



Van Arty Assoc and RUSI Van Members News Aug 13, 2013

Wednesday Lunches

Mrs Lum is on her scheduled vacation. Lunches resume on Sept 4th. NO LUNCHES on Aug 14, 21 or 28th.

Veterans Ombudsman's Statement about Canada's Obligation to Veterans

The Equitas class action lawsuit against the government by six Afghanistan Veterans, and the government's legal stance, that there is no Social Contract or special obligation by the people of Canada, through the government, to Veterans continues to fuel a lot of debate in the Veterans community. The Veterans Ombudsman, Guy Parent, has also addressed the issue several times in public. His latest release is below.

There is a discussion currently taking place among the member organizations of the Veterans Consultation Group about what action the Group should take in reaction to the government's arguments in the Equitas case. The Group is the largest Veterans organization in Canada, consisting of 17 member organization, some of which are also umbrella organizations. It meets twice a year, hosted by the Legion, and has sent resolutions it has passed to the Minister. At present, a joint press release by the Group through the Legion is likely. Those organizations which support the press release will be named in the release. The initiative for the joint release came from CPVA. I will keep you posted as matters progress.

With best regards,

Ray Kokkonen - President
Canadian Peacekeeping Veterans Association
www.cpva.ca

Thank you for your messages of support for what I wrote in my July 29th blog on the Government of Canada's recognized obligation to Veterans. If you have not had time to read the Globe and Mail's July 31st editorial, Veterans are not just regular retirees, and the Ottawa Citizen's August 1st editorial, Duty to Veterans about our government's obligation to Veterans, please take time do so. They sum up well what generations of Canadians have believed to be theirs and their government's obligation to those who willingly risk injury, illness or death to serve Canada and protect the values and the way of life that we enjoy in this great country. This obligation, on the part of the Government of Canada to its Veterans, is stated clearly in such legislation as the Pension Act, the Veterans Review and Appeal Board Act, and the War Veterans Allowance Act, for example. Each states that the acts shall be liberally construed and

interpreted to the end that the recognized obligation of the people and Government of Canada to those who have served their country so well and to their dependants may be fulfilled.

This is as it should be because we ask of everyone who puts on the uniform in defence of our country to be ready to pay the ultimate sacrifice. In recognition of that bond, they write a blank cheque to the people of Canada up to and including their lives.

It is this act of joining the Canadian Forces voluntarily and willingly accepting the unconditional obligation to follow orders—whatever the danger and risk of harm or death—that distinguishes those who serve in the military and police from other Canadian professions. In return for their selfless dedication to serve Canada, the Government of Canada has a recognized obligation to ensure that if they are injured or become ill and can no longer continue in uniform that it will help them rebuild their lives and restore, to the greatest extent possible, their health, financial independence, and quality of personal and family life.

This reciprocal obligation is necessary for a country to effectively defend itself and protect its interests, encourage recruitment and retention in its armed forces and maintain a high morale throughout the organization. The members of its armed forces must believe that its citizens and its government support their efforts, and recognize the risks that they willingly accept to defend the ideals and values that we so often take for granted. This has always been the Canadian way, and we can be very proud of it.

For generations, this obligation has been a central part of the national fabric of our country, and past Veterans' legislation recognized and affirmed it. Our Veterans deserve no less.

Guy Parent

Veterans Ombudsman <http://www.ombudsman-veterans.gc.ca/blog-blogue/post-eng.cfm?202>

Royal Canadian Air Force could be next to go retro

JESSICA HUME | QMI AGENCY

OTTAWA - The Royal Canadian Air Force is next in line to go retro on its rank titles, the Defence Minister confirmed Tuesday. A day after announcing the Army would revert its uniforms, symbols and ranking system back to original British Army and Commonwealth designations, Peter MacKay told reporters the same would next be applied to the Air Force.

"We're looking at a number of ways in which we can continue to restore historic symbols, ranks, insignia that respect the history of the Canadian Forces," he said. "So specific to the Air Force ranks, we'll look at it." MacKay continued that the government believes "this is consistent in keeping with what was stripped away and taken from the Canadian Forces in 1968 by a previous government". While MacKay called the move something of an homage to Canadian military history, military historian Desmond Morton sees it otherwise.

"This is an homage to elderly vets who vote Conservative," Morton told QMI Agency. "This is highly political." Morton recounted a story about an Air Force pilot "who told me about how he has to buy a new uniform every time they change these things, which is stupid and costly." The government has said the cost of the Army name changes will total \$245,000, though no numbers have been put on the Air Force upgrade.

"I guess MacKay can say this is cheap, and I mean, for him, it will be," Morton said. "But let's not confuse military desires with Conservative political ideology here. It looks like the Conservatives are getting ready for the 1915(?) election."

Historic airpower database now online

By Tech. Sgt. Sarah Loicano, Air University Public Affairs / Published August 09, 2013

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, Ala. (AFNS) -- More than eight years in the making, a new database containing information from U.S. military and coalition aerial bombing campaigns over the last century is now publicly available online. An historical data collection project developed and researched by Lt. Col. Jenns Robertson, the Theater History of Operations Reports database, or THOR, has evolved into a full-scale research tool available online at <http://afri.au.af.mil/thor/index.asp>

The database combines digitized paper mission reports starting with World War I to create a central source of bombing history around the globe. The database can be searched by date, conflict or even aircraft-specific criteria, and organized into spreadsheets, charts or onto maps, forming a live-action sequence of events. The THOR database is useful not only for current and future military commanders, Robertson said, but also for academic researchers, historians and government agencies involved in unexploded ordnance clean-up efforts.

"The most exciting part is that I can't envision all the ways this can be used," Robertson said. "This is a data trove that allows us to look over the last 70-100 years of bombing data, how we've conducted wars for the last century using airpower, and if we can't pull lessons out of that, then we're not doing our job."

Currently, the public can access data, including 58 different aircraft, bomb information, and even altitude, from World Wars I and II and Vietnam. The records from World War II and Vietnam are the most complete, he said, and include U.S. and Royal Air Force data, as well as some Australian, New Zealand and South African air force missions.

"We've tried to have all air forces, to make sure that it is an airpower view versus just a (U.S.) Air Force view, so joint, coalition data is our goal," explained Robertson. Korea, he added, will be included on THOR, but record keeping during that time was done by hand due to changing technology.

"Everything was done free-text, not punch-card text or digitally, so we have to read the reports to pull the context out in order to get the data," he said.

Robertson began the project in 2006 when his military duties required him to create weekly briefings of current bombing activity. Realizing that it was taking longer than necessary to gather information from multiple resources, Robertson wanted to create a centralized source of information for military commanders to use. The need for a single information pool on current missions expanded into Robertson's goal of building an entire airpower collection dating back to World War I. During his off-duty time, Robertson spent the next five years decoding almost four million Vietnam War entries gathered from the National Archives in Washington, D.C.

When he was assigned to the Air Force Research Institute here to work exclusively on THOR, Robertson was able to locate strategic bombing information from WWII and battlefield raid reports from WWI, further adding to the database.

"We're still hunting for some of the data, and I don't know if we'll ever find it. You ask and you hunt and oftentimes we get lucky and find a trove like in the halls of the Air Force Historical Research Agency where I ran across the bombing survey books that had been untouched for 70 years," Robertson said.

Although the THOR website is just now publicly available, the database has already proved helpful, most recently by the Vietnamese government, which is using the Vietnam conflict data to assess post-war bomb and mine contamination in the Southeast Asia region.

"We can show that they have actually been able to save lives and prevent casualties since they originally got the data back in 2010, and the data that we've been able to give them has been even better, so hopefully we'll improve their chances of lowering exposure to explosives," Robertson said. "To be told, and to find out from the folks that are doing the demining in the field, that the data that was sent to them made them more effective. It's an incredible feeling to get that feedback that what you're doing is important."

From the time the Minnesota native arrived at the Air Force Research Institute, he and THOR team members John Conway and computer programmer Billy Barth have been working to get the data online for public use. Robertson said part of the goal of putting THOR on a public website is to have the best and brightest academics and historians fill in the gaps in official documents and correct inaccurate data whenever necessary.

"The professors at the various universities who teach and are writing books and doing research, we want to provide them access to this resource so they can give us the feedback of whether or not we've got it right," Robertson said. "I suspect there are errors still uncovered within the system that I cannot discover because I don't have the knowledge base myself, but, if I put it out there for the experts to examine, we can make it a better resource faster than relying on me working by myself or just a small crowd of us within the (Department of Defense). I look forward to seeing the response and see how we can make the database better for them."

Peacekeepers Day

Ottawa August 9, 2013

Prime Minister Stephen Harper today issued the following statement to mark National Peacekeepers' Day:

"For several decades, Canada has made important contributions to peacekeeping operations around the world.

"Tens of thousands of Canadian Armed Forces members, police officers and civilians have worked tirelessly to promote Canada's interests and international stability. This has included placing themselves between hostile forces, supervising cease-fires and the withdrawal of opposing troops, providing valuable support to international security operations and stabilization efforts through capacity building, training and policy development, and participating in strategic deployments of equipment and uniformed personnel and civilian experts."

"On this day, let us pay tribute to the remarkable work accomplished by all Canadian and international peacekeepers and remember with deep respect the more than 275 citizens of our country who paid the ultimate price while on peacekeeping missions.

"Let us also remember those Canadians currently keeping up the proud tradition of peacekeeping in places such as Haiti, Israel, Cyprus and South Sudan, and wish them a safe return home.

"Today, I call on all Canadians to join me in saluting and thanking these heroic and selfless individuals who sacrifice so much to help make the world a better place."

"Who Is That?"



Last week's photo had us all scratching our heads. We quickly identified Jim Bathurst on the left and Al Langmuir on the right, but no one was able to ID the chap in the middle. Had a real breakthrough on the weekend when I spoke to Ron Gates, a former 43rd member, who ID'd himself in another photo from the same occasion. He says the photos were taken at the Normandy Restaurant on Granville Street, between Broadway and 12th.

The 43rd had formed a Quarter Guard, which was used at official functions, such as visits by the Lieutenant Governor. On this occasion, their reward was a dinner at this restaurant.

Ron also confirmed our story about the 43rd firing 6pdrs on a Victoria Day salute in the absence of 15 Fd.

Here is your Quiz Photo No 8, and a big thanks to all who are participating in this activity. It



helps all of us to remember so that those who served in the past are not forgotten.

This week's quiz brings us a bit closer to the present period. In fact, with all the 'back to the future' changes in the Canadian Army, such as pips and crowns replacing 'merchant navy' insignia, can it only be a matter of time before 'bush' is reintroduced? I certainly hope so because I (almost) fit my old ones, global warming having shrunk them slightly.

So, here is a group of officers doing what officers have and always will do--- observing. Note the one fellow using his glasses, while the others discuss the importance of trigonometry to gunners. The photo comes, once again, from Vic Stevenson's extensive collection, which covers all his years with the army, from COTC in 1948, to the end of his admirable career. We recognize one or two of these gentlemen, but leave it up to you to guess the date, place and people.

As always, answers to johnd.redmond@telus.net or the editor. Thank you all for your help with the museum's collection."

From the 'Punitary'

After the Armistice there was a POW exchange. I guess the saying is true – “the truce shall make you free’.

Murphy's Laws

Doctors, Dentists and Lawyers are only on time when you are not.

Quotable Quotes

It is said that power corrupts, but actually it's truer that power attracts the corruptible. The sane are usually attracted by other things than power. - *David Brin*