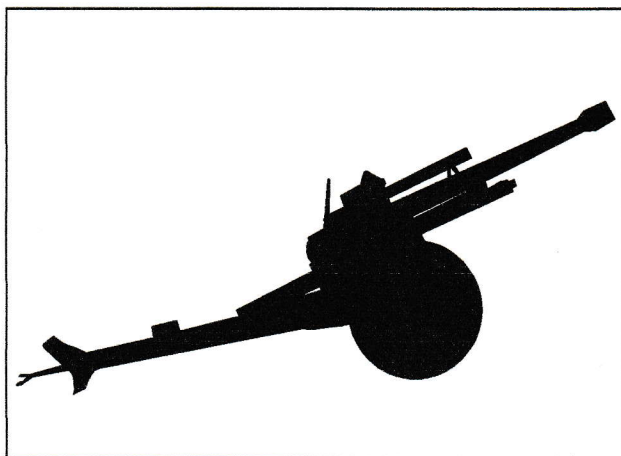




NEWSLETTER

FIFTEENTH FIELD REGIMENT RCA OFFICERS' MESS

2025 West 11th Avenue, Vancouver BC V6J 2C7



6 November 1998

**Published by authority of
LCol Leon Jensen, CD
Commanding Officer,
15 Field Regiment, RCA**

Editor - LCol D E Gayton, EM, CD, late RCA (Retired)

1. CHANGE OF COMMAND - HAND OVER PARADE

A ceremony was held at 1200 hours, Saturday 24 October 1998, in the Bessborough Armoury at which LCol J W Mortlock, CD handed over command of 15th Field Regiment, RCA, to LCol Leon Jensen, CD. A biographical sketch of LCol Jensen and a message by him appear on pages 5 and 6 in this newsletter. LCol Mortlock is now on GSF (General Service Force) and is the prime operator for the JANUS system in Edmonton and will be DS for EXQUARTERBACK DRAW in Dec 98 and in May 99 will be DS of EX TOTAL RAM.

2. THE FATE OF THE BESSBOROUGH ARMOURY

At a luncheon meeting of the Vancouver Branch, RUSI, on 14 Oct 98, the Chief of Staff of 39 Brigade, LCol W J Stutt, CD stated that there were no current plans to dispose of the Bessborough Armoury. Earlier this year, BGen Dan Ross, CD, Commander Land Forces Western Area held a meeting attended by the Honorary Colonels and Honorary Lieutenant Colonels of lower mainland units

and stated that there were no plans to dispose of any armouries in the lower mainland area prior to November 1999 and that seismographic studies of Bessborough and Beatty Street armouries would be undertaken to determine if they would be able to survive a major earthquake. A seismographic study of the Bessborough Armoury is now underway. BGen Ross made a personal visit to the Armoury on 31 Oct 98.

3. LETTER TO THE EDITOR REGARDING THE BESSBOROUGH ARMOURY

LCol Keith W. Freer, MMM, CD, our ever faithful correspondent, has written to the Editor regarding LCol Stevenson's item concerning the search for a site for the Bessborough Armoury. Col Freer writes:

Regarding potential sites for the Armoury, it is well to recall that the process commenced not long after the First World War, when the then Department of Militia, now DND, accepted the recommendation of local military authorities to erect armoury accommodation for an Artillery unit, and for a Squadron of the BC Hussars. During succeeding years various sites were considered, including the CPR property mentioned, and each time contemplating a shared use basis. When finally the West 11th Avenue location was selected, and financing arranged, not without tortuous negotiation, the building plans included provision for the cavalry unit, this being the early Thirties.

Accordingly, the Armoury was built; the drill floor was originally tan-bark to permit the use of horses, and manoeuvre of guns and limbers. What is not recorded in detail, is where horses were stabled, who had responsibility for their maintenance, nor what all that cost.* Anyway, the onset of mechanization meant changes including the need for motor vehicle space and POL storage facilities. That was when the present compound was acquired in 1937 by purchase from a local owner's estate. One must speculate on what previous use the strip of land has had as it lies between the Armoury building and the railway right-of-way. At that time, the BC Electric inter-urban tram ran on the Arbutus track. The Downtown Historic Railway has just re-opened a section of line at 6th Avenue.

[Ed's note: Col Graham Blyth, CD (Retired) was CO of 43rd Heavy then Medium Anti-Aircraft Regt, RCA, from 1955 until it was amalgamated with 15th Field Regiment, RCA in 1959. In 1933, 15 Field Artillery Brigade moved into Bessborough Armoury from the Horseshow Building located at the entrance to Stanley Park. Col Blyth was at that time a Bombardier. After parade, he was often detailed to return to the stables the 10 horses which were rented from the *Clinton Riding Stables*. The stables were located on the University Endowment Land side of Crown/Camosun at 30th Avenue. Bdr Blyth was supplied with a BC Electric street car ticket to get back home from the Dunbar district].

4. MUSEUM REPORT FROM LCOL R V STEVENSON, CD

In 1977, Major Ian Newby of 15th Field Regiment was visiting Woolich, England when a number of old cannon barrels were uncovered during the excavation for a housing project on the site of an old ordnance factory. The London County Council offered the barrels to the Royal Artillery at Woolwich. Major Newby made a request for two of the barrels to be donated to the 15th Field Regiment and after a bit of paper work, the barrels were ours. Now the problem was how to get them to Vancouver. In his usual persuasive way he managed to have the Royal Corps of Transport move the barrels to the Royal Navy Fleet Auxiliary Ship *Sir Galahad* which was sailing from Marchwood to

Vancouver with equipment for the British Army at CFB Suffield, Alberta. After arrival, one barrel was mounted at each entrance of Bessborough Armoury.

The next problem was to identify our new acquisitions. A plaque was placed on each mounting to identify the barrels but there has been some long standing doubt as to whether they were correctly identified. Several attempts over the years were made to solve the mystery but they only brought conflicting results. The barrels were badly corroded which made some of the critical markings difficult to interpret.

In September 1998 after taking a number of photos and taking some 19 careful measurements of each barrel the information was sent to Mr Charles Trollope, an expert in England. His findings are as follows:

West door barrel: A Bloomfield Iron 12-Pdr of 24 Cwt with a length of 6 feet for Land Service and cast about 1810. It was one of many bored out to the 24-Pdr calibre of 5.823 inches in about 1840 for use as flanking guns on Martello Towers. The cypher is that of George III. General Sir Thomas Bloomfield was Inspector of Ordnance from 1779 to 1822 and the main designer of guns during that period.

East door barrel: This is a 6-pdr of 7 feet 6 inches weighing about 19 Cwt. The cypher is that of the Rose and Crown. The date period is 1703-1707 and was probably cast by Maximillian Western Sussex.

We hope this will put to rest our search. Plaques will be mounted in the future to identify each barrel.

5. SAINT BARBARA'S DAY MESS DINNER

Saint Barbara's Day is once again fast approaching. It appears that this year in Vancouver we will have the largest ever celebration of our patron Saint. We are expecting more than 100 members and guests of the Regiment on the evening of Saturday the 12th of December 1998 to help us celebrate this most prestigious event AT Bessborough Armoury..

The Band of the 15 Field Regiment, RCA, will be in attendance to add to the atmosphere with their excellent musical talents. And, as in prior years, our mess caterer will ensure that the culinary delights will exceed our high expectations.

To ensure your reservation, please RSVP with your payment of \$60.00. Details are:

Saint Barbara's Day Dinner Saturday 12th December 1998

1900 for 2000 hours - Cost \$60.00

Dress: Mess kit or formal

Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact any of the following Saint Barbara's Committee members:

Captain Richard Van Slyke, CD
Lieutenant Doug Gayton

e mail address: richardv@direct.ca
e mail address: doug_gayton@hotmail.com

6. THE COMMANDING OFFICER'S CHRISTMAS TEA

This annual event is being held in the Mess on Sunday 13 December 1998 from 1400 to 1700 hours. Dress is jacket and tie. Cost: the usual \$10.00 per person.

7. UPCOMING SOCIAL EVENTS

<u>Event</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Officer Responsible</u>
Remembrance Day	11 November 1998	Capt Montrose
15 th Field Regt fires a 21 gun salute from a firing area immediately west of <i>Crabb Park</i> at 1100 hours. (<i>Crabb Park</i> [now known as <i>Portside Park</i>] west of the Sea Bus Terminal). Mess and bar will be open from 1030 until 1430 hrs. A meal will be served at no cost to members until 1300 hours. From 1300 to 1400 hours the charge will be \$10.00. Members are reminded the matinee performance of <i>We'll Meet Again</i> starts at 1400 hours at the Orpheum Theatre. The RCA Band is playing in this presentation. Tickets available from Ticketmaster.		
Saint Barbara's Day Dinner	12 December 1998	Capt Mathews
CO's Christmas Tea	13 December 1998	Lt Gayton
Ladies Dining In - Valentines	12 February 1999	Capt Wickens
Military Ball	1 May 1999	Capt Watkins

8. GENERAL MESS MEETING OF 29 OCTOBER 1998

A new slate of officers was elected, as follows:

PMC	Lt Gayton
Vice PMC	Capt Montrose
Treasurer	Lt Colling
Secretary	Lt Skuce
Wines Member	Lt Lamb

Furnishing and Housing	Lt Tyler
Entertainment	Cpts Wickens, Watkins, Watts, McCready, Mathews
Band Representative	Capt Van Slyke
Christmas Card person	Lt Skuce
Friday evening organiser	Lt Colling

9. EVENTS OF INTEREST

Saturday 7 Nov 98 Informal Tacos and Mai Tai Soiree Lt Colling

Thursday 19 No 98 2100 - 2130 General Mess Meeting

2130 - 2300 Professional Development
 "Viet Nam in the 50s"
 LCol D E Gayton, EM, CD

10. BIOGRAPHY OF LCOL LEON JENSEN, CD

Oct 70 Enrolled 15th Field Artillery Regt RCA. Paraded at the old CFS Ladner Station prior to it be torn down in one the many ongoing "restructures".

Oct 72 Promoted Bombardier. The rank structure was undergoing a transition during the unification of the Forces which resulted in just missing the rank of Lance Bombardier.

Jul 73 Attached to 1 RCHA in Lahr, Germany for the annual Op REFORGER series of exercises.

Apr 74 Promoted Sergeant. The Master Bombardier rank had not yet made its way down to the Militia and we were still somewhat confused by Bombardiers in 3 RCHA sewing a Warrant Officer's crown on top of their Bombardier's stripes and telling us to call them Master. The old Senior NCOs were still wondering if this was really a fair trade for Staff Sergeants.

Nov 76 Promoted Warrant Officer. Signed off by our present Honorary Colonel during his tenure as Commanding Officer.

Apr 78 Transferred to Supplementary List. A job transfer to Calgary, Alberta necessitated a short respite. After one year of transferring on and off the Supp List for 2 to 3 exercises per year it was deemed administratively less burdensome to keep a person on strength from the Supp List for the entire year.

Oct 82	Transferred to 20 th Field Regt RCA. Another job transfer finally brought me to a civilized metropolis with a Gunner presence.
Jan 83	Promoted Master Warrant Officer.
Aug 83	Transferred back to the 15 th Field Artillery Regt.
Jan 86	Promoted Chief Warrant Officer. Appointed Regimental Sergeant-Major.
Sep 88	Transferred to Pacific Militia Area as the G1 to 11 th Canadian Training Brigade Group.
Mar 89	Commissioned in the rank of Captain. Backdated to Sep 88 due to administrative delays.
Mar 89	Transferred back to the 15 th Field Regt.
Jun 93	Promoted Major.
Jul 95	Accepted callout on OP SPEAKER: UNPROFOR as Watchkeeper/LO. Attached to HQ Sector South West - Bosnia-Herzegovina, a multi national brigade HQ built on the nucleus of a British Brigade HQ: 4 Armoured Brigade.
Dec 95	Transferred to NATO IFOR HQ of the Multi National Division South West: the British 3 Armoured Division, as Divisional Liaison Officer Operations Officer.
Apr 96	Transferred to BC District HQ as the G1.
Sep 97	Transferred back to 15 th Field Regt RCA.
Oct 98	Promoted Lieutenant-Colonel: Appointed Commanding Officer.

11. NOTES BY THE COMMANDING OFFICER

The Regiment continues to have as its main focus Artillery training. A successful exercise over Thanksgiving had 31 Battery deploying as a three gun C1 battery under command of 5 Field Regt with 55 Battery providing a second three gun battery with the newer C3 modified guns. For the present training year 5 (BC) Field Regiment has been tasked to command and coordinate this combined artillery training.

The training has also been focused on the Brigade sanctioned courses that the unit has been

tasked to run. A QL4 Basic Communicators course, an Artilleryman Communicator conversion course (Which is appended to the Communications course) and a QL3 Artilleryman course are also being run at Bessborough Armoury. As well, soldiers have been sent out as students on a Driver Wheeled course being conducted at 12 Service Battalion.

In conjunction with these courses the unit must also ensure that all personnel have been given their SHARP training (Standards for Harassment and Racial Prejudice) and have completed their Warrior program for basic military skills. We have also recently received the one day Diversity training package that must be completed by all soldiers prior to June 1999.

The large Courgar Salvo exercise in Fort Lewis has been sidelined for this year and in its place we will be deploying to Wainwright in May 1999 as part of a Composite Battery with 5 (BC) Field Regiment. This promises to be an interesting exercise under command of Colonel Leslie, the Commander of 1 CMBG.

In all, we have the potential of an excellent interesting year. Along with these courses, we also have the potential of running a Regimental recruit course, if we recruit sufficient new Gunners. We have the vacancies; we just need the new people. Should you know of anyone who is interested in joining please send them down to the Regimental Recruiting Office at the Armoury on any Thursday night between 1900 and 2200 hours.

12.

LAST POST

It is with regret that we inform you of the passing of
Major Charles Anderson Coull on 13 June 1998.

13. NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new members:

Major John Clive Howard, CD	RCAF (Tech/Te;) Jun 52-Jul 68 Cdn Forces (CELE) CFHQ Jul 68-Dec 71 Dept Supply & Services, Ottawa Dec 72-Nov 75 Communications Cda, Vancouver, BC Director Engineering Nov 75-Apr 89 Consultant Jun 89-Jun 96
Major John H M James, CD, MD	RAF Medical Service Sep 53 - Jul 58 RAMC Territorial Branch 1960 - 1972 Medical Practitioner 1951 to Present