



## Van Arty Association and RUSI Van Members News Dec 20, 2016

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

**Wednesday Lunches Holiday Stand down** - The Unit is stood down from Dec 12 - Jan 6. Last lunch was Dec 7 and the first lunch of 2017 will be Jan 11.

**Upcoming events – Mark your calendars** Details to follow in future editions

Jan 1 **New Year's Levée** Mess opens at 1100hrs

Feb 4 **Regimental reunion dinner** - details TBA Note change of date

**There will be no full newsletter until the New Year. I am putting out an abbreviated newsletter mainly to keep the World War 2 entries up to date and to publish important news and event updates. Next full newsletter will go out on Jan 3, 2017.**

### World War 2 - 1941

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

**Dec 14<sup>th</sup>:** The Italian battleship Vittorio Veneto is damaged by a British submarine. Japanese troops based in Southern Thailand start to advance into Malaya. HC76 sets sail from Gibraltar to the UK, over the next nine days, 5 U-Boats and 2 Condors will be lost in exchange for a RN Escort Carrier, a Destroyer, and 2 merchant ships out of 31.

**Dec 15<sup>th</sup>:** U.557 sinks a RN light cruiser off Alexandria as the British stage a major convoy run to Malta. The Soviet counteroffensive reaches Klin and Kalinin. A tentative Japanese assault crossing onto the island of Hong Kong is defeated, and the Japanese will be forced to expend more time and effort on preparations. Rommel falls back from the Gazala line and a tardy flanking attack by 7<sup>th</sup> Armoured Division lets the Germans and Italians get away.

**Dec 16<sup>th</sup>:** To avoid letting the British do to him what they did to the Italians a year ago, Rommel starts to evacuate all the way back to El Aghela (from whence he started last February). The Italians use four battleships to escort a major convoy of supplies and

reinforcements to Libya. 16<sup>th</sup> Japanese Division lands at three sites on Borneo, but British and Dutch forces set fire to the oil plants as they depart. More Japanese forces land in Malaya.

**Dec 17<sup>th</sup>:** Manstein's 11<sup>th</sup> Army launches a series of attacks on Sevastopol. Field Marshal von Kluge takes over command of Army Group Centre from von Bock. Nimitz relieves Admiral Kimmel, and efforts are being made to relieve the garrison on Wake. A British cruiser, Dunedin is torpedoed by a U-Boat.

**Dec 18<sup>th</sup>:** The Japanese land in force on Hong Kong Island and secure a beachhead. Six Italian frogmen launched from a submarine and riding "pig" torpedoes damage the battleships HMS Valiant and Queen Elizabeth in Alexandria Harbor in a daring attack. Bock is replaced by Kluge in Russia. The T-34 tank has come as a real shock to the Germans, but it is worse still when these tanks are effectively crewed and led. Senior Guards Lieutenant Dmitriy Lavrinenko of the 15<sup>th</sup> Armoured Division has shown his company how to use their tanks, personally knocking out over 50 German armored vehicles and becoming one of the War's first tank aces. He is killed in combat today but becomes a posthumous Hero of the Soviet Union.

**Dec 19<sup>th</sup>:** The Selective Service Act is amended in the US, all men between 18 and 64 must register, and those 20 to 44 can be called up. The 8<sup>th</sup> Army reaches Derna in its pursuit of the Afrika Korps. Captain FJ "Johnny" Walker sinks his first U-boat; this legendary Royal Navy officer will sink dozens more. The Japanese land on Mindanao near Davao. Hitler turfs Brauchitsch as Commander in Chief of the Army; his replacement is Hitler – whose new orders to the troops in Russia are "stand fast". (Amazingly this works this time, but it won't in the future no matter how much 'Will' the Fuhrer has). Company Sergeant Major John Robert Osborn, of the Winnipeg Grenadiers, has been fighting with great gallantry for eight and a half hours against an overwhelming Japanese assault at Mount Butler near Hong Kong. Now, a bare handful of men are left in a crater, with a bare handful of cartridges and the Japanese are repeatedly throwing grenades. The Canadian grenadiers are catching them and throwing them back, a dicey game with only one possible outcome. When a grenade is missed, and lies sizzling at the bottom of the pit, Osborn throws himself on it to save his comrades. He is posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross.

**Dec 20<sup>th</sup>:** Admiral King is appointed CinC of the US Fleet; King will prove to be a stubborn Anglophobe. Goebbels starts an appeal for winter clothing for the Army from German civilians (only about 20% of the troops in Russia have greatcoats at this time); and the Army is still being hammered quite badly around the Moscow area.

**Dec 21<sup>st</sup>:** The Japanese start landing in force at Lingayen Gulf on Luzon, and their 48th Division soon establishes a secure beach-head. The bombardment of Wake Island is joined by carrier aircraft.

**Dec 22<sup>nd</sup>:** Just before midnight, Japanese troops are able to land on Wake Island while the American relief convoy is called off on learning the IJN has two battleships and two carriers in

the area. Churchill and his senior commanders arrive in Washington for meetings with their American counterparts. The conferences will sketch out common policies and strategies for the coming months.

**Dec 23<sup>rd</sup>:** Axis forces evacuate Benghazi. The Japanese land at Sarawak – but a pair of Dutch submarines sinks two transports and a destroyer (for the loss of one submarine) as they do so. The Japanese stage their first air raid on Rangoon – opposed by a mixed force of RAF fighters and Chennault's Flying Tigers. The garrison of Wake Island surrenders after an epic fight. Once the story is fully known with the end of the war US Marines adopt the custom of all standing in respect whenever in the presence of a survivor of the Wake Island defence. Of all the defenders of Wake Island, only one is awarded the Medal of Honor. Captain Henry T Elrod flew one of Wake Island's 12 Wildcats, shot down two Zeros and sank a Japanese destroyer. During the final Japanese landing he was killed while leading an improvised defence unit of Marines around one of the gun pits. He was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor.

**Dec 24<sup>th</sup>:** Haiti declares war on Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania – the World trembles (However, to be fair, Haiti provided basing rights for Allied anti-submarine patrols that did help secure the Caribbean). Free French Forces occupy St Pierre and Miquelon, the two French possessions off Newfoundland. 7,000 more Japanese troops land in southern Luzon, while US/Filipino troops start to delay the Japanese advance south from Lingayen Gulf. Resistance at Hong Kong is crumbling as the defenders are being overwhelmed. Japanese troops land on Jolo in the Sulu Archipelago.

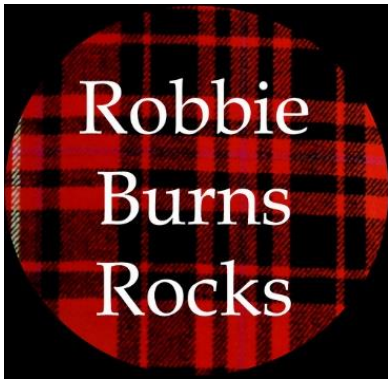
**Dec 25<sup>th</sup>:** Merry Christmas to the Wehrmacht; its strength is fast ebbing, the Panzer Armies near Moscow have less than 100 working tanks between them and 25% of the men who have entered the USSR have become casualties. 8<sup>th</sup> Army reaches Benghazi. In the Pacific, Hong Kong surrenders and the Japanese indulge in some atrocities (most notoriously at a military hospital where the patients and male staff are bayoneted and the nursing sisters gang-raped). American and Filipino troops on Luzon fall back to their next defensive position. Beria tells Stalin that he has shipped 894,600 ethnic Germans east from their old homes to Central Asia and Siberia.

**Dec 26<sup>th</sup>:** Soviet troops land at Kerch on the Crimea and will successfully divert Manstein's attention from Sevastopol. 250 British commandos land on the Lofoten Islands off Norway to destroy fisheries facilities.

### **From the 'Punitary'**

Which of Santa's reindeers needs to mind his manners the most? "Rude"olph

## “The” Burns Supper: Saturday, 21 January, 2017



Fort Fraser has hosted a Burns Supper since the 1980's; and your editor has attended most, if not all, of these wondrous events over the past 20 years. Based upon that experience I feel qualified and safe to say *'tis a poor deil who's missed one – he/she hasnae lived well!*

The evening is all about good fellowship, friendly banter and fine fare.

Add to that the Kilt, the Tartan sash, the Pipes and The Haggis – not to mention a wee dram o' the *uisgue batha* – and you complete the formula for what my parents called a “swell affair” and what many have lately called “the best party of the season”.

### ***Bigger & Better:***

Lately our Burns Supper has been straining the limits of the capacity of the mess and the “classroom” with over 85 seated for dinner. There is, however, plenty of room “below decks” (as the matelots say), on the 15FD parade deck.

There we find plenty of elbow room for diners, Pipers can manoeuvre more elegantly, and speakers can be more easily seen and heard by all.

For the 2017 Burns Supper the Garrison would like to encourage all members to attend and ***bring 2 or 3 guests or at least 1 guest couple.***

The intent is:

- a) to optimize the number to make use of the parade deck and
- b) to introduce the 78<sup>th</sup> to prospective members and participants, in other words to show-off!

Burns Night on the Parade, we are certain, will include a most entertaining line-up of musical and poetical talent, some interesting whisky choices, and opportunities to win worthwhile draw and auction prizes.

Please be sure to advise the PMC ([scand@shaw.ca](mailto:scand@shaw.ca)) of your intent to attend and the number of guests accompanying you. RSVP/ASAP as the saying goes.

**McNally Robinson Community Classroom**

*presents*

# Hollywood Takes to the Skies

**Three Sessions**

Early Years, Golden Age, Modern Era

**2-4 PM, February 8, 15, 22, 2017**

**For Anyone interested in Aviation and Film**

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- *Jet Pilot*
- *Top Gun*
- *Amelia* and many more ...

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**Host: Filmmaker Bill Zuk**