



## **Van Arty Association and RUSI Van Members News Mar 31, 2015**

### **Wednesday Lunches**

The 15 Field Officers Mess holds weekly lunches, serving a 5 course, 'homemade' meal for only \$15- you won't find a better meal - or a better deal, anywhere. If you are in the area on a Wednesday, drop in and join us for lunch.

The dress for Wednesday lunches is suit/blazer/sports jacket and tie. Dress for ladies is the equivalent. Your guests are always welcome but don't forget to tell them about dress requirements BEFORE they come.

### **From the Journal of Capt Fred G Coxen RFA - 1915**

**Apr 4<sup>th</sup>:** Collins and I proceeded to CROIX BARBETTE to take over wires and comms of 35 Battery, [which] we were to relieve. We arrived about midday, and went along observing line to [the] observation station, which was what little that remained of the brewery in Neuve Chapelle. It was interesting to go over all the ground that we had won in the big scrap on the 10<sup>th</sup> Mar. Everywhere was hapless ruin and the old German trenches were in a very battered condition. One could not walk for shell holes and graves; many of the graves [had been] ploughed up by shell and the remains re-buried. There were still scores of dead Germans between the trenches, and the smell was not pleasant. The church and churchyard was utterly destroyed, but strangely enough, a large crucifix was standing intact and apparently untouched, while everything else within a mile from it had been battered to pieces. In the whole village, there was not a house standing. Rifle bullets were plentiful as we wired, at times in full view of the enemy trenches.

However we fixed up the line without mishap and on the way back [we] came across the grave of a telephonist of 35 Bty that had been killed. We felt sorry for we knew him quite well, and worse still he had been killed by one of our own 6" shell[s] which fell short. A 6" Howitzer had also blown up in a field in front of the battery, killing 3 and wounding several. We were told that it was not so quiet here, as it was when we were here before. From the sights around, it was quite evident, but still the little farm was still intact. All the inhabitants of the village in the rear had been cleared out. I got a woollen mattress, which made a grand bed, and was much preferable to the straw we got; [it] was firm and warm. The battery came in rather late, and things seemed a little noisy in front, but it was only a 'wind' attack [from the] batteries in our rear firing slowly all night on barring. It is most difficult to justify the loss in lives to ground gained, as the casualty figures show the Battle of Neuve Chapelle casualties amounted to 7,100 British and 4,200 Indian killed, wounded or missing. It is estimated that German casualties were about the same.

## **World War 2 - November 1939**

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

**April General:** The Allies lose 58 ships this month, but 5 U-boats are sunk (mostly around Norway).

**April 1<sup>st</sup>:** Hitler approves the plans for the invasion of Norway, but sleeps on deciding what date D-Day will be until the 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**April 3<sup>rd</sup>:** A Cabinet shuffle in the UK gives Churchill the chairmanship of the Ministerial Defence Committee.

**April 5<sup>th</sup>:** Chamberlain says that "Hitler has missed the bus" in a speech in Parliament... maybe Adolph did, but he seems to have "caught a tank instead. Meanwhile, Britain and France tell Norway that they reserve the right to deny Germany access to Norway's resources.

**April 7<sup>th</sup>:** German ships put to sea, carrying the three divisions of the assault force for Norway: 500 Transport aircraft, 300 bombers and 100 fighters are also assigned to the attack.

## **Protecting the Pass: Army Fires Shells into Mountains to Limit Avalanches**

*BILL GRAVELAND Rogers Pass, B.C. — The Canadian Press Mar. 09 2015*



It's a never-ending war that the Canadian Forces has no hope of winning. They have to settle for victories in small battles along the way.

Despite lengthy stints in wars overseas, Canada's longest military mission continues in Rogers Pass, B.C., where it has taken part in Op PALACI doing avalanche control for more than 50 years. Every year since 1961, from November to April, the artillery task force is deployed in the pass with 105-mm howitzers firing from roadside gun platforms. The shells are fired into rock formations to reduce natural avalanches. The objective is to prevent blockage of the Trans-Canada Highway and Canadian Pacific rail corridors between Vancouver and the rest of Canada.

Sergeant David Chelkowski, the troop sergeant-major for the 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment, Royal Canadian Horse Artillery, served two tours in Afghanistan. This year marks his second deployment doing avalanche control. "This is the only part of Canada where the soldiers deploy to support avalanche control," says Sgt Chelkowski. "At the end of the day it is a mission and we're here to do a job that's asked of us." He says he and the new recruits here for the first time realize

they are taking part in a bit of history. “Members of our regiment and other regiments in Canada have been doing this since the 1960s and for them it is important to write another chapter.” Between 700 and 1,500 rounds are fired each year at predetermined targets in the peaks most at risk. Within a couple of minutes the guns are locked into place on reinforced firing platforms, aimed and ready to fire. Sgt Chelkowski says the results can be awe-inspiring. “It’s Mother Nature at its best. You can just watch the trees tumble in front of it. It’s out of control and you can’t do anything but stand in awe and watch the view.”

It is Parks Canada who is calling the shots – literally. Jeff Goodrich, the senior avalanche officer, says his people do the science and the forecasting and the Canadian Forces provide the firepower. In a 40-kilometre stretch within Glacier National Park, he says there are 134 avalanche paths that could hit the road. “It’s amazing how much it can snow here,” Goodrich says. “We get periods where we don’t get blue sky for weeks on end and we can get into periods of stormy weather where we need to do avalanche control and the next day get back at it again.” Lieutenant Steen Hinman-Miller, the troop commander, is in Rogers Pass for the first time this year. It’s not something that is covered in basic training. “Shooting down avalanches? No, it’s not included in the job description,” he says with a laugh. “We train for general warfare for the most part, but anything we can do to help another government agency for the people of Canada is what we do.”

## **CF Unaffordable in Its Current Form, Says Budget Office**

DAVID PUGLIESE, OTTAWA CITIZEN March 26, 2015



*Members of the Canadian Forces board an Airbus CC-150 Polaris at CFB Trenton in Trenton, Ont., on Thursday, Oct. 23, 2014. The Canadian forces will help fight the ISIL and be based out of Kuwait City, Kuwait.*  
Lars Hagberg / THE CANADIAN PRESS

The Harper government has built a military that it cannot afford and will be forced to make tough choices about in the future, writes Murray Brewster of the Canadian Press.

Brewster is citing a new report from the Parliamentary Budget Office which was released Thursday. The new assessment by the parliamentary budget office came as debate kicked off in the House of Commons about an expanded and extended war against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, a conflict that opposition MPs were warned this week will last more than a year. Jean-Denis Frechette, the parliamentary budget officer, says the federal government will need to either pour more money into its defence budget, scale back its ambitions, or do a mixture of both in order to put Canada’s military on a sustainable footing.

The Harper government currently spends \$21.5 billion on defence — or 1.1 per cent of the gross domestic product. In order to sustain the existing number of troops, bases, tanks, planes and ships, the budget office says the Conservatives will have to spend about 1.6 per cent of GDP, which would be an increase of at least \$3 billion annually. The Conservatives rode to power in 2006 with a promise to dramatically increase the size of the military and to provide it with stable funding after years of lean Liberal budgets. The defence budget did grow during the Afghan war, but starting in 2011 the Conservatives attacked the federal deficit through its strategic review process and the separate Deficit Reduction Action Plan — or DRAP. The effect of most of those cuts kicked in last year. “Our modelling shows that until 2014, there were sufficient funds to maintain the program,” said the report. “The model shows that it was only with the significant spending increases seen in the latter half of the 2000s that the affordability gap was closed and capability was able to be maintained and to some extent re-built. However, the recent cuts to the defence budget point to an impending affordability gap beginning in this fiscal year.”

That affordability gap — or shortfall — runs anywhere between \$33 billion and \$42 billion. Frechette said, under the current budget structure, the government can afford a military about the same size it had in 1999, at the height of what the Conservatives have often described as the “decade of darkness” under the Liberals. The Harper government has been under pressure from NATO allies — notably the U.S. and Britain — to increase defence spending to at least the alliance benchmark of 2 per cent GDP. Prime Minister Stephen Harper faced criticism during last fall’s NATO leaders Summit in Wales and defended Conservative budgeting, saying allies could rest assured Canada will spend what is necessary. “I don’t in any area of government set a budget and say we’ll spend a certain amount and go out and try to spend it no matter how we can spend it,” Harper said. “That’s not how we do business and I’m certainly not going spend on a massive military expansion for the sake of doing so.”

But what the PBO report makes clear is that Harper will have to spend considerably more just to keep its existing force. It is not the first time the government has been warned that its ambition out strips its wallet. The Conservatives introduced their marquee defence policy in 2008 with a laundry of equipment needs, including the F-35 stealth fighter. Internal documents show the ambitious program was deemed unaffordable within three years.

## **Military Intelligence Warns of Terrorists Harassing CF Personnel**

*LEE BERTHIAUME, OTTAWA CITIZEN March 23, 2015*

A secret military intelligence report has warned of an “emerging trend” in which terrorist groups use social media to harass the family and friends of Canadian military personnel. The Department of National Defence is refusing to say how prevalent the problem is. However, the report emerges amid growing concerns about the safety of military personnel in Canada and other western countries at a time when personal information is readily accessible online. Just this weekend, for example, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) sparked anger and horror after publishing the names, addresses and

photographs of 100 American military members, urging supporters to kill them. ISIL has claimed the information used to make the hit list was stolen from U.S. government computers, but some analysts say the data was already publicly available online and probably culled and compiled by the militant group's propagandists. The Canadian military intelligence assessment, written in January and obtained by the Citizen using the Access to Information law, says the "primary aim of terrorism is the achievement of psychological effects on a target audience." "While social media has revolutionized the way persons communicate in the 21st century, such media has also provided terrorists with a valuable and useful tool with which to generate fear and anxiety as a means of intimidating governments or societies at large," the report adds. "An emerging trend in force protection is the extent to which social media is being employed by organized terror networks to orchestrate protracted campaigns of online harassment directed against the friends and families of self-identified military members."

The report, which is a summary of known or possible terrorist, espionage, sabotage or other threats to military personnel and facilities between October and December 2014, details one incident involving a Canadian Armed Forces member on Facebook. "In the course of a Facebook exchange between a self-identified CAF member and an acquaintance, a third party not previously engaged in the conversation posted a comment supportive of the killing (of) a CAF by the Taliban," the report reads. "Specifically, the unsolicited posting consisted of the words '... I hope (yo)u get shot by my fellow Taliban brothers.' The third participant's Facebook cover photo displayed two persons, one of which was brandishing an RPG launcher." The person was listed as residing in Canada, the report says. Although officials didn't believe there was a direct threat to National Defence or the military, "this individual's posting does illustrate the caution and discretion currently required on the part of CAF members when engaging in social media activity."

But the report does not detail any other incidents, nor does the previous quarterly summary covering July to September 2014. Rather, the most significant concern during that period was when someone tried to blackmail a military member by posting a sexually explicit video on YouTube. National Defence spokesman Daniel Blouin wouldn't say how many online threats have been made against Canadian military personnel or their friends and family, and whether the number is growing, as the report suggests. "The use of social media platforms to target members of the Canadian Armed Forces is a concerning, but not an unheard-of threat," Blouin said in a prepared statement. "Individual members are highly visible and powerful symbols of the military and the Government of Canada, and the unique position of trust held by the CAF in Canadian society makes military members vulnerable to predation by adversarial or criminal elements."

DND restricted media interviews and photographs of CF members being sent to help fight ISIL last October, saying it was concerned for their safety and the safety of their families. It has since expanded that policy to the majority of military personnel. The move ended a long-standing tradition of journalists capturing the often-emotional scenes of soldiers and families saying goodbye, and of CF members being allowed to speak openly about their jobs and experiences. CF personnel have been targets of more than social media

campaigns. Two Canadian soldiers, Cpl. Nathan Cirillo and Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent, were killed in separate terror attacks in Canada last October, within days of each other.

## **RCAF's Fixed Wing Search and Rescue Project**

*Industry expects request for proposals to soon be issued*

*David Pugliese, Ottawa Citizen March 29, 2015*



*After more than a ten-year delay the Canadian Forces is hoping to proceed with its purchase of a new search-and-rescue aircraft fleet sometime in the spring. That was the article I had written back in February. Now word comes in from industry representatives that they expect the request for proposals (RFP) to be issued soon, possibly as early as next week. The actual purchase, however, is expected to run into some further delays because of this year's federal election, say aerospace industry representatives. That's because major decisions are put on hold at that time. The*

new planes will replace the almost 50-year-old Buffalo aircraft used on the west coast (as well as older C-130 Hercules used in the SAR role). The project to buy new search-and-rescue planes has been floundering since 2004 when it was announced as a priority by the then Liberal government. The project was re-announced by the Conservatives in 2006 and the contract was supposed to be awarded in 2009. After some firms questioned how the procurement process was structured, a new schedule was issued in which the final RFP was to be issued to industry in late 2013. That release of documents was further delayed to December 2014 but they weren't issued.

But industry insiders say once the RFP is issued, they expect a contract to be awarded sometime in 2016. Aerospace firms have been ready to bid for years. Alenia Aermacchi is offering the C-27J Spartan, Airbus Military has its C295 and Lockheed Martin is promoting the C-130J. The firms have teamed with Canadian companies to provide systems and other equipment or services for their proposed bids. Viking of British Columbia and Bombardier of Quebec have decided against offering aircraft for the competition.

## **Putting Names to the Faces of Second World War Soldiers**

*BARB LIVINGSTONE, FOR THE CALGARY HERALD March 24, 2015*

There are still 600 names without faces in the Canadian war cemetery in Holten, Holland. Calgary nurse Donna Maxwell and her 24-year-old niece Clarice are making it their mission to find as many photos of those remaining soldiers as possible by this May when the Netherlands celebrates soldiers of the First Canadian Army who liberated it from the Nazis 70 years ago.

“We go through newspapers of the 1940s, through obits, we search the Internet to find brothers, sisters, nieces, nephews and grand-nieces and nephews of those who have died,” says Donna, whose father fought in Holland. “And I have sent random letters to families in the same area they may have come from.” The pair’s A Face to Every Name project search has yielded almost 70 useable photos for Holten.

Now, of the 1,355 Canadian soldiers buried there, almost 800 have photos along with their stories in a special kiosk housed in the cemetery’s visitors’ centre. A touch screen allows guests to browse a directory of Canadian soldiers, see their photographs and read about their lives before the Second World War. The Holten kiosk will be featured at 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary remembrance celebrations, May 4, to be attended by a Canadian federal government delegation, veterans, their families and thousands of Dutch residents. Before then, the Maxwells’ search continues for the many soldiers — including 26 originally from Alberta — still without faces to their names. (All names can be found at Donna’s blog at <http://soldierseeker.blogspot.ca>). For some of the Holten soldiers, families have lost the connection with the relative or know they are buried in Europe, but not where. “Families splintered; in some cases it was an only child who died and that was the end of the family. Many people just got on with life,” Donna says.

More than 7,600 Canadian soldiers, sailors and airmen died fighting in the Netherlands and are buried in official war cemeteries across the country. In the final months of the war, Canadian forces were tasked with liberating the Netherlands from Nazi occupation. From September 1944 to April 1945, the Canadians fought German forces on the Scheldt estuary, opening the port and clearing the way for food and other relief to reach millions of starving people. Every year since then, the Netherlands has sent thousands of tulips to Ottawa in appreciation of Canada’s sacrifice and for providing exile to the Dutch royal family during the war. Gerry Van’t Holt, who was four when Canadians liberated his hometown, started the ‘A Face to Every Name’ project. He gathered photos and stories about the soldiers, aided by former Canadian soldier Mike Muntain, before Van’t Holt’s death last year.

Maxwell — long a volunteer on military research projects who has also accompanied veterans to Italy and Holland — stepped up to help. “My uncle was with the Canadian Scottish and 48 of his comrades are buried (in Holten) and so it is important to me.” Both grandfathers and two great-uncles of niece Clarice were in Holland during the war. A self-described “news junkie” who follows current military clashes around the globe, she readily joined her aunt on the genealogical quest. At the end of April, aunt and niece will travel to the Netherlands and take part in the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations. The letter writing campaign to find photos has received heartfelt responses, from families excited to learn where their “hero” is, to others anxious to see a first-ever photo of their relative. And at the request of the family of an Aboriginal soldier who died in Holland, the Maxwells will lay a red rose and a medicine pouch with tobacco, sweetgrass and sage on his Holten grave May 4th.

## **Who is it?**



**Last Week:** 60 pdr, fired at Sarcee in the 1930s by the heavy Bty, which, I think, was 58 Bty. The British Ordnance BL 60-pounder was a 5 inch (127 mm) heavy field gun designed in 1903-05 to provide a new capability that had been partially met by the interim QF 4.7 inch Gun. It was designed for both horse draft and mechanical traction and served throughout the First World War in the main theatres. It remained in service with British and Commonwealth forces in the inter-war period and in frontline service with British and South African batteries until 1942 being superseded by the BL 4.5 inch Medium Gun.

**This Week:** Big boys like big toys, and no toy is bigger for most people than a big truck (or lorry, should you prefer that term). If one strolls into the vehicle park of Bessborough Armoury, one should notice the big, new vehicles, replete with gun-crew cabins, nice dull paint, army stuff bolted here and there, and a general sense of purpose. They have replaced the trucks that, in turn, replaced our beloved deuce-and-a-half, which itself replaced the iconic CMP vehicles of World War Two fame.



However, there are more stories to be told of wheeled vehicles. The army has used many more trucks and other green and khaki rolling stock than one can shake a stick at, and this week's identify parade includes one that is from before my time (the author being quite young and innocent, as you know). So, do you recognize this powerful behemoth? Did you drive it or was it used during your time of service? The original negative gives no clue, other than the licence plate, which provides the date: 1956.

Any ideas, guesses and suppositions can be sent to the editor, or to the author, John Redmond ([johnd\\_redmond@telus.net](mailto:johnd_redmond@telus.net)).

## **From the 'Punitentary'**

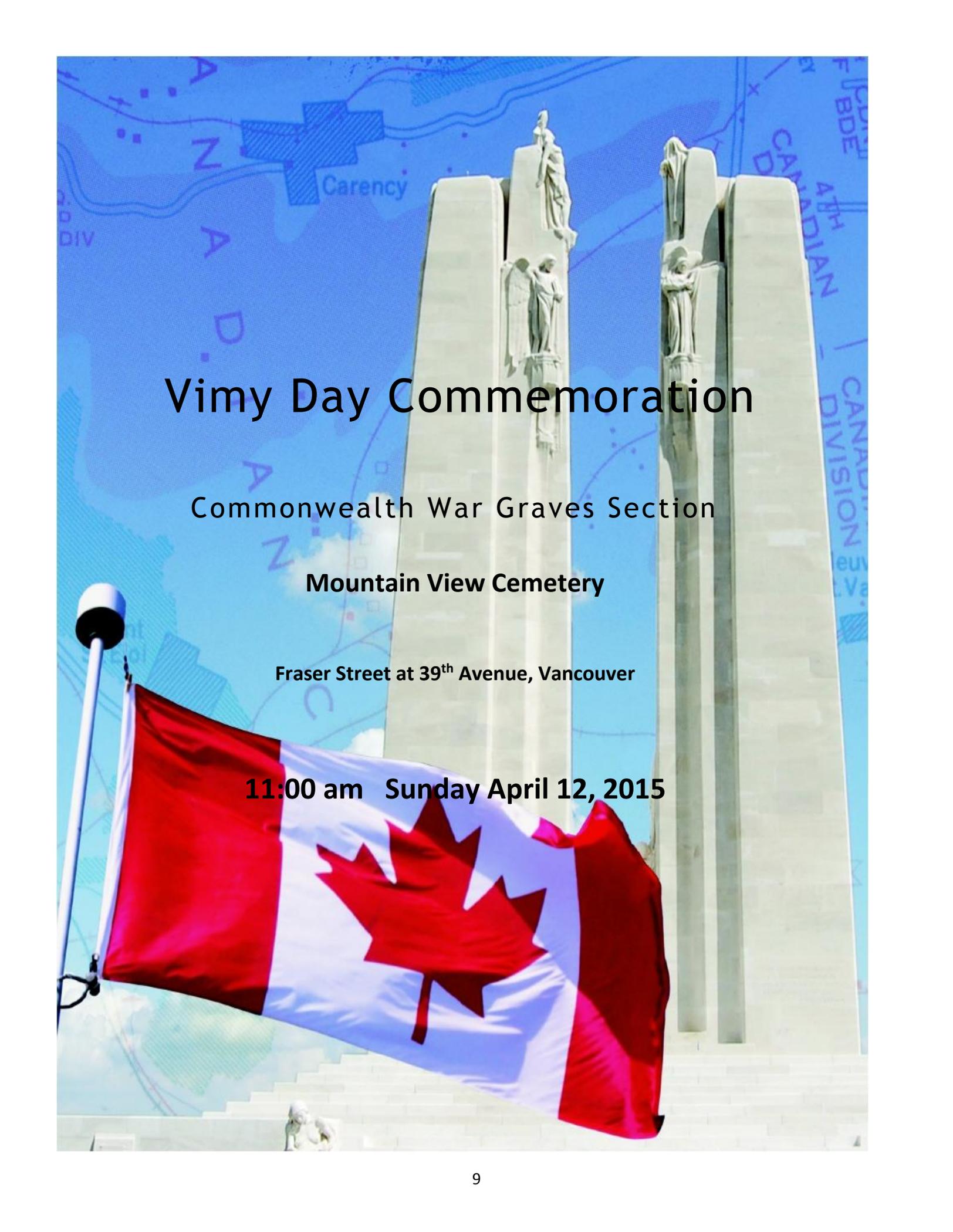
I tried to catch some fog. I mist!

## **Murphy's other Laws**

The more unworkable the plan, the greater the probability of implementation.

## **Quotable Quotes**

There is a great difference between worry and concern. A worried person sees a problem, and a concerned person solves a problem. - *Harold Stephens*



# Vimy Day Commemoration

Commonwealth War Graves Section

**Mountain View Cemetery**

Fraser Street at 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Vancouver

**11:00 am Sunday April 12, 2015**

**Vancouver Welsh Men's Choir Concert**

**THE VANCOUVER WELSH MEN'S CHOIR**

**with the  
AWARD WINNING B.C. GIRL'S CHOIR**

**7:30 pm, Saturday, April 11th, 2015**

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# Tartan Day Ceilidh

*Come enjoy...*

**Dinner, Dancing, Piping, Drumming,  
Scotch Tasting & Silent Auction**

*Featuring:*

**The Shot of Scotch Vancouver Highland Dancers**

***Saturday, April 25<sup>th</sup> 2015, 6:00 PM***

*Location:*

**Riverside Palace Banquet Hall, 14431 Knox Way, Richmond, BC**

***Tickets \$60***

**Dress: Formal, tartan encouraged  
(wear your tartan kilt, tie, scarf or sash)**

**For tickets and information contact Brent Jette: 604-308-1424**



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