence utilizing the new modular Blackhawk T-Series L2D holster issued with each pistol; how to remedy stoppages;



multiple target engagements; shooting on the move; use of cover; and no light/low light conditions — with how to become more proficient instructors. At its most basic, they learned different grip methods such as thumb placement and grip pressure to understand what would work best for individual soldiers.

Once the Canadian contingent returned home, “the Advanced Small Arms Instructor Cell began developing a training package specific to Army requirements,” said Ritch. “It combined everything we had before in the CAF with updated practices and techniques we learned at the academy. When these are applied correctly, pistol marksmanship will undoubtedly improve.” As the new syllabus was developed, the Canadian Army Doctrine and Training Centre (CADTC) weighed in on how to best allocate the number of student positions across the five divisions. It’s a Goldilocks approach—not too many, not too few — to ensure that as personnel are introduced to the new pistol, an operational core is preserved within each unit. Pistols are close-quarters weapons, but with the newer technologies and the C22 having more than twice the precision of the Browning, infantry can now be trained at distances up to 50 metres with the new supplemental range practices. Feedback within the Army so far has been positive, particularly that the C22 is truly ambidextrous, unlike older Brownings. Like other elements of the new firearm, that potentially enhances troops’ effectiveness in urban operations.

## **MND Says Plan in Talks for ‘Significant’ Military Investments**

David Baxter Global News Dec 3, 2023

Defence Minister Bill Blair says he is committed to pushing for increased investment in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) after two top commanders sounded the alarm recently on operational readiness. “Colleagues and shipmates, the [Royal Canadian Navy] (RCN) faces some very serious challenges right now that could mean we fail to meet our force posture readiness commitments in 2024 and beyond,” VAdm Angus Topshee, commander of the navy, said in a YouTube video posted earlier this week. Last week, Chief of the Defence Staff Gen Wayne Eyre said military resources are strained amid increased calls for assistance in natural disasters and recruiting challenges. On *The West Block*, Blair told host Mercedes Stephenson that how the government addresses these challenges is part of an ongoing discussion. “We have brought forward a plan that’s very much in discussion right now within our government about making significant new investments,” Blair said. “We’re going to do more. But there’s also some context in the doing that more because there is a fiscal situation in Canada that I have to be realistic about.” At the House of Commons defence committee last week, Blair said that the long-promised defence policy update is tied in with broader budgetary conversations happening with the Prime Minister’s Office.

Blair said part of his job is focused on helping clear up issues in military procurement — a longstanding challenge when it comes to sourcing much-needed equipment. Earlier this week, he along with Innovation Minister Francois-Phillipe Champagne and Procurement Minister Jean-Yves Duclos announced Canada has selected Boeing for a sole-source \$8-billion deal on new surveillance aircraft to replace the Auroras. “I don’t want to sort of relitigate the past, but I think for a very long time, we did not make the necessary investments in the platforms,” Blair said.

“What’s also become apparent is that the world is becoming an increasingly dangerous place. Our responsibilities are well known to us and significant.” Stephenson pressed Blair on Canada’s military readiness, pointing out that sources say Canada now has a three-day ammunition supply and not 30 days as mandated by NATO commitments.



“We’ve been working on what have been challenges in acquiring the ammunition. And some of it is resources, but an awful lot of it is this process. So, making that process work more effectively is a critical part of what we have to do,” Blair said. As part of broader budgetary deliberations, Blair has been tasked with shaving \$1 billion off defence expenditures. Blair

previously said they are looking for efficiencies in areas like consulting and administration, but he says issues with procurement are more process than budget related. “Last year, the Canadian Armed Forces was unable to spend over \$2 billion of their budget. And it’s because the processes of procurement are not as efficient as they need to be,” Blair said. “It’s a matter of making sure that those processes work for them so that they’re able to do that maintenance, they’re able to acquire that ammunition, they’re able to make the investments that they need to make.”

## **15<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Regiment’s ‘Christmas Turkey Shoot Competition’**



The annual turkey shoot has been re-started by Sergeant Donato Calogero for the first time since 2007 (another example of why he was awarded a Col Commandant’s coin). Sgt Calogero arranged the loan of the Cadet Corps air rifles with Capt Kirk Weale, Commanding Officer 2472 15<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery

Regiment Royal Canadian Army Cadet Corps (RCACC) and the shooting plan was to allow the unit members to fire every Wednesday night in November. At the Annual Soldier’s Christmas Dinner, the winner of both the trophy target and random shot target were awarded a frozen turkey - all in the spirit of Christmas. The random shot target has a secret overlay for scoring and the trophy target winner also gets a name plate put on the trophy for the year.

*Sgt Jayson Wong certainly made the best of his time on the range competing in the Regiment’s ‘Christmas Turkey Shoot Competition’*

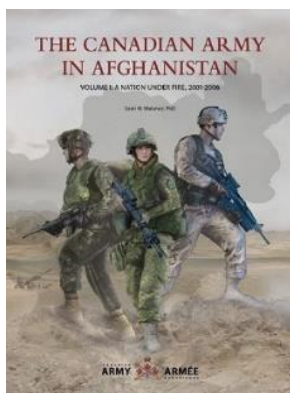


Thank you to Sgt Calogero, for restarting this tradition!

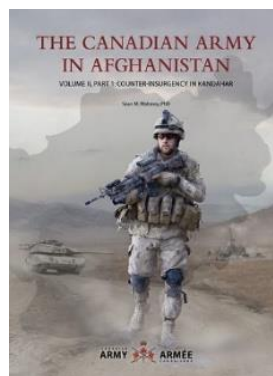
## **New Book Series - The Canadian Army in Afghanistan**

November 27, 2023

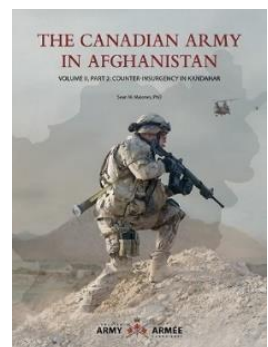
The War in Afghanistan is unlike any conflict that Canada has ever been involved in. The duration of the war generated continual stresses on the Army and put soldiers, units, and leaders at all levels to the test. After the removal of the Taliban Regime, Kabul had to be stabilized to prevent a new civil war. When the revived insurgency set its sights on Kandahar and the OEF and ISAF coalitions were confronted with a sophisticated and amorphous insurgency, the Canadian Army was forced to adapt to new and different types of operations continuously from 2001 to 2014. *The Canadian Army in Afghanistan* is the first narrative to lay out what happened and why. This complex story depicts the evolution of the forces in-theatre and how they carried out their missions in pursuit of national and coalition objectives from the dark days of the 9-11 attacks to the suppression of the insurgency in Kandahar Province in 2011.



The Canadian Army in Afghanistan, Volume I: A Nation Under Fire, 2001-2006 (651 pages)[PDF - 43.6 MB]



The Canadian Army in Afghanistan, Volume II, Part 1: Counter-Insurgency in Kandahar (569 pages)[PDF - 64.87 MB]



The Canadian Army in Afghanistan, Volume II, Part 2: Counter-Insurgency in Kandahar (610 pages)[PDF - 62.89 MB]

To order these books go to:- <https://www.canada.ca/en/army/services/line-sight/articles/2023/11/the-canadian-army-in-afghanistan.html>

## **Vancouver Gunners Website Update**

I trust everyone is starting to get into the festive spirit. After all the dining and partying I trust you have already circled your calendar for the New Year's Day Levee on 1 January. Details should be out in the near future.

**Congratulations - Bombardier Andy Law CD** for his Canadian Forces Decoration.  
**Sergeant Stephan Figueroa** for his promotion to Sergeant while serving with 20<sup>th</sup> Ind Fd Bty.

**Commanding Officer's Christmas Tea** - A long standing tradition in the Officers' Mess. Would anyone happen to know when it first began? There may not be any photos as the lighting was



rather dim due to BC Hydro deciding the Sunday would be a fine time to do an upgrade. Kudos to the organizers for doing a great job!

**Turkey Shoot** - The annual turkey shoot has been re-started by Sergeant Donato Calogero for the first time since 2007. The plan was to allow the unit members to fire on every Wednesday night in November leading to the Annual Soldier's Christmas Dinner where the winner of both the trophy target and random shot target are awarded a frozen turkey.

<https://www.vancouvergunners.ca/turkey-shoot-2023.html>

**Sergeant Harry Alexander (Alex) Robertson, MM** - Sergeant Robertson has been added to our list of Military Medal awards. He was a member of the 5th Siege Battery, Canadian Garrison Artillery, CEF, a unit perpetuated by the 15th Field Artillery Regiment, RCA. Lest We Forget.

<https://www.vancouvergunners.ca/whats-new/sergeant-harry-alexander-alex-robertson-mm>

### **Gunner Everett McEachern, MM**

Gunner McEachern has been added to our list of Military Medal awards. He was also a member of the 5th Siege Battery, Canadian Garrison Artillery, CEF.

<https://www.vancouvergunners.ca/whats-new/gunner-everett-mceachern-mm>

**Wednesday Lunch** - Join us to check up on your old lunch buddies. Click on this link.

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/71810323784?pwd=ehLJDhj9zlqI0HvnBlMCYmw0p6ZDwe.1> or use <https://zoom.us/j/71810323784> or use Meeting ID 718 1032 3784 and the secret passcode is 6L6qz0 (fourth digit is a lower case Q and the last digit is a Zero)

**Remember – Stay healthy and stay safe!**

## **Who (or What) Is It?**

**Last Week:** The **Lockheed P-38 Lightning** is an American single-seat, twin piston-



engined fighter aircraft that was used during World War II. Developed for the United States Army Air Corps (USAAC) by the Lockheed Corporation, the P-38 incorporated a distinctive twin-boom design with a central nacelle containing the cockpit and armament. Along with its use as a general fighter, the P-38 was used in various aerial combat roles,

including as a highly effective fighter-bomber, a night fighter, and a long-range escort fighter when equipped with drop tanks. The P-38 was also used as a bomber-pathfinder, guiding streams of medium and heavy bombers, or even other P-38s equipped with bombs, to their targets. Used in the aerial reconnaissance role, the P-38 accounted for 90 percent of American aerial film captured over Europe. Although it was not designated a heavy fighter or a bomber destroyer by the USAAC, the P-38 filled those roles and more; unlike German heavy fighters crewed by two or three airmen, the P-38 with its lone pilot was nimble enough to compete with single-engine fighters.

**But this particular aircraft as also known as the Traitor Lightning:-** Martin James Monti, born in Saint Louis, Missouri, on 24 October 1921, was the son of Italian-German immigrants. During the 1930s, Monti was anti-communist and an enthusiastic admirer of Charles Edward

Coughlin, a Roman Catholic priest who made weekly radio broadcasts and was dubbed the “Radio Priest”. Coughlin was known for his sentiments towards anti-communism, antisemitism, and the admiration of the fascist governments of Germany and Italy. His broadcasts attracted millions of listeners before being stopped by the Roosevelt administration in 1939 after the outbreak of WWII. In October 1942, Monti traveled to Detroit, Michigan to meet and converse with Coughlin. Prior to enlisting in the US Army, Monti worked as an aircraft assembler. On 19 December 1942, Monti enlisted in the US Army Air Force as an aviation cadet. After completing flight training in early 1944, he was commissioned as a flight officer. He was qualified on the P-39 Airacobra and the P-38 Lightning and was promoted to Second Lieutenant. In August 1944, he was posted to the 126th Replacement Depot in Karachi, India (today in Pakistan). While at Karachi, he decided to join the 82<sup>nd</sup> Fighter Group in Italy. On 2 October 1944, without orders he boarded a Curtiss C-46 Commando transport bound for Cairo, then other transports to Cairo, Egypt and, from there, traveled to Italy, via Tripoli, Libya. In Naples, Italy, Monti “borrowed” a Jeep to go to Foggia where he met General Clarence T “Curly” Edwinson, commander of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Fighter Group. Edwinson ordered him back to Naples. He turned towards Naples but instead went to Pomigliano Airfield, near Naples. At Pomigliano, the 354<sup>th</sup> Air Service Squadron prepared aircraft for assignment to combat squadrons.

On the morning of 13 October 1944, Monti spotted a brand new Lockheed F-5E, s/n 44-23725, with a “1A” card indicating mechanical problems requiring control tests. Lockheed P-38J-25-LO Lightning, s/n 44-23725 was modified as an unarmed F-5E photo-reconnaissance aircraft (affectionately called “Photo Joe”) at Lockheed’s Dallas Modification Center. The F-5E carried 3 precision cameras in its nose which were operated by remote control from the cockpit. Since the F-5E had no armament, it was much lighter and faster than the standard P-38. Monti identified himself as a test pilot of the 354<sup>th</sup> Air Service Squadron and took off at 1230 hours in the faulty F-5E. At about 1500 hours, he landed at Milan-Linate airfield near Milan. On exiting the plane, he told the German personnel surrounding him that he wanted to defect. The F-5E was quickly hidden at the end of the runway. A few days later, Tenente Brini, a pilot of the Aeronautica Nazionale Repubblicana (ANR), flew the F-5E to Villafranca, near Verona, where it was repainted with German markings. The F-5E was then given to the Germans and sent to the test center Erprobungstelle at Rechlin and was given the code T9 # MK, then it went to the Rosarius Zirkus.

In 1945, Monti participated in a radio program titled “The Round Table Conference” at the SS-Standarte Kurt Eggers recording studio. The program consisted of political propaganda where he operated under various aliases, including “Martin Wiethaupt”. During his radio broadcasting, he came into contact with Mildred Gillars, the American broadcaster known as “Axis Sally”, who took an immediate dislike to him. Monti then officially joined the Waffen-SS and was given the rank of SS-Untersturmführer, equivalent to his rank was in the US Army. While in the SS, he never saw combat but instead participated in the creation of a propaganda leaflet to be distributed by the Wehrmacht among Allied POWs. With Germany’s defeat imminent, Monti fled Berlin to Milan, Italy, by railroad and military transport where he surrendered to the US Army. Monti had come full circle. After the war, Monti was indicted for 21 accounts of treason committed between 13 October 1944 and 8 May 1945 (VE day). Monti was sentenced to 25 years in prison and paid

a fine of \$10,000 USD. He served his sentence in Leavenworth Penitentiary, Kansas and he was paroled in 1960.

**This Week:** Just the other day, as I was striding down the street in a military manner, I happened to come upon a youthful lass whose ears sported two tiny white devices. Thinking she was much too young to be a deaf gunner wearing hearing aids, I enquired of my valet what these might be. He told me that they were “ear buds”, a wireless machine which is able to communicate with an equally wireless telephonic device by use of a tooth of a different colour. I stopped her and examined her mouth for this discoloured molar but could find nothing blue. After explaining this



to the police, who, to their credit, were very quick to respond to her unnecessary call, I remembered that in my youthful middle age many youngsters sported lightweight headphones with orange pads. These were attached, via a reliable wire, to a Walkman (other brands were available), upon which one could play an entire Bee Gees cassette. It was the wonder of the age, and this was its successor.

Engines capable of playing music have come a long way since Edison's first wax cylinder, and most of you have lived through the whole of that development, or, at least from the shellac record disc of 78 rpm to, well, the now popular again vinyl record disc of 33 1/3 rpm. Some things do go in circles. You may wonder why we are detailing this history. It is because we believe we have found in our vast photo archives a picture of an early transitional music playback device, intermediate between the LP and the cassette. Might our photo show an early 8-track machine? You be the judge of that by sending your ideas to the editor, Bob

Mugford ([bob.mugford@gmail.com](mailto:bob.mugford@gmail.com)), or the long-playing author, John Redmond ([johnd.\\_redmond@telus.net](mailto:johnd._redmond@telus.net)).

### **From the 'Punitentary'**

Customer: Do any of your dogs go cheap? Pet shop owner: “Sorry, all our dogs go woof.

### **Murphy's Other Laws**

The enemy never watches until you make a mistake.

### **Quotable Quotes**

Most things are easy if you put a great effort into making them so. *Anon*



# Looking For a Christmas Gift?

Check out Hal Skaarup's great series of books about Cannon in Canada



## **Volume 1**

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[Shelldrake: Canadian Artillery Museums and Gun Monuments](#)



## Wednesday Digital Video Lunch



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.**

Join us to check up on your old lunch buddies. Click on this link:-

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/71810323784?pwd=ehLJDhj9zlqI0HvnBlMlMCYmw0p6ZDwe.1>

or use <https://zoom.us/j/71810323784>

or use Meeting ID 718 1032 3784 **and the secret passcode is 6L6qz0** (fourth digit is a lower case Q and the last digit is a Zero)

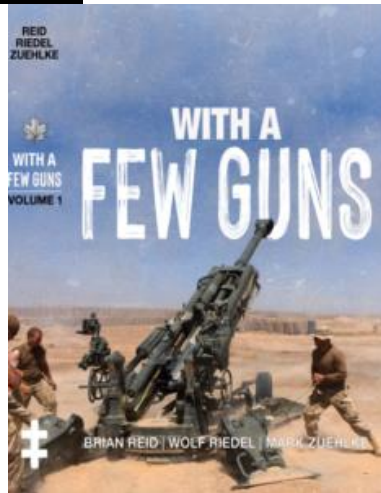
+-

Invite some friends! We have room for 100! See you on Wednesdays at noon. Bring your own lunch and beverage of choice.

Attendance at this meeting is falling off. If you haven't been on for a while, we miss you so come back and join us.



# **With a Few Guns – Volume 1**



## **With A Few Guns –**

### **The Royal Regiment of Canadian Artillery in Afghanistan Volume I 2002-2006**

Authored by Col (Retd) Wolf Riedel and Mark Zuehlke,  
building on the work of LCol (Retd) Brian Reid

This two-volume set captures the experiences of Canadian Gunners and the Regimental family during the Afghanistan era.

- Volume 1 – 2002-2006, publication date **4 December 2023!**  
The translation “Avec quelques canons” is expected for autumn 2024.
- Volume 2 – 2007 to 2014, targeted publication date 2024/2025

[READ SELECTED EXCERPTS FROM VOLUME 1](#)

<https://rca-arc.org/excerpts-from-with-a-few-guns/>

*We can't complete Volume 2 without your help. Be part of this significant undertaking – tell your story, submit your photos. Even the smallest detail touches someone!*

Contact [mrgnrsmith@gmail.com](mailto:mrgnrsmith@gmail.com) and make sure *our* story is recorded for generations to come!

“With A Few Guns” is dedicated to the greater family of the Royal Regiment of Canadian Artillery—from those who served with distinction in the face of danger in Afghanistan, to those who trained and supported them to become mission-ready, and especially to those who kept the rest of the family together at home. In memory of “Reid B.A of the RCA” (1939-2023) and his dedicated service to the Guns, his sage advice and his literary prowess in recording parts of the Canadian Army’s rich history.

# 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Liberation of Holland Battlefield Tour

*The  
Royal Canadian Artillery  
Association*



*L'Association de  
l'Artillerie royale  
canadienne*

13 October 2023

## **RE: 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Liberation of Holland Commemorative Battlefield Tour, May 2025**

Dear Sirs, Commanding Officers, et al

I am writing this letter to solicit your interest in participating in a May 2025 Battlefield tour to commemorate the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of Holland. The organisation of a trip of this magnitude involves a lot of time and resources and we, at the RCAA, would like to ensure that we have sufficient interest from all the units across the country before we start planning. For those of you that participated in the last significant commemoration, the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of D-Day in 2019, we would like to build on it's success and use the lessons learned to make this trip better.

### **Why**

- The 80th Anniversary of the Liberation of Holland will be a major event – the very last major event while veterans of the Second World War are still with us. These commemorative events in Holland every fifth year are always a big deal – but this one will be special.
- The Royal Regiment of Canadian Artillery played a major role in the Second World War, especially in the Liberation of Holland.
- Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) will be the lead Department for Canada in official ceremonies, and the Department of National Defence (DND) will support the VAC efforts (typically a multi-service Guard, Band, Logistics support, Security, VIPs, airlift, etc.). Elements of the Gunner community will most certainly be involved in the VAC-led events, but so will all elements of the CAF be represented.
- Separate from the "official" GOC activities, many Branches/Corps, Regiments, Associations, and travel companies will be organizing commemorative trips to participate in the 80th Anniversary of Liberation of Holland.

### **Mission**

- To enhance cohesion, morale, and esprit de corps of the Royal Regiment by commemorating and celebrating the accomplishments of our predecessors during the Liberation of Holland 1945.

### **Rationale**

- Remember and commemorate those Gunners who served in WWII, and those who paid the ultimate sacrifice.
- Build cohesion and morale amongst serving members, Regular Force and Reserve.
- Connect the serving generation of the RCA with retired members
- Support and reinforce the goals and objectives of the RCA Association.
- Supplement the professional development of serving members.
- Re-learn lessons of the Artillery at war in a theatre of operations in North-West Europe.

*Administration  
27048 35B Avenue  
Langley, B.C. V4W 0C3*

*Au service des artilleurs canadiens depuis 1876  
Serving Canadian Gunners Since 1876*

*Finance  
10 Lancewood Crescent  
Brampton, Ont. L6S 5Y6*



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### **Concept and Scope**

- Conduct a ten-day battlefield study immediately prior to and during the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Liberation of the Netherlands.
- Aim for 30 to 40 deserving Non-Commissioned Members and Junior Officers representing every Regular Force and Reserve Artillery unit, who will be sponsored through raised donations.
- Invite other serving, retired Gunners and their families, Association members and others, who will pay their own way.
- Aim for two bus loads of participants (80-90 pax).
- Engage a professional company that specializes in battlefield studies, with professional historians.
- Arrange all travel activities (flights, land travel, hotels, meals, insurance, etc.) through a professional travel agency.
- Conduct with the assistance of the RCAA, a major Non-Public fundraising campaign at national, local, and unit level to raise approximately \$6,000-6,500 per person. Ideally each participating member should contribute \$500 towards the trip.
- Identify a point of Contact per unit that will engage with the national organising committee.

### **Conclusion**

The RCAA want to ensure the participation of serving gunners and we are willing to put the time and resources however, this trip cannot happen without your support and commitment. Please advise us of your interest in supporting and participating in this trip by the 31<sup>st</sup> of October by notifying Major (R) Richard Gratton at [rgratton1534@gmail.com](mailto:rgratton1534@gmail.com).

Following the returns, timelines and more information will be coming your way.  
If you have any questions, please also contact Maj (Ret'd) Richard Gratton at [rgratton1534@gmail.com](mailto:rgratton1534@gmail.com).

Ubique!

*Bill Kalogerakis*

B. (Bill) Kalogerakis, CD  
Colonel (Ret'd)  
President  
The Royal Canadian Artillery Association  
[president.rcaa.aarc@gmail.com](mailto:president.rcaa.aarc@gmail.com)



# Commemoration Cyprus 2024



Commémoration Chypre 2024



Commemoration Cyprus 2024



## Mission

*...commémorer la contribution du Canada à la mission de l'ONU à Chypre à l'occasion du 50e anniversaire de la guerre de 1974.*

*...commemorate Canada's contribution to the UN mission in Cyprus on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1974 war.*



**WHAT** - Cyprus 2024 Pilgrimage.

**GOAL** - to capture the history and stories from those who served in Cyprus with emphasis on the actions that took place during the 1974 war, **A FORGOTTEN WAR.**

**WHEN** - November 2024.

**WHO** - All Cyprus and Canadian Airborne Regiment Veterans and family members.

**WHERE** - Nicosia Cyprus, lodged at the Hilton Hotel.

**COST** - Pay as you go trip with individual costs in the \$5000 to 6000 range. Costs covered will include airfare, hotel with breakfast and expenses such as transportation.

**TRAVEL** - Will be arranged by professional travel agents, with pre and post tour travel options available.

**PROGRAM** - Seven days: three days of battlefield tours, three days of excursions, and one day of Remembrance.

**FURTHER INFORMATION AND UPDATES ARE AVAILABLE BY JOINING THE CYPRUS 2024 FACEBOOK GROUP** [Cyprus2024 | Facebook](#)

**QUOI** - Pèlerinage à Chypre 2024.

**OBJECTIF** - capturer l'histoire et les récits de ceux qui ont servi à Chypre en mettant l'accent sur les actions qui ont eu lieu là pendant la guerre de 1974, **UNE GUERRE OUBLIÉE.**

**QUAND** - Novembre 2024.

**QUI** - Tous les vétérans de Chypre, du Régiment aéroporté canadien et les membres de leurs familles.

**OÙ** - Nicosie Chypre, logés à l'hôtel Hilton.

**COÛT** - Voyage à la carte avec des coûts individuels inclus, environ \$5000 et 6000. Les coûts comprendront le billet d'avion, l'hôtel avec petit-déjeuner et les dépenses telles que le transport.

**VOYAGE** - Sera organisé par des agents de voyage professionnels, avec options de voyage avant et après la réunion.

**PROGRAMME** - Sept jours: trois jours de visites du champ de bataille, trois jours d'excursions et une journée du Souvenir.

**PLUS D'INFORMATIONS ET MISES À JOUR SONT DISPONIBLES EN REJOIGNANT LE GROUPE FACEBOOK CYPRUS 2024** [Cyprus2024 | Facebook](#)

