



Van Arty Assoc and RUSI Van Members News Feb 5, 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. There hasn't been any decision made on a start date, contractor or fundraising plans, but the Mess members will have to bear the costs of the renovations. You can be sure that they will be running some kind of fundraising efforts - either with special functions, direct appeals or both - to fund the work. The cost of lunches will go up as well and, effective Jan 1st, it has been raised to \$15pp.

We have a continuing problem with missing lunch tickets. Diners buy their tickets from the bar and are supposed to drop them in the pot when they pick up their soup and salad but sometimes diners forget and take the tickets home. At the moment, we are missing 3 tickets. If you have one of these tickets (check your jacket pockets) please return them to us. If you bring guests, make sure they drop their tickets as well.

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

Veterans Ombudsman Finds Disability Benefits Application Process Unfair to Applicants

Ottawa, Ontario - Today, the Veterans Ombudsman released a report entitled *Veterans' Right to Disclosure: A Matter of Procedural Fairness*. The report makes a number of recommendations to improve the administrative practices used by Veterans Affairs Canada when processing applicants' service and health records. Service and health records are retrieved directly from government custodians of records and processed by the Department to prepare a package that adjudicators rely upon to make a decision on Veterans and serving members' application for disability pensions and disability awards. Although the legislation requires applicants to substantiate their claim, the Department relies on the documents it has retrieved, rather than documents provided by the applicants themselves. The Department also fails to disclose to the applicants which documents they will use to make a decision on their application. "Veterans and serving members of the Canadian Forces and the RCMP have the right to know what information is considered by decision-makers, and they should be able to challenge that information and provide their own." stated Guy Parent, Veterans Ombudsman.

The Ombudsman is of the view that the Department should modify the current procedure to ensure procedural fairness, while continuing to retrieve service and health records for speed and

quality assurance purposes. The procedure should not impede Veterans' and serving members' ability to comply with their legislated obligation to substantiate their claim. "While disclosure of information may require a bit more time at the beginning of the application process, the overall process will be more efficient, and more effective, by reducing the need for reviews and appeals."

The report also shows that bias may be introduced when disability benefits officers, who do not have the authority to rule on applications, bring to the attention of adjudicators the documents they believe to be most relevant to the application through the practice of "flagging".

"Administrative practices, as much as they might aim for increased effectiveness, should never stand in the way of procedural fairness, particularly when it comes to Veterans' and serving members' rights to participation and to a fair hearing."

The full report is available online at www.ombudsman-veterans.gc.ca. This is the third of a series of four reports on issues of procedural fairness related to the various steps in the disability benefits process.

The Minister must have known that the previous report was coming as he has posted this reply already.

Minister Cutting Red Tape for Veterans Applying for Disability Benefits

Ottawa – The Honourable Steven Blaney, Minister of Veterans Affairs, today launched the "Right to Fairness Implementation Plan" to cut red tape for Veterans applying to Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) for disability benefits.

The plan addresses the recently issued Ombudsman report entitled "Veterans' Right to Disclosure: A Matter of Procedural Fairness." It consists of new measures that will ensure Veterans and their families have a better understanding of the Department's disability benefit application process for considering information and how that information is used to make a decision on their applications.

"While over 70% of first applications currently receive a favourable decision, we welcome this report because we are always looking for ways to improve how we serve Veterans and their families," said Minister Blaney. "To best serve Veterans, we are making the right decision as quickly as possible. Veterans can be assured that every application is reviewed and fully considered to ensure a fair outcome."

As a result of the Right to Fairness Implementation Plan, the Department will now:

- proactively call Veterans who have not submitted sufficient evidence to support their application. This will give applicants the opportunity to submit any additional, relevant information;
- more clearly inform applicants that the applicants' official service and health records will be required and retrieved as part of the application process;

- examine ways to further streamline the process for common disability claims to make processes quicker and more efficient, with the view to ensuring faster decisions for Veterans; and
- ensure that all documents submitted by Veterans are reviewed and factored into the decision on an application every time before a negative decision is made on the application.

For more information on the Right to Fairness Implementation Plan, visit veterans.gc.ca.

The Waking Dragons – The Need for Concern in the West

Written for Frontline by Robert Day

Since the near fiscal collapse of both the American and European governments over the continuing deficits and debts that was created by the US economy's collapse of the sub-prime mortgages market and a series of concomitant bails outs of major sections of the economy, the West has introspective switching from a global perspective to one that is mainly concerned with Western problems. With the waning exception of Middle Eastern areas of religious conflict and Islamic fundamentalism that have directly affected them, this self-induced myopia has led to a loss of caring awareness and perspective in a number of global regions notably the Far East. The same can be said for the majority of third world nations who exhibit a reciprocal lack of interest in involvement with major Western governments and economies.

In restricting their vision, both the Europeans and the Americans, have risked a potential loss of global military and economic influence over these lesser countries. However, the depth and breath of the problems of specifically the Far East cannot be addressed by the West fully until the multifaceted Medusa of fiscal problems has been solved or at least well on its way to the establishment of control over their fiscal and associated societal problems.

Since 2009, Asian nations have become increasingly more aggressive over border issues and interstate relations even to the point where military forces have been deployed to reinforce a perception of ownership or the location of international boundaries. Recent events have escalated to the point where using military forces as a demonstration of ownership to where any incursions over the disputed territory by either side could result in military actions just short of a full out war. A number of Asian analysts feel that this escalation in the taking of more aggressive action has occurred as a result of a lessening of the West in the Far East. It could well be the case of "the mice will play while the cat's away" since it is highly unlikely that the West will be willing to be the referee in a potentially costly pseudo-conflict after a costly decade of military action in the recent Middle Eastern conflict between sovereign nations and religious Islamic fundamentalists.

During the same decade of massive military spending, deficit spending and debt accumulation which caused this retrenchment, Asian countries went through a period of exceptional growth. The stability Asian countries enjoyed were in vivid contrast to the West's disabling fiscal problems, most of the major Asian economies have been only marginally affected by economic

problems. Their massive accumulation of western monetary resources ultimately lead to the purchasing of massive amounts of American and European debt by the Prime Eastern economies of India and China as long term investment. The West, in this case, was the author, to some degree, of their countries later economic problems. In pursuit of higher profit margins, many Western corporations outsourced the majority of production to Asian economies because of the very cheap labour costs. These much lower labour costs allowed them to attain their profit goals.

Well before the “subprime” collapse of 2009, Asian companies were awash in the Western corporations’ contracts for the long-term for the production of a significant number of highly desirable products. In short, the Asian economies were buttressed against fiscal pressures for their immediate future. In consequence, the Asian economies have not yet experienced a major down turn in economic activity. They have also experienced, in the recent past, phenomenal increases in their revenue by sales to meet the demand of their own rapidly developing domestic economies. However, they are expected to see a modest but significant down turn in their economic activities as the demand for their goods and services decreases in the West. Moreover, the continuing foreign use of Asian labour is forecasted to drop sharply due to a combination of budgetary cuts and western government incentive programs and the desire for domestic jobs and production. Government budgets are now starting to include funding to induce major western corporations to repatriate their technologies and manufacturing back to North America. Although still not fully deployed, these incentives have been moderately successful in having American and European high technology manufacturers announce that their new product lines will no longer be outsourced to Asian manufacturers.

Although the Asian governments that currently hold substantial amounts of American debt will, no doubt, seek to use their holdings as a lever to affect both trade and political policy as a means to protect their long term interest. However, as we have seen before, when Japan played that same gambit two decades before, they quickly found that with the loss of Western business that they were forced to liquidate their holdings in order to keep the Japanese economy from foundering. Although Japanese companies still hold on to some of their American and European acquisitions, most of their acquired physical assets were sold off in order to staunch Japan’s economic slide by infusions of capital retrieved from the West and Europe. To this day, the Japanese have only experienced relatively small economic growth in comparison to their previously large annual economic growth.

Many North American and European analysts have suggested that economic forecasts, made by Asian analysts, who predict that long, term prospects the Asian economies auger well for the future are being overly optimistic. Their ethnocentric outlook blinds them to the possibility that the forecasted massive western austerity could adversely impact their countries’ projected annual growth of their economic activities for some time to come.

While these fiscal problems will likely continue for both the American and European economies, for some time, strategic analysts are seriously suggesting that the weakened western economies could perhaps leave a military vacuum as those nations cut their military

expenditures, for the major state actors in the East to consider the pursuit of policies that have an hegemonic agenda. Reduced military's capacity for military action by the western nations to deal with the outbreak of conflicts between any combinations of various Asian alliances could provide the initiant to the start of Asian conflicts. This potential of an Asian regional conflict could become a very real possibility that will face the West nations and their various economic and diplomatic relations. As well, arrival of a major regional conflict could adversely impact presently stable Western economies by any number of military actions such as naval blockades or economic exclusion zones come into force.

How likely is a major Asian conflict? Historians of note suggest that any war or conflicts between the Asian nations will simply be but a continuation of previous conflicts and grievances such as long standing border issues that have existed since well before pre-colonial times.

With exception of some of the more remote Asian areas, there has almost been a never-ending battle for control over borders, trade routes, waterways and farmland between the Asian major state actors. China, Russia, India, Japan and Mongolia have all had hegemonic and territorial ambitions that have resulted in border conflicts and wars. Each nation, in turn, has been in ascendancy at some time or other. They have often being conquered but rose again to re-establish their empires.

However, what most Americans and Europeans can't comprehend is that these conflicts go well beyond territorial or border disputes. They, in fact, have gone in some instances for nearly a millennium. They are rooted in past empires, prior conquests and vicious struggles for consolidation of states or to regain national sovereignty. Let us conduct a short review of the history of the region.

The Chinese state, as we all know it, only came into being during the rise of the Chin dynasty. The Chin nation simply fought a series of wars with each of the states that co-habited with the other nations that took up residence on the land mass that we now identify as China. The Chin dynasty imposed its administration, laws and customs upon it now-vassal states. It is the reason that we call this combined country: China. Since their conquest by the Mongols as well as other areas of Asia, they have become the dominate state in the region. Under the Mongolian, or Manchurian, if you prefer, rulers China has been in conflict more than once with most of their neighbours. The have established and lost empires within the region and almost every country in the region has vestigial Chinese populations within their societies.

There have been as well conflicts with other major states within the region. In the past China has been involved in sporadic wars with such nations as Japan, India and Korea. Since the rise of the Muscovy state in the North, China has had a continuing conflict with Russia up to modern times with the last reported major Sino-Soviet Russia conflict being as late as 1968 when both nations engaged in a limited war over disputed territory. This conflict was precipitated by the Russian claim to much of the northern areas of the Far East, such as Siberia and the northern parts of Manchuria. In a similar vein, in the period of 1979/80, the Chinese

government to protect their interests within South East Asia, the Chinese engaged in a border war with Vietnam that resulted in 20,000 Vietnamese casualties for the Vietnamese and a similar number for the Chinese PLA. The war was to punish the Vietnamese for their aggressive actions in Cambodia which was viewed by the Chinese government as an area of paramount interest that was not open to Vietnamese for exploitation.

China also experienced a half a century long conflict in the early twentieth century with the armed forces of the Empire of Japan. After the Russo-Japanese War of 1905, Japan as victor occupied Russian concessions along the Chinese coast. From the post-WWI era which ceded former German territorial concessions to Japan, that Nation embarked on a program of encroachment with the intent capturing of Chinese raw resources. The Japanese had two aims in mind. The first was to acquire a major source of raw materials and secondly to secure more agricultural resources by the colonization of Manchuria with the “surplus” Japanese population. However, one should also remember that the Japanese also remembered the three abortive attempts by the Chinese government of the day, the Mongols, to invade the Islands of Japan in the 14th century.

The areas known as Indochina also suffered at the hands of both the Chinese and the Indian Empire. The Indians states often found as they launched attempts to conquer bordering countries that the Chinese also had designs on Indochina. Burmese, Vietnamese, and Malayan history extensively recount their struggles to gain control over their own country from Chinese and Indian occupation. All of the regions were subjugated by Manchu/Mongol led Chinese forces. Both China and India remained under control until well into the 20th century. The only exception between the two being the control over the affairs of a single agency, the East India Company, which used local rulers to maintain control of the regions, backed up a sizeable military presence. The Manchu Empire collapsed after the failure of the Boxer rebellion. In 1911, China moved towards becoming a modern state with the overthrow of the remaining vestiges of the Manchu empire by revolutionary forces lead by Dr. Sun-Yat-Sen. However, China was to remain divided by a Civil war that lasted for forty years. It has ultimately risen to become the predominant power within the region. But the Chinese still maintain a long list of ancient quarrels that often informs their world view.

The list all of the major state actors and their grievances is too long to recount here. However, once the Asian nations achieved some degree of economic success, they all have begun to spend significant fiscal resources on establishing an imposing military presence. Both China and India have embarked on a naval construction program that will yield both nations a fleet of large aircraft carriers. They have also embarked on the construction of submarines, surface ships and littoral vessels. Japan has in response updated their naval forces with a fleet of Aegis-equipped, extremely modern destroyers and are building more. The Chinese and Indian navies both possess nuclear submarines as well as a retinue of littoral and coastal vessels to provide extensive maritime protection for the islands nation. Rumors abound, as well, that both India and Japan have embarked on a program designed to produce an effective submarine deterrence force. However, most frightening is the continuing missile programs within each of the major Asian nations.

In terms of sophisticated technology, every major nation within the Asian sphere has developed significant amounts of ICBM capable missiles. Given that most of these nations also have access to nuclear weapons; these missiles could be used as a first strike weapon or as a strategic resource to prevent any future regional war from becoming nuclear. Even nations such as Pakistan and Korea are known to possess the capability of manufacturing nuclear weapons and both are continuing to develop effective delivery systems. They all also possess stocks of effect SSMs and SAMs which have been made locally or purchased from Russian or other nations. Every nation within the region also has a significant amount of effective artillery pieces which have been procured as surplus from the Russians or manufactured by national agencies. Most of these nations also possess stocks of mobile launched missile systems either from Russian, Chinese or other nations that range from the famous WWII “Katuska” truck mounted systems to Cold War systems and many are now seeking the new Russian system: “Smersh”. In addition all of these nations are equipped with significant amounts of tanks, armoured vehicles, mines mortars, machine guns and rifles.

One could argue that such actions, on the part of these nations, is simply their desire to have adequate protection in an unstable region of the world, but I doubt it. Their old wounds and long histories from long ago seem as current today in their political drivers and their discourses on regional affairs. The rest of the world should take note of the potential conflicts within the Far East and begin to plan for contingencies as a precaution. Although volatile, it does remain a critical keystone of international trade and the wealth of nations and the World Economy could not withstand the impact of a major regional war.

Whiskey Tasting Fundraiser

The 15th Field Artillery Regiment RCA and the 78th Fraser Highlanders welcome you to attend a Fund Raising and Whisky Tasting event at our Armoury. There will be food, draw prizes, and music from the BC Regiment (DCO) Irish Pipes and Drums.

Tickets are \$55.00 per person for those sampling a selection of six excellent Whiskeys selected by the Officers of the Mess, or \$25.00 if you are only having beer, wine, or soft drinks from our No-Host Bar.

Only 50 tickets will be sold for the full whisky fleet!

Dress is business causal. Kilts, of course, are welcome.

DATE: March 23rd, 2013

TIME: 1800 hrs – 2300 hrs

LOCATION: 15th Field Artillery Regiment RCA
2025 West 11th Ave Van BC V6J 2C7

TO RESERVE YOUR TICKET CONTACT:

LCol James Barrett

Cell: (604) 916-1766
E-Mail: barrettjd007@gmail.com

All profits will go to the 15th Field Regimental Society to be directed towards the kitchen renovation fund.

Tax receipts will be issued for all donations.

DUES 2013

It's time to pay dues again:

Vancouver Artillery Association – Dues are \$75/yr. Make cheques payable to the Vancouver Artillery Association and send to the Vancouver Artillery Association at the address below.

15 Field Regt Officers Mess – Dues are \$60/yr. Make cheques payable to 15RCA Officers Mess and send to the Associate Members Representative at the address below.

Association and Mess dues to: 2025 West 11th Ave, Vancouver, BC V6J 2C7

RUSI Vancouver – dues are \$25/yr. Make cheques payable to RUSI Vancouver and send to Keith Freer, 524-666 Leg-in-Boot Square, Vancouver, BC V5Z 4B3

2013 Military Ball



Vancouver Garrison Officers Society

The Military Ball



We invite everyone to attend our

68th Annual Military Ball

to be held at the

Hyatt Regency Hotel

on

April 6, 2013

For information about the event and ticket orders please contact us at:
bcmilitaryball@gmail.com Tickets - \$110pp

Mark your calendars now for the **6th of April 2013** to attend the Annual Vancouver Garrison's Military Ball, scheduled once again to be held at the Vancouver Hyatt Regency Hotel. The tariff to attend the Vancouver Military Ball remains unchanged for 2013 at \$110 per

person - Tickets must be purchased in advance. To purchase tickets send an email to the address on the poster above to have an order form emailed back to you. We look forward to seeing you there.

Want to book a room at the host hotel for the Military Ball? The Hyatt has again offered a special room rate for our guests and the reservations link is pasted below. The rate is **\$149.00!** As per last year, this rate is *only available by booking on-line via this link*. You will not be able to find it if you call the Hyatt 1-800 reservation phone number or try to book via Hyatt.com.

On line reservation: <https://resweb.passkey.com/go/mball2013>

Website

We are still looking for someone in our membership to act as our Webmaster. If someone on our list has the necessary skills, please contact me ASAP at bob.mugford@shaw.ca

Newsletters

Miss a newsletter? Want to see a back issue? Newsletters for the last couple of years are archived on the RUSI Vancouver website (www.rusivancouver.ca) Go to: <http://www.rusivancouver.ca/newsletters.htm> to view.



From the 'Punitary'

Practice safe eating - always use condiments.

Murphy's Rules of Combat Operations.

There is no such thing as a fair fight -- only ones where you win or lose.

Great Truths

To be sure of hitting the target, shoot first and call whatever you hit the target.