



Van Arty Association and RUSI Van Members News Dec 29, 2015

This is a short holiday newsletter published mainly to keep the World War 2 events up to date. The next regular newsletter will be published on Jan 5th.

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>

Wednesday Lunches The Armoury is shut down completely for the winter break so our lunches are now finished for 2015. The first lunch of 2016 will be on **Jan 6**.

New Year's Levée – 1 Jan 2016

15 Fd Artillery Regiment is holding their annual Levée. The Messes will open for visitors at 1100hrs. A light lunch will be served starting around noon. The Seaforths will hold their Levée at the Jericho Mess. The HMCS Discovery Wardroom will also be open on Jan 1st. The BCRs have announced that all their Messes will be shut down.

World War 2 - 1940

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

Jan 1941: Italy's Army Humiliated

"The tanks had to be coaxed along, and so did we, tired and exhausted. Only men who have experienced a dreadful long desert journey could realise how tired and exhausted the human frame can become. The dust and dirt clings to your skin, your eyes become red and bloodshot, your head aches and your limbs become stiff. Your mind wandered and your eyes watered and closed as you crouched in the smell of oil, petrol and cordite fumes." - *Account of the march to Beda Fomm by James Palmer, extracted from BBC WW2 People's Archive. (ID: A3193355)*

General: Doenitz only has 22 U-boats ready for operations, but 67 more will soon be ready. Due to the rough winter weather over the North Atlantic, they will sink only 21 of the 76 ships (320,000 tons total) that will be lost this month. Between the Luftwaffe and the RAF, major air raids will be visited on Bremen, Brest, Bristol, Cardiff, Hamburg, London, Portsmouth and Wilhelmshaven.

Jan 1st: Bulgaria comes closer to becoming a German ally and will allow German troops to transit across its territory. X Fliegerkorps is reinforced and can now muster 120 bombers, 150 Stukas and 40 fighters against Malta – which is currently defended by 15 Hurricanes against both the German and Italian Air Forces.

Jan 2nd: Roosevelt announces a plan to build 200 standardized 7,500 ton cargo ships – later to be called “Liberty Ships”. Henry Kaiser supervises the building of these ships, which are based on a British design from the 1880s.

Essential Reading: The history of the Liberty Ship has largely been limited to a trio of books all from academic sources. Although these vessels were as essential to the Allied victory as Studebaker trucks and jeeps, this mass-produced cargo vessel deserves more respect. Of the three books on the subject, perhaps the most appealing is Peter Elphick’s *Liberty: The Ships that Won the War* from the Naval Institute Press. It is more engaging to somebody unversed in marine engineering and logistics than might be expected and is a good read.

Jan 3rd: The gallant 7th UK Armoured Division is joined by the 6th Australian Division to form XIII Corps – they then tear into the Italian fortress of Bardia and bag about 30,000 Italians as POWs.

Jan 4th: After a pause to regroup, the Greeks start a new offensive toward Valona in Albania, but the Italians are no longer “stuck in the mountains and have been reorganizing themselves too.

Jan 5th: Bardia falls, leaving 40,000 POWs in the Western Desert Force’s hands. However, Bergonzoli (with his celebrated “electric” whiskers) has scampered off. British casualties in the battle come to around 500.

Newsletters

I am often asked how I come up with all the articles that I put in the newsletter. It is actually quite easy - I do ferret out articles myself but I have a good number of contributors who send me most of the stories or links to items on line. Some send stuff every day, some every week or every month or once in a while. But, because I keep the editions to 8 pages (not including the event posters) I usually have more than I can use. Most of the time all I have to do with an article is format it to the size and style of the newsletter and paste it in so there is not a lot of work, although it takes me at least a day to format, edit and assemble everything.

The biggest problem these days (and what takes the most time to do) is caused by the spam filters the email providers use. They have tightened up on spam control. I have around 500 email addresses in my newsletter address book and with most providers, if you send an email with more than around 90 addressees, their spam detectors will lock out your account. Same if you send multiple emails in an hour where the total number of addressees exceeds 90. I had to break down my list into 20 different distribution lists and set up two accounts in gmail. Then I send out one email each hour, from each account to one of the lists. It takes about 10 hours to send out the newsletter to the full list.

I would name my ‘contributors’ but there is always the danger I will forget to include someone so I will just say thank you to all of them and please keep the info flowing my way.

A very Happy New Year to all!

Who is it?



Last Week: This picture was taken at a tri-service Cadet parade held in the Seaforth Armoury parking lot in 1968.

Everyone recognised Robert Bonner, the BC AG at the time. Behind the dais from L – R: Moir MacBrayne, West Vancouver Police Chief; Ralph Booth, VPD Chief; an RCMP representative, still not identified; Lt Col Gordon Platt CD, who had just finished his term as CO 15 Fd Regt RCA and moved to a Staff Position at the Jericho HQ (probably here representing the Commander); and, Ray Perrault, newly elected MP for Burnaby Seymour

This Week: John is on a Christmas break so there is no quiz picture from the Museum this



week. For those of you that have some spare time over the holidays I attach a picture to keep you entertained.

This is a picture of the 1971 Captain Qual (Arty) course at CFB Petawawa. The picture was sent to me recently by John Yu. Both of us are standing side by side in the picture. Any of you see any familiar faces here?