



Van Arty Association and RUSI Van Members News Aug 13, 2019

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

Newsletter on line. This newsletter, and previous editions, are available on the Vancouver Artillery Association website at: www.vancouvergunners.ca and the RUSI Vancouver website at: <http://www.rusivancouver.ca/newsletter.html>. Both groups are also on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=vancouver%20artillery%20association> and <https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=rusi%20vancouver>

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

NOTE: There will not be a lunch on Sept 11. Mrs Lum will be out of town.

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

Sept 11 NO LUNCH - mark your calendars! Mrs Lum away.

Sept 28 RUSI Vancouver Inaugural Annual Dinner

World War 2 – 1944

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

Aug 14th: St Malo falls to US troops as II Canadian Corps fights to within 8km of Falaise with another heavy bomber raid and the US XV Corps consolidates its hold at Argentan.

Aug 15th: Four Allied Corps (American, British and Canadian) attempt to close the Falaise gap as the German armies there engage in frenzied attempts to break free – Kluge is stranded in the gap and his inability to stay in contact with his superiors arouses Hitler's suspicions that he is negotiating surrender. American and French troops from US Seventh Army land in Southern France (Operations Dragoon and Anvil), the beaches are only lightly defended and there is little action for the USN, RN, and French battleships and carriers offshore.

Aug 16th: The Soviets come within 10 km of Warsaw but allow themselves to be pushed back (more seeming evidence of a desire to let the Germans finish off the Polish Home Army). Stalin

formally refuses requests from the Western Allies and the Catholic Church to aid the Polish insurgents. The Canadians enter Falaise and a Polish division plugs the final main road out of the Falaise Gap during intense fighting while Chartres is liberated by the US XX Corps. With the beachheads secure, II French Corps moves inland from the Dragoon/Anvil landings. Lt Tasker Watkins was the only officer remaining when a company of the Welch Regiment found itself under intensive machinegun fire in the middle of a mined wheat field near Barfour, in Normandy. Lt Watkins rallied and led 30 men in a charge that eliminated 50 of the enemy, then single-handedly stalked and destroyed a machinegun post; allowing his company to safely withdraw. He was awarded the Victoria Cross and went on to a distinguished career as an athlete and judge.

Aug 17th: The capture of Falaise is completed by 2nd Canadian Division and American troops liberate Orleans, Dreux and Chateaudun and the old citadel outside St Malo yields. Kluge, still lurking in the Falaise pocket, is sacked and replaced by Model. The Soviets move to cut off Riga again in the face of determined German counterattacks. In Southern France, St Raphael, St Tropez, Frejus, Le Luq, and St Maxime are liberated. The last large cohesive Japanese force on Numfoor is largely destroyed. The tiny protectorate of Tannu Tuva (a Mongolian entity on the Siberian border with China) petitions the USSR for admission and is absorbed – the smallest of the Allied nations vanishes from history.

Aug 18th: The Falaise Gap is finally closed as Polish and American troops meet at Chambois, but the seal is not tight, and Germans continue to percolate to the east. Kluge commits suicide as Allied fighter bombers continue to savage the German's retreating columns – performing tremendous execution. In southern France, US and French columns move on Aix-en-Provence, Toulon and Marseilles. The Soviets resume the advance around Lake Peipus (with 3rd Baltic and Leningrad Fronts) and cross the Vistula at Sandommierz (1st Ukraine Front). A Dutch police officer named Dirk Boonstra had refused to round up Jews in his village of Grijpskirk; for his pains he was arrested and is executed this day in the Kamp Vught Concentration Camp. For his courage he is named Righteous Among the Nations in 2007.

Aug 19th: Ferocious fighting continues around Falaise and Argentan, while 3rd US Army's motor tour reaches the Seine at Mantes Grassicourt. The Resistance begins its rising in Paris. Dive bombers are not supposed to dogfight with fighter aircraft, and the odds are also heavily against aviators completing hundreds of combat missions – especially Soviet aviators. Senior Lieutenant Pavel Artemyevich Plotniokov doesn't accept conventional wisdom and does things his way as often as possible, with care, awesome skill, imaginative planning and ferocious determination – which is why he has survived over 250 combat missions since first flying a Pe-2 dive bomber in October 1941. He has also shot down three fighters in this time and earned a reputation for being the man to pick off the most difficult targets. Today he is named a Hero of the Soviet Union.

Aug 20th: The last escapees from the Falaise Pocket stagger off to the east as 3rd Army crosses the Seine at Mantes Grassicourt (50 km from Paris) and enters Fontainebleau upstream from Paris. The Germans arrest Petain for refusing to leave Vichy and drive him off to Germany. De

Gaulle returns to France. With Allies like this, are the Germans necessary? Toulouse is sort of liberated but dozens of self-appointed leaders and commanders in numerous (mostly left-wing) factions of the Resistance then go after each other and a month of chaos ensues. On New Guinea, Biak is finally pronounced secure for 2,250 US casualties – while 4,500 Japanese are dead and 225 have been taken prisoner. The Soviets uncork major new offensives by 2nd and 3rd Ukraine Fronts at Jassy and Tiraspol, where the Germans are very thin on the ground and the vast majority of defenders are Romanians. Another shock at Jassy comes when German Tigers settle in for some of their usual long-distance kills to find 122mm shells from the new generation of Soviet armour buzzing around their ears; the days of the assured supremacy of Tigers and Panthers are over. Three days of fighting come to an end at St Lambert-sur-Dives as Major David Vivian Currie's combat team of South Alberta Regiment tanks and infantry from the Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada holds one of the exit routes out of the Falaise Gap. He and his men have deprived the German army of seven tanks, 40 vehicles, twelve 88mm guns, and 2,900 men dead, wounded or surrendered. Currie later receives the Victoria Cross. He is also the only winner of the VC who was photographed at the scene of exploits on the day of them – a photographer snapped a shot of the pistol carrying major as several German POWs filed by.

Species at Risk in Good Hands at Ottawa's Connaught Range

Steven Fouchard, Directorate of Army Public Affairs



The Connaught Range Primary Training Centre (CRPTC) in Southwest Ottawa is a major hub for military and police firearms training. With that in mind, CRPTC probably sounds less than hospitable to wildlife, but it is actually a safe haven for a wide range of plant, animal and insect species designated by government authorities as endangered or on the cusp of becoming so.

CAF member prepares to shoot during the Canadian Armed Forces small arms competition on 6 September 2016 at the Connaught Range Primary Training Centre, Ottawa, On.

*photo: aviator Desiree T Bourdon,
Canadian Forces Joint Imagery Center
re30-2016-0228-020 ©2016 DND-MDN Canada*



That is thanks to the Department of National Defence (DND) and its federal government colleagues at Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) who work closely together to ensure compliance with legislation that protects those species – ranging from butternut trees and

monarch butterflies to snapping turtles and bald eagles. In fact, explained Paul Haight, a PSPC Environmental Advisor responsible for environmental support to the DND-owned facility, safety concerns at CRPTC ensure human activity on the site is so limited that much of it is more ecologically diverse than Gatineau Park, one of the most popular wooded recreational areas in the National Capital Region. “DND lands are home to an abundance of different species, thanks in part to the limited human activity on the sites,” he said. “You don’t get a lot of human activity at Connaught besides routine maintenance and/or DND training, so there is a back area that is pretty pristine. And we have this ‘good neighbour’ policy of trying to meet or exceed federal, provincial, and municipal regulations at all of our sites.” PSPC acts as property manager, among other roles, for federal government departments and operates at CRPTC under a Memorandum of Understanding with DND.

Mr Haight joined PSPC in 2001, after spending much of the 1990s working as an environmental advisor and consultant in the private sector. The impetus for his current work was provided by Canada’s Species at Risk Act, which was adopted in 2002. PSPC, previously known as Public Works and Government Services Canada, responded with the creation of programs to assess species at risk on government lands. A thorough survey of CRPTC – just over 1,000 hectares of land – was completed in 2014 and will be updated in 2019. “It is an area that is thriving with species,” Mr. Haight said. “We found 22 species at risk.”



PSPC’s response has included making improvements to animal habitats and creating management plans with a communication brochure to keep all occupants aware of the species on the site and working together to help protect them. “One of the issues was turtles coming from the Ottawa River making their way in for nesting would end up going onto the range,” he added. “We actually created a turtle nesting area as a

buffer between the river and the range. We brought in a biologist who planned the area. You’ll still see them at Connaught walking along the roads, so we’ve posted turtle crossing signs trying to make people aware.”

PSPC and DND took a similarly hands-on approach with bat species calling the facility home – one that also has health benefits for the human population. “We installed bat houses to protect and promote habitat,” said Mr Haight. “Bats, as you know, eat a lot of mosquitoes. We do treatment for West Nile virus and having more bats means reducing the mosquito population.” Looking ahead, Mr Haight said PSPC is contemplating an assessment of butternut trees in the area. The species is listed as endangered in both the federal Species at Risk Act and Ontario’s Endangered Species Act. A recovery action plan could also have long-lasting benefits for 30 other species of conservation concern. “We may take samples of them as a genetic marker because a lot of them are being affected by disease,” Mr Haight added. “If we have a healthy population of trees, we may be able to grow them and then replant them elsewhere to re-establish a population.”

In WW II, German Scientists Reverse-Engineered London's Weather

Deduced conditions from the sound of the Big Ben's bells during BBC's "freedom broadcast."



the Big Ben tolling the hour.

Throughout the entirety of World War II, BBC regularly broadcasted its news programs throughout Europe's airwaves. Not only did these radio transmissions serve as extremely effective propaganda, they also offered hope and an accurate news source to underground resistance fighters throughout German-occupied territories. While the Germans were powerless to stop them, they did make the most of them. Each broadcast opened with live sound of

Some German physicists realized something—the frequency of sound (in this case, the bell toll) is influenced by the temperature and other weather conditions (such as fog). In addition, if London was experiencing heavy rainfall, some of the sound was inevitably caught in the broadcast! By utilizing tiny differences in the sounds, they could make good estimates of London's conditions and therefore gain a strategic advantage. And remember: This was much before the satellite era, so widespread weather reporting systems were not yet in place. For a German military always keen to send the Luftwaffe to bomb London and other English cities, this information was critical. The difference between hazy clouds and a frigid rainstorm could determine the success of an air raid. The British Secret Service eventually caught wind of what the German scientists were up to. As soon as they found out, agents immediately ordered the BBC to switch that segment of the live broadcast to a recording.

How Did Two WWII Shipwrecks Just Vanish From Pahang Waters

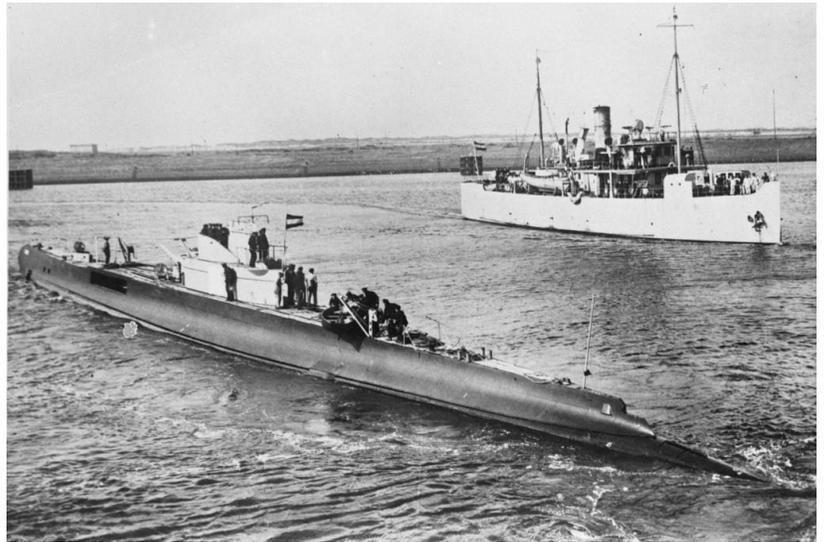
Without any media coverage *Raymond Saw — 25/07/2019*



Almost as if it was something straight out of another novel by Dan Brown, it was recently reported that some important pieces of history had somehow just **DISAPPEARED** in Malaysia. Okay so maybe this doesn't involve the Deklarasi of Merdeka, but when you think about it, it's even weirder than Nicholas Cage: Not one, but **TWO** Dutch World War 2-era

shipwrecks have mysteriously vanished on the seabeds of Malaysian waters over the past couple of weeks. And surprisingly, we couldn't find any mention of it in local media, instead having to depend on international publications to catch wind of it. Now these weren't some emergency sampans that Rose selfishly used to save herself – these two warships were over 240 feet in length. How then could two shipwrecks suddenly disappear from the bottom of the sea?! Well, there does seem to be a reason it. The historical shipwrecks may have been tragically looted by scavengers

*The HNKMS K XVII submarine in the foreground, one of the WW2 Dutch shipwrecks that suddenly went poof.
Image from Atlas Obscura*



The two Dutch shipwrecks were that of two World War 2 era submarines: the HNLMS O 16 and HNLMS K XVII. These ships were built in the early 1930s, with the K XV11 being the older of the two, while the O 16 was an improvement on its older sibling that was bigger and faster. The Dutch would later send them to become the pride of their submarine fleet patrolling the Dutch East Indies by the late 1930s. The K XV11 was also quite controversial, with a number of conspiracy theories about how it actually saw the Japanese troops heading over to Pearl Harbor. Sadly, both of these submarines were sunk in 1941 by Japanese mines near Pulau Tioman, and these shipwrecks were also the final resting grounds for the 79 men who were onboard. The disappearance came to light when a group of Dutch and Malaysian expedition members were investigating a possible disturbance in the area surrounding the shipwrecks, and discovered that the pair of almost 80-year old wreckages were no longer there. What's left was just an outline in the seabed and a few remains of one of the shipwrecks in the ocean. The remains of the 79 crewmen are now missing as well.



*The O16 submarine in its prime.
Image from The Guardian*

The prime suspect behind these disappearances? Salvagers, according to Dutch govt officials. And as it turns out, scrap metal salvagers have been hunting down these types of shipwrecks for a number of years now, and it's become a problem not just for us, but also for countries like Indonesia and Cambodia. At least 40 World

War 2-era ships have already been destroyed by these looters, according to a 2017 Guardian report. One notable incident that made headlines around the world was the 2016 disappearance of three sunken British WW2 ships and a US submarine wreck from the Java Sea bed. The suspected scrap metal looters had salvaged up the metal, and allegedly dumped the remains of the dead WW2 soldiers from the wreckage into mass graves, which caused the UK govt to condemn the ‘unauthorised disturbance of the wreckage’. Even smaller and lesser known shipwrecks like that of the HMS Banka have already been destroyed and salvaged, to the ire of divers in Tioman who used to dive and sightsee around these wrecks. These looters would look for these WW2 era shipwrecks and begin to quite literally blow them up in the middle of the ocean, breaking down the boat into tiny little pieces of rusty steel. A barge with a crane then proceeds to scoop up all the metal.

And as for why these guys do it? Well, money duh. These ships have plenty of steel, copper and brass from it, with even the poorest quality steel from these shipwrecks able to fetch about USD1.3 MILLION! One reason why it seems to sell for so much is apparently to feed the booming demand for steel and scrap metal in China. China has in recent years taken over as one of the world leaders in global steelmaking, and with that new role comes a new appetite for scrap metal to recycle into steel. While globally scrap metal use in steel production has dropped, in China, scrap metal use is on the rise. Meanwhile, another reason why these WW2 era shipwrecks can fetch enough money to pay three generations of your family’s PTPTN debt is that these ships were made with ‘low background steel’. What this means is that they were made before nuclear testing began in the 1940s, and as such the steel in these shipwrecks are free of radiation. Low background steel is highly coveted for their use in super scientific and medical equipment like Geiger counters and space sensors. This might explain why despite there being more modern shipwrecks in the ocean, these aren’t being targeted by the looters as much.

But still, could you imagine if someone went to the cemetery of your loved ones and dug up the graves? You might then perhaps understand why relatives of those who died with the Dutch ships are shocked to hear that a war grave had been destroyed by looters. Also, that instead of ending up in a memorial or a museum, that these historical artifacts will probably be melted down into housing girders or the new iPhone.... this HAS to be illegal right? We’re not entirely sure which laws they’re breaking. In domestic laws, from what we’ve found in the National Heritage Act 2005, illegally excavating a heritage object may lead to jailtime of up to five years and/or a fine not exceeding fifty thousand ringgit. But the vagueness of the laws comes into play as to whether these wrecks are considered an ‘underwater cultural heritage’, in which case it’s only an offence if the ‘heritage’ in question is older than 100 years. And seeing as these shipwrecks aren’t, it does become a bit of a grey area. HOWEVER, the remains of sunken wartime ships are actually protected under international treaties as the war graves of the soldiers and crewmen onboard who died with the ship. In fact, it seems as though that, regardless of where the shipwreck is, the shipwreck itself actually has sovereign immunity under international law and it is considered the property of the ship’s country of origin. As such, it seems that it’s illegal to destroy these shipwrecks without permission from the country who

owns it. However again, we couldn't find any one general rule for it, with some legal professors saying that there's a lack of international law regarding wrecks.



*Dutch politician
Jet Bussemaker.
Image from Ad*

Nevertheless, Jet Bussemaker, a Dutch politician whose grandfather was the commander of one of the Dutch ships, said that while it was frustrating, it should

not come as a surprise given the history of salvaging in the region. *“It is a very sad message. It is shocking to all the relatives, but at the same time it does not surprise me at all. I am now also just a surviving relative. This is very bad. It gives no rest this way. That boat was the grave,”* – Jet Bussemaker, Dutch politician, as quoted by the Guardian. Adding more salt to the wound is the fact that just earlier this year, the Dutch foreign minister Stef Blok had come to Kuala Lumpur to sign an agreement with the Malaysian govt. One of the points discussed was the protection of these Dutch shipwrecks that are considered war graves in our waters. Blok even thanked us for protecting the shipwrecks..... **awkward** So is there really no more hope for these shipwrecks to be protected? It's hard to enforce the law in an ocean so big, but proper legislation would be a good start. The ocean is huge, that's a given. As such, it's no surprise that despite the numerous international laws protecting these wartime shipwrecks, scavengers and looters have still managed to destroy and sell off the scrap metal from these wrecks. Indonesia, another country having to deal with looters desecrating WW2 shipwrecks, has argued in the past that they do not have the resources to patrol them when there's other threats to deal with such as smuggling and illegal fishing.



*Some of the British ships in the region's waters that have been damaged by scavengers.
Image from the Guardian*

Some countries whose shipwrecks are in the waters have decided to step up their conservation efforts in the last couple of years. As part of their efforts to protect the war graves at sea, the US have sent a number of delegations to Indonesia in an attempt to protect and conserve their sunken battleships. The British meanwhile have been planning to look after shipwrecks in their waters using tech like radar, sensors and satellites,

with a possibility to increase coverage to foreign waters too. As for the Dutch, in that aforementioned agreement between Malaysia and the Netherlands, a plan was set in place to have an expedition to investigate shipwreck sites as well as set up a joint management plant to protect these war graves. For now, it appears as though these scrap metal looters might not be stopping anytime soon. Only time will tell if the efforts of the countries involved will make a change towards protecting the shipwrecks. In the end, it is perhaps Jet Bussemaker who best points out our lack of care towards these historical oceanic war graves.

Abbotsford Airshow 2019

The Vancouver Artillery Association took the Museum's FAT and 25pdr to the Abbotsford Airshow over the weekend.



*VAA members standing in front of our 25pdr.
L to R: 15 Fd Regt Hon LCol Don Foster,
Doug Loney and Bernie Rowe.*



The display set up.

Unfortunately, the second 25pdr and FAT, owned by Walde Libera, wasn't able to make it. Hopefully we will get together at an event in the near future.

Vancouver Artillery Association Yearbook Updates

Here's the latest activities from the website of the 15th Field Artillery Regiment RCA family.

Lieutenant-Colonel Dean Drysdale's struggle with ALS continues. The Colonel Commandant and other members of The Royal Regiment of Canadian Artillery have sent him messages of encouragement.

<https://www.vancouvergunners.ca/whats-new/august-07th-2019>

<https://www.vancouvergunners.ca/whats-new/lcol-dean-drysdale>

<https://www.vancouvergunners.ca/dean-drysdale.html>

Your comments can be added to the list by sending them to president.vcrgunners@gmail.com and we will post them as quickly as possible.

The Vancouver Artillery Association was present at the Abbotsford Air Show and the Abbotsford AgriFair.

<https://www.vancouvergunners.ca/air-show-2019.html>

<https://www.vancouvergunners.ca/whats-new/yearbook-update-20199813148>

Keep those stories, calendar events and pictures coming! president.vcrgunners@gmail.com

VIA Rail Discount for Veterans

VIA is offering a 40% off the best available fares in Sleeper Plus class onboard the Canadian (Toronto-Vancouver train) —for qualifying members of the Canadian Armed Forces, National Defence civilian personnel, veterans, and their immediate families. The offer ends on September 23, 2019. For details see:- <https://www.viarail.ca/en/canadian-forces>

Who (or What) Is It?

Last Week: The motorcycle is a Japanese Type 97 motorcycle and was ‘liberated’ by Canadian



Troops during the invasion of Kiska. The Type 97 motorcycle, or Rikuo, was a copy of a Harley-Davidson motorcycle, with a sidecar, produced from 1935 in Japan under license from Harley-Davidson by the Sankyo Company (later Rikuo Nainen Company). Some 18,000 of the machines were used by the Imperial Japanese forces during World War II. In the years after World War I, Harley-Davidson's US sales declined while dozens of US motorcycle brands went under, primarily as a result of the decline in the price of the Ford Model T car, triggering a national shift

from motorcycles to cars for cheap transportation. Harley-Davidson sought to make up the lost sales abroad and was selling 2,000 units per year in Japan by the middle of the 1920s. In 1932 Harley-Davidson licensed Sankyo Trading Company to build complete motorcycles in Japan, under the name Rikuo, which meant King of the Road. The soldiers shown are all Canadian, one with a Lee Enfield slung over his shoulder, although we are not sure of their unit. You can see several other ‘liberated’ items like the book with Japanese characters on the cover tucked into the pant top of one soldier, the small white Japanese Navy cap on the head of another and the *kyu guntō* Japanese army sabre in the belt of another.

This Week: Given that the world has become hotter and hotter by the year (it was up to 15 degrees Celsius in northern Scotland recently, resulting in a severe shortage of ale), we thought



we'd cool you down a bit with a foggy photo for this week's quiz. As is par for the course, regardless of the era, the Royal Canadian Navy entered the Second World War with a very tiny fleet. It is to their eternal credit that they ended that conflict with one of the largest and most effective navies in the world. Nonetheless, the first few years were ones of trial and error, with more than a few ships encountering bumps and grinds of the metal sort. That's what happens when the officer on watch has never been to sea before, as in the "left hand down a bit" of HMS Troutbridge (who remembers BBC Radio's "Navy Lark"?).

However, in spite of its appearance as a ship run aground by a "subbie" from Medicine Hat, this is not one of ours, thankfully. Whose it was, and where it still resides are questions that some of our salty naval experts can answer, we are sure. In fact, I think that one of our regular readers has actually laid eyes on this vessel. So, we await your responses. Send them to either the editor, Bob Mugford (bob.mugford@outlook.com), or the author, John Redmond (johnd._redmond@telus.net). In the meanwhile, stare at the photo and think of cool, foggy, misty days that are coming soon. So restful.

This is our 300th Weekly Quiz, which means we have been running these quizzes for 6 years. Many thanks to all who wrote in with guesses or hard facts and to our Quiz Master, John Redmond for continuing to churn them out.

From the 'Punitentary'

What runs but never walks, has a mouth but never speaks and has a bed but never sleeps?
.....A river.

Murphy's Other Laws

Ammo is cheap; your life isn't.

Quotable Quotes

Much that passes as idealism is disguised hatred or disguised love of power." - *Bertrand Russell*



*The President
and the Directors
of*

Royal United Services Institute Vancouver Society

request the pleasure of the company of you and your guests

at our

Inaugural Annual Dinner

*Celebrating the 75th Anniversary of D-Day
and the 30th anniversary of our 'Royal' Designation*

to be held at

*BESSBOROUGH ARMOURY
2025 West 11th Avenue, Vancouver, BC*

on

Saturday, the Twenty-Eighth of September 2019

at

six thirty for seven o'clock in the evening

RSVP by 18 September 2019
to RSVP@rusivancouver.ca

Send payment to:
Treasurer, RUSI Vancouver
2025 West 11th Avenue
Vancouver, BC V6J 3C7

Dress: Business Formal (Mess Dress Optional)

Tariff: \$50 per person
Make cheques payable to: RUSI Vancouver

Menu: Chicken Cordon Bleu or Vegetarian – please indicate choice on RSVP