



Van Arty Assoc and RUSI Van Members News June 4, 2013

Wednesday Lunches

Lunches in the 15th Field Officers Mess continue with Mrs Lum cooking at home and bringing the food in. The decision has been made to renovate the upstairs (Mess) kitchen at an estimated cost of \$30-35,000. A good start has been made on fundraising and efforts are continuing; watch this newsletter for events and campaigns.

Your guests are always welcome – just don't forget to tell them that jacket and tie are required for men, equivalent for women.

Lunches will continue through the summer.

Remember to drop your lunch ticket in the bowl when you pick up your soup/salad.

And finally, PLEASE DO NOT PARK IN THE VEHICLE COMPOUND!!

Remembering the Alamo: My Year in Afghanistan - Chapter 2

By Colonel Peter Williams Publication date: 23 October 2012

Col Williams is the senior serving Canadian gunner officer in the Afghan training program at this time.

Since I last wrote, the Kabul Military Training Centre Training Advisory Group (KMTC TAG) at Camp Alamo has maintained its high operational tempo. In my last article, the Muslim holy month of Ramadan (or "Ramazan" as it is known here) had just about concluded, to be followed immediately by Eid al-Fitr, the "Festival of Breaking the Fast." A three-day celebration, Eid is an occasion for giving thanks for the blessings of this life, and especially to meet family, friends and neighbours to share in the joy. Once again, our hosts of the Afghan National Army (ANA) invited us to celebrate with them. We were bidden for breakfast this time, so we brought along some of Camp Alamo's world-renowned cinnamon rolls seriously, these have to be eaten to be believed. The KMTC Commandant, Brigadier-General Patyani, recently thanked me for some little gifts of food I gave him at Eid, particularly the bakeapple jam that is, jam made of *Rubus chamaemorus*, for the floral cognoscenti out there so it's nice to know he likes goodies from the Rock. Eid ul-Adha (or "Big Eid") is coming up in late October, after the annual pilgrimage to Mecca, so I'll have to see if I can replenish my stocks.

While the Afghans were enjoying Eid, the multinational residents of Camp Alamo kept busy with refresher training, camp improvements, and sport. Members of our British contingent took the lead in organizing a camp-wide athletics competition, with support from other participating countries. In all I'd have to say that the Alam Olympics was a great way to bring the whole Alamo team together in a spirit of friendly competition. Team Canada did very well, placing

second overall, with Team U.K. and the Australians coming first and third respectively. Our Romanian contingent earned honourable mention for their powerful cheering section.

As the ANA reaches a steady state in terms of final strength, its training methods focus increasingly on quality over quantity. In that regard, with our assistance and advice, the KMTC training staff have obtained approval from the Afghan Ministry of Defence to lengthen courses for new recruits, non-commissioned officers and officers. They are also developing a new advanced course for instructors, with a pilot serial planned for later this fall. All positive developments to be sure. When speaking to young Afghan soldiers, I'm always struck by their dedication to serving their country. Recently I had the chance to speak to several new graduates from a course at KMTC who were about to head off to their first operational assignments. While Canadian soldiers can and do express their preferences for a posting, all the ANA soldiers I've spoken with, without exception, say that they are willing to serve wherever they are sent. Knowing that they could be in combat within days in Kandahar, Helmand or a host of other hot spots, I find this quite moving, and I always wish them success once they face the enemy.

Another group we speak to here often is the news media, and we have no shortage of visitors from international outlets and networks. To give a few recent examples, we've had representatives from the Daily Telegraph in England, El Mundo in Spain, and Al Jazeera. Of late, there has been much focus on "insider" attacks, in which persons dressed in ANA or Afghan National Police uniforms have shot ISAF soldiers. I'd like to assure all readers that, while these incidents do not shake our resolve to continue with our mission, protecting our soldiers is something we all take very seriously. Here at Camp Alamo, we work very close to our ANA counterparts. Believing that "it's all about relationships," we put a high premium on fostering strong ties based on mutual respect between ourselves and our ANA colleagues. I think it's also fair to say that both we and the ANA follow U.S. President Ronald Reagan's famous maxim, "Trust, but verify."

Canada's vets worried that wounded will be forgotten as wars fade

Murray Brewster, The Canadian Press Published Sunday, June 2, 2013



Former Cpl. John Lowe rests in Dover, England on Saturday, June 1, 2013. (Murray Brewster/CP)

LONDON -- Retired warrant officer Andy Godin vividly remembers the warm night he got off the plane, returning from the cauldron of shellfire and snipers that was Sarajevo. A non-commissioned officer dragged a chair to the centre of the hangar, stood on it and told hundreds of assembled troops that if anyone had any problem with their "melon" to see the social workers who were waiting in the wings.

Nobody moved. Nobody dared move.

Former warrant officer Andy Godin, leans against his bicycle in Dover, England, Saturday, June 1, 2013. (Murray Brewster / THE CANADIAN PRESS)

Fast forward nearly 20 years to 2010 to when former corporal John Lowe finished his tour in the killing fields of Kandahar.

His generation has a myriad of money and programs, but checking yourself in to one is known within the ranks as "spin dry."

Lowe came home alone, a month ahead of his buddies in Charlie Company, 1st Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry. He had elected to go into the reserves and the army was adamant about filling out his paperwork back in Canada, and so he was yanked away from the men and women who were, at that time, closer than his family.

As he slept in a near-empty Edmonton barracks, worked out on his own and shuffled paper, he noticed something was off and went to get help. That was when the nightmare started. The Harper government takes great pride in saying it has poured an additional \$130 million into improving the system of military medical care since being elected, including an often-trumpeted \$11.4 million for mental health. When you listen to the accounts of soldiers past and present, it is still a system of stifling bureaucracy, occasional leadership indifference, but most of all prejudice.

It can be the kiss of career death for a soldier, especially in combat arms such as the infantry, to put their hands up and say they have a problem with the horrors they've witnessed.

"It's the culture; the culture is totally different," said Lowe, who at one point had envisioned going to special forces. "One of the sayings, one of our mottos is suffer in silence. That's what's honourable. That's what we're taught. If you're in pain, you buck up and keep moving."

One bit of advice he was given by a fellow soldier was "take your pills as sort yourself out" and don't take too much noise about it.

"He basically said take a pill or drink something to solve your problems."

Godin, who has battled his own demons after watching Serbs and Croats viciously toss their dead into the Miljacka River in the 1990s, was angry upon hearing Lowe's story. "It makes me flippin' angry," he said. "We throw resources at something; we have a system set up for this and this, and this after every tour to see how (the troops) mental health is doing, but are these programs working? I don't know." Godin pointed to the rising number of post-traumatic stress claims arriving at the doorstep of Veteran Affairs, and said that the system trains soldiers very



well to obey orders and kill, but doesn't teach how to deal with consequences. He said it feels like not much has changed.

Defence Minister Peter MacKay's staff declined an interview on the subject, but instead issued a statement pointing to the investments, saying the government has taken substantial action. "In fact, when compared to our NATO allies, the (Canadian Forces) has the greatest ratio of mental health care workers to military members," a spokeswoman said. A group of Canadian soldiers and veterans, many of them struggling with post-traumatic stress, have arrived in London after a gruelling six-day cycling ride from Paris. They took part in an event put on by the British-based charity Help for Heroes, which gathered 300 riders from the United Kingdom, Canada and the U.S., including a number of amputees who lost limbs in Afghanistan and Iraq. The entire group stopped at various battlefields in northern France, and received a huge welcome in London as they ended the ride at Horse Guards Parade. Most of the Canadians took part under the sponsorship of the charity Wounded Warriors Canada.

Dave Penasse, a former armoured vehicle driver who served in Bosnia, says he's concerned that as the war in Afghanistan becomes a distant memory for the public, people will forget about the 2,047 who were wounded physically and mentally. "It is sad to think about, but if a country is not a war, there's less media attention (on the military), less and less and less, and then there's none," he said. "People forget so easily what these people have been through."

His sentiment is echoed by Bryn Parry, co-founder and chief executive of Help for Heroes, who says most memorials are to the dead, but he says one should be erected to the wounded.

Read more: <http://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/canada-s-vets-worried-that-wounded-will-be-forgotten-as-wars-fade-1.1308002#ixzz2V7uYsJmD>

Book Jacket Design Contest

The Management Committee overseeing the publication of Vol III of **The Gunners of Canada-History of the Royal Regiment of Canadian Artillery 1967-2012**, has decided to conduct a contest aimed at selecting a design for the book jacket (AKA the dust cover). They are also encouraging all Gunners to contribute information or anecdotes about what they saw or did during their service

William Rawling PhD has been selected as the author of Volume III. Dr Rawling is a highly regarded Canadian military historian with twenty years of experience in the Directorate of History and Heritage. He has written eight books and many articles in both English and French and has co-authored the official histories of the RCN and the RCAF.

Vol III is expected to be published in 2017. For more information on the book and contest, go to:- <http://www.artillery.net/beta/gnr-of-canada-vol-iii/>

Remembering Wegner Point

By Sean Chase, Daily Observer - Sunday, May 12, 2013



CFB PETAWAWA - Forty five years ago, 26 paratroopers disembarked from their aircraft anticipating a smooth landing on the sandy Mattawa Plains.

When the three Buffalo transports took off from Bonnechere Airfield, the conditions were favourable for an early evening drop. That drastically changed when the men began exiting the planes at around 8:30 pm.

Staring down at the dark, perilous Ottawa River, most knew they were overshooting the drop zone. The wind shear that caught them off guard propelled 22 of them into the frigid waters off Wegner Point with some landing as far as 1,000 feet offshore. Entangled in their parachutes and weighed down by equipment, most struggled to escape being dragged to the bottom. Some family members watched anxiously from the cliffs above. When rescuers finished pulling what men they could from the water, seven were still missing.

The night of May 8, 1968 still remembers fresh in the memories of those who lived it. Retired colonel Joe Aitchison was one of the lucky ones. He was on the second pass waiting to exit when the pilots got the word to 'stop drop.' "It's something I will never forget for as long as I live," the former paratrooper told a ceremony commemorating the worst training accident in Petawawa history Sunday. "It was a very difficult day and those that followed were very difficult days." Family, friends and former comrades gathered at a memorial cairn above Wegner Point to reflect on that catastrophic evening over four decades ago. Ray Clowes and Dave Jannisen, both survivors of the drop, read out the names of the seven who drowned: Master Warrant Officer Reginald Riddell, Warrant Officer Michael McDonnell, Cpl. Hugh Fields, Cpl. Bob Knight, Cpl. Dennis Clements, Cpl. Jim Misner and Cpl. Bruce Chiswell. The men had served in the First Battalion, Royal Canadian Regiment and the 2nd Signals Squadron. For Aitchison, who today serves as the RCR's Colonel of the Regiment, it was a sombre time as it took days to locate the bodies of the victims. When searchers did find them, some were still in their parachute harnesses. Most of them were less than 50 yards from shore. The next day, the colonel was asked to identify the body of 41-year-old McDonnell.

"As the old saying goes, 'Fair winds and following seas, have a good one, jumper.' Unfortunately, there were seven men who didn't," concluded the colonel.

The winds gusted as serving members of the 1st and 3rd Battalions, Royal Canadian Regiment, and 2 Canadian Mechanized Brigade Group (2CMBG) Headquarters and Signals Squadron formed up alongside Airborne veterans. Then Padre Wayne Sollows offered a prayer for those jumpers who died doing their duty.

"We gather to remember those who trained to defend our great nation but in doing so had their lives taken from them in peace," said Sollows. "Lives of young men who were not only soldiers but all of them sons and friends, some of them husbands, fathers and uncles." Then with

headaddresses removed, trumpeter Glen Wagner played "The Last Post." After two minutes of silence, Warrant Officer Scott Pollon performed a solemn lament on the pipes. Mayor Bob Sweet said it was important to reflect on the loss of seven young soldiers so tragically killed 45 years ago. Alluding to the casualties inflicted on the base from the recent Afghanistan mission, the mayor said the community has always mourned with the military during their times of great sadness.

"When tragedies happen on the base, we feel as you do," said Sweet. "I have never served in a uniform but I am eternally grateful to those who do."

The current generation of signallers and jumpers, in the form of members of 2CMBG Headquarters and Signals Squadron and 'Mike Company', 3 RCR, were also given a chance to pay tribute to their predecessors. "We lost members of our unit back in 1968," said Maj. Neil Marshall, commanding officer of 2CMBG Headquarters and Signals Squadron. "It's very important we keep their memories alive. It's important we show the community we still care." This ceremony is held each May by the Canadian Airborne Regiment Association. Airborne veteran Dennis Stow, who was on the ground as a drop zone controller that night, said the association would continue to stage this memorial to their seven fallen brothers.

Cabela's Canada will offer Priority Hiring to Veterans

Ottawa – On behalf of the Honourable Steven Blaney, Minister of Veterans Affairs and Minister for La Francophonie, Eve Adams, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Member of Parliament for Mississauga–Brampton South, today congratulated John Tramburg, Vice-President of Cabela's Canada, on its commitment to Canada's Veterans.

"I commend the commitment that Cabela's Canada is making today to Canadian Veterans. Its participation in the Hire a Veteran initiative goes hand in hand with the work our Government is doing with other corporate partners to promote Canada's highly skilled Veterans," said Minister Blaney. "Through this initiative, Cabela's Canada is giving Veterans new opportunities to make a successful transition from military to civilian life."

"Our Veterans have a great deal to offer," said Parliamentary Secretary Adams. "I applaud the efforts of Cabela's Canada, and other corporate partners such as Queen's University and Mount Allison University, for joining our Hire a Veteran initiative. I call on the rest of corporate Canada to join these leading companies in this initiative, and to allow Canada's Veterans to put the excellent training and skills gained during their service to use in the civilian workforce. Without a doubt, these companies will benefit greatly from hiring highly skilled Canadian Veterans."

"Cabela's Canada is proud to partner with Veterans Affairs Canada in the Hire a Veteran initiative," said John Tramburg, Vice-President of Cabela's Canada. "We are committed to helping Canadian Veterans transition to their civilian lives. As Cabela's grows, so will our

need to hire knowledgeable employees to support Cabela's culture and our customers. We're excited to participate in this important initiative for our Canadian Veterans."

The work of Cabela's Canada builds upon the Veterans Transition Action Plan, launched last fall by Minister Blaney. The plan consists of new measures for cutting red tape for Veterans, enhancements to service delivery, post-military career opportunities for Veterans, ground-breaking research on the needs of releasing Canadian Armed Forces personnel, and enhanced cultural awareness.

For more information on Veterans Affairs Canada's programs and services, visit www.veterans.gc.ca

Cabela's in Canada

Showcasing thousands of products, including hunting, fishing, camping, hiking, boating and wildlife-watching gear, as well as outdoor clothing and outdoor-themed gifts and furnishings, Cabela's is famous for its strong brand and world-renowned reputation for delivering quality merchandise, value and legendary customer service.

Cabela's purchased S.I.R. Sports Store in 2007 as a launching pad for the company's planned expansion into Canada. The S.I.R. facilities acquired through the purchase became the headquarters for Cabela's Canadian operations Today, Cabela's Canada serves over 250,000 customers across Canada and internationally through its Call Centre, Online and Retail divisions.

Government Marks the 111th Anniversary of the End of the South African War

To view this release, go to: <http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/department/press/viewrelease/1777>

A final toast for the Doolittle Raiders

By Bob Greene, CNN Contributor



Lt. Col. James Doolittle leans over a bomb on the USS Hornet deck just before his "Raiders" began the bombing raid on Tokyo.

(CNN) -- It's the cup of brandy that no one wants to drink. April 2013, in Fort Walton Beach, Florida, the surviving Doolittle Raiders gathered publicly for the last time. They once were among the most universally admired and revered men in the United States. There were 80 of the Raiders in April 1942, when they carried

out one of the most courageous and heart-stirring military operations in this nation's history. The mere mention of their unit's name, in those years, would bring tears to the eyes of grateful Americans. Now only four survive.

After Japan's sneak attack on Pearl Harbor, with the United States reeling and wounded, something dramatic was needed to turn the war effort around. Even though there were no friendly airfields close enough to Japan for the United States to launch a retaliation raid, a daring plan was devised. Sixteen B-25s were modified so that they could take off from the deck of an aircraft carrier. This had never before been tried -- sending such big, heavy bombers from a carrier. The 16 five-man crews, under the command of Lt. Col. James Doolittle, who himself flew the lead plane off the USS Hornet, knew that they would not be able to return to the carrier. They would have to hit Japan and then hope to make it to China for a safe landing. But on the day of the raid, the Japanese military caught wind of the plan. The Raiders were told that they would have to take off from much farther out in the Pacific Ocean than they had counted on. They were told that because of this they would not have enough fuel to make it to safety. And those men went anyway.

They bombed Tokyo, (as well as Yokohama, Yokosuka, Nagoya, Kobe and Osaka) and then flew as far as they could. Four planes crash-landed; 11 more crews bailed out, and three of the Raiders died. Eight more were captured; three were executed. Another died of starvation in a Japanese prison camp. One crew made it to Russia. The Doolittle Raid sent a message from the United States to its enemies, and to the rest of the world: We will fight. And, no matter what it takes, we will win.

Of the 80 Raiders, 62 survived the war. They were celebrated as national heroes, models of bravery. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer produced a motion picture based on the raid; "Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo" starring Spencer Tracy and Van Johnson, was a patriotic and emotional box-office hit, and the phrase became part of the national lexicon. In the movie-theater previews for the film, MGM proclaimed that it was presenting the story "with supreme pride." Beginning in 1946, the surviving Raiders have held a reunion each April, to commemorate the mission. The reunion is in a different city each year. In 1959, the city of Tucson, Arizona, as a gesture of respect and gratitude, presented the Doolittle Raiders with a set of 80 silver goblets. Each goblet was engraved with the name of a Raider.

Every year, a wooden display case bearing all 80 goblets is transported to the reunion city. Each time a Raider passes away, his goblet is turned upside down in the case at the next reunion, as his old friends bear solemn witness. Also in the wooden case is a bottle of 1896 Hennessy Very Special cognac. The year is not happenstance: 1896 was when Jimmy Doolittle was born. There has always been a plan: When there are only two surviving Raiders, they would open the bottle, at last drink from it, and toast their comrades who preceded them in death. As 2013 began, there were five living Raiders; then, in February, Tom Griffin passed away at age 96. What a man he was. After bailing out of his plane over a mountainous Chinese forest after the Tokyo raid, he became ill with malaria, and almost died. When he recovered, he was sent to Europe to fly more combat missions. He was shot down, captured, and spent 22 months in a German prisoner of war camp.

The selflessness of these men, the sheer guts ... there was a passage in the Cincinnati Enquirer obituary for Mr. Griffin that, on the surface, had nothing to do with the war, but that emblemizes the depth of his sense of duty and devotion: "When his wife became ill and needed to go into a nursing home, he visited her every day. He walked from his house to the nursing home, fed his wife and at the end of the day brought home her clothes. At night, he washed and ironed her clothes. Then he walked them up to her room the next morning. He did that for three years until her death in 2005."

So now, out of the original 80, only four Raiders remain: Dick Cole (Doolittle's co-pilot on the Tokyo raid), Robert Hite, Edward Saylor and David Thatcher. All are in their 90s. They have decided that there are too few of them for the public reunions to continue. The events in Fort Walton Beach will mark the end. It has come full circle; Florida's nearby Eglin Field was where the Raiders trained in secrecy for the Tokyo mission. The town is planning to do all it can to honor the men: a six-day celebration of their valor, including luncheons, a dinner and a parade. Do the men ever wonder if those of us for whom they helped save the country have tended to it in a way that is worthy of their sacrifice? They don't talk about that, at least not around other people. But if you find yourself near Fort Walton Beach this week, and if you should encounter any of the Raiders, you might want to offer them a word of thanks. I can tell you from firsthand observation that they appreciate hearing that they are remembered.

The men have decided that after this final public reunion they will wait until a later date -- some time this year -- to get together once more, informally and in absolute privacy. That is when they will open the bottle of brandy. The years are flowing by too swiftly now; they are not going to wait until there are only two of them. They will fill the four remaining upturned goblets.

And raise them in a toast to those who are gone.

From the 'Punitary'

My girl always gets her way by pretending she's sad. She is using sighcology.

Murphy's Rules of Combat Operations.

Helicopter tail rotors are naturally drawn toward trees, stumps, rocks, etc. While it may be possible to ward off this event some of the time, it cannot, despite the best efforts of the crew, always be prevented. It's just what they do.

Quotable Quotes

Whether a man is burdened by power or enjoys power; whether he is trapped by responsibility or made free by it; whether he is moved by other people and outer forces or moves them -- this is of the essence of leadership. *Theodore H. White*