



#### Van Arty Assoc and RUSI Van Members News Jan 7, 2014

#### **Wednesday Lunches**

First Lunch of 2014 is **tomorrow**! Hope all our regulars can make it to start the year off right.

Guests and visitors are always welcome. People these days, especially civilians, don't think about dress much and, if not pre-warned, will show up in very casual dress so, to avoid embarrassment, please make them aware of the dress requirements (suit/blazer and tie, equivalent for ladies) <u>before</u> they come.

#### A Purse for Mrs Lum

Every year in December, we collect from lunch attendees to create a 'purse' for Mrs Lum. This is traditionally presented on the last lunch of the year. She has worked extra hard this year because she has had to prepare all the meals at home and bring them in to serve. A lot of extra work – and expense – to maintain her high standards. Unfortunately I was unable to attend the 'last lunch' in Dec so we will have to present Mrs Lum with her 'purse' on Jan 8<sup>th</sup>. Anybody wishing to contribute can see me in the Mess and sign a Christmas card, to be presented to her with the purse.

#### **Burns Dinner - 2014**

Wed, January 29, 2014 at the London Aviation Centre, 4580 Cowley Crescent, Richmond, BC. This is our annual fundraising event for our charitable Society.

This year we have a Theme – '**The Big Shake'** 'what will you do when the Big one hits?' We expect to have representatives of the Ambulance service, Fire Dept, Emergency Services, the military etc in attendance to set up displays on disaster preparedness. Dinner will be served as if at a Disaster Response Centre and should be quite interesting and a lot of fun.

Entertainment will be provided by the 15 Fd Band and the RCMP Pipes and Drums.

Further details can be seen on the invitation at the end of this newsletter.

#### **Time for Annual Dues**

As of Jan 1<sup>st</sup>, dues are now payable for RUSI Vancouver (\$30), The Vancouver Artillery Association (\$75) and 15 Fd Officers Mess Associates (\$60).

Dues payments can be sent to the Treasurer of the applicable organization at Bessborough Armoury: 2025 West 11th Avenue, Vancouver BC V6J 2C7. **This includes RUSI Vancouver!** In the past, payment for RUSI dues has been sent directly to Keith Freer but Keith had a bit of a mishap and is in hospital. We are in the process of appointing an acting

Treasurer until Keith's situation is resolved so please send RUSI dues payments to the Armoury.

#### **Military Ball Renamed**

The date for the 2014 Ball has been set for May 10, 2014 at the Vancouver Hyatt Regency Hotel. 39CBG is getting more involved in the running of the event and has renamed the Military Ball the 'BC Army Gala'. The Gala website is: <a href="http://bcarmygala.ca/">http://bcarmygala.ca/</a> and tickets can already be purchased on the EventBrite site at: <a href="https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/bc-army-gala-tickets-8508578387">https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/bc-army-gala-tickets-8508578387</a>

#### Government won't buy new \$2B armoured vehicles for army

*Program was to supply 108 heavy armoured personnel carriers to protect against roadside bombs* By James Cudmore, <u>CBC News</u> Posted: Dec 19, 2013



The federal government has decided not to go ahead with a plan to buy heavy-armoured close-combat vehicles. The Nexter VBCI armoured vehicle was one of three in competition for the \$2-billion contract first proposed during the height of the Afghan war. (Nexter)

The government has decided not to proceed with a \$2-billion program to buy new heavy armoured vehicles for the army. The decision to cancel the program for new close-combat vehicles, first reported by CBC News on Thursday, was confirmed by Chief of Defence Staff Tom Lawson at a Defence briefing Friday morning. LGen. Marquis Haines told reporters the vehicles are no longer needed because of recent upgrades to light armoured vehicles already in use. Haines says the improved LAVs will offer soldiers the same degree of protection. Three different defence contractors were bidding to build the close combat vehicle for the army: Nexter; BAE Systems Inc.; and General Dynamics Land Systems Inc. General Dynamics is the London, Ont.-based manufacturer of the army's current fighting vehicle, the LAV III. Some industry insiders suggest that the General Dynamics vehicle called the Piranha 5 was struggling in the competition against Nexter's VBCI and BAE's CV90. The program to buy 108 heavy armoured personnel carriers for the army was conceived during the height of the Afghan war. Four years later it appears the government has reconsidered its commitment to the close combat vehicle program. The CCVs were to be larger, more powerful and more heavily armoured then Canada's LAV III vehicles used extensively in Afghanistan. The LAVs frequently suffered mobility issues in Afghanistan and also were found to be too lightly armoured to provide adequate protection against roadside bombs planted by insurgents. That led the military to plan for new vehicles that would provide enhanced protection. Sources tell CBC News the army was recently asked to re-evaluate its need for the vehicles. That process allegedly led the army to restate its desire to buy the heavier fighting vehicles.

On Wednesday, CBC News reported the Conservative government is considering a wholesale remake of its Canada First Defence Strategy and even discussed the issue at cabinet this week. That move would launch a fresh wave of study and analysis that is likely to result in a pared-down military force with a more limited role. The roots of that "reset," as it's called, are in new budget realities that have already put increased financial pressure on allocations used to pay for military training. The Conservative plan was first announced in 2008. It called for a massive investment in new hardware for the military, including fighter jets, frigates, support ships, Arctic patrol ships, and an entire family of new vehicles, including two types of trucks and three types of armoured vehicles. One of those armoured vehicles was to be the CCV. The review of the Conservative defence strategy could end up proposing a smaller force with less hardware and reduced capabilities. In that context, it's possible the government decided

the CCV could be one of the first new pieces of army gear to be struck off the list.

A Canadian Forces LAV III patrols in Afghanistan. The military says improvements to the light-armoured vehicles have reduced the need for a new close-combat vehicle. (Tobi Cohen/Canadian Press)

That decision solves a budget problem for the army. Recently, retired and current army sources have been quietly complaining about budget pressures they face. The army's readiness budget was cut by 10 per cent year over year from about \$3.7 billion to about \$3.3 billion. The army has struggled to implement that cut without affecting its operations and maintenance budget — the account that pays for training as well as gasoline and maintenance on vehicle fleets.

Earlier this week it was reported the commander of the army, LGen Marquis Hainse, had ordered his units to park up to half of the so-called B fleet of logistics and support vehicles. Some defence industry sources say that was a demonstration the army was willing to take painful decisions in order to ensure it would have enough cash to operate and maintain a new armoured vehicle, such as the CCV, in future years.

The CCV program was loaded with political consequence for the government. General Dynamics, one of the three contenders, is a major employer in London, Ont., and a big contributor to the local economy. If it lost the competition it would be hard for the government to explain why the product of a Canadian plant potentially wasn't good enough for Canadian troops — especially after General Dynamics LAV IIIs had protected Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan over the course of the last decade. At the moment, General Dynamics is also engaged in a major overhaul of 550 of Canada's war-ravaged LAV IIIs intended to re-armour and otherwise upgrade the vehicles for years to come. Those two facts — that the Canadian Forces is not at war now, and it's getting upgraded armoured vehicles anyway — combine into a formidable argument against continuing with the CCV program. But that side of the debate ignores that the CCV would still offer better protection against mines

and roadside bombs should Canada be drawn into war again, soon. It also doesn't deal with another possible problem — damage to the government's reputation.

The three bidding companies have together spent tens of millions of dollars to compete in the CCV program, even providing versions of their vehicles to be driven and later blown apart in explosive testing. Industry sources tell CBC News they're hearing overseas defence suppliers are thinking about not bidding on future military contracts because they worry the Canadian government can't be trusted not to waste their time.

#### Britain's 'Luftwoofe': The Heroic Para-dogs of World War II



Keystone-France/Gamma-Keyston/Getty Images

Brian was a tough paratrooper. He trained hard for his deployment with the British Army. During his training, he learned how to identify minefields. Then, on the battlefield, he protected his comrades-in-arms -- though not all of them made it back. On D-Day, he parachuted under heavy anti-aircraft fire onto the Continent. He was there when the Allies liberated Normandy. A

few months before the war's end, he parachuted into western Germany, from where he marched to the Baltic Sea. Less than two years after the war, Brian was given an award to recognize his "conspicuous gallantry." But the bronze medal was not the only thing that distinguished this special soldier from the majority of his comrades: Brian, the tough paratrooper, was a dog, a young Alsatian-Collie mix.

During World War II, the 13th (Lancashire) Parachute Battalion started an adventurous experiment as it prepared for D-Day: enlisting dogs into their ranks. The so-called "paradogs" (short for "parachuting dogs") were specifically trained to perform tasks such as locating mines, keeping watch and warning about enemies. As a side job, they also served as something of a mascot for the two-legged troops. Andrew Woolhouse, an amateur historian, surmises that the battalion first got the dog in early 1944 because Lance Cpl. Ken Bailey "had a veterinary background." Woolhouse researched the battalion for five years and gathered the writings of a number of battalion members from both before and after D-Day to help him write a battalion history, "13 - Lucky for Some: The History of the 13th (Lancashire) Parachute Battalion," published this year. At the time, Bailey had been assigned to run the "War Dog Training School" in Hertfordshire. In 1941, the British War Office had made radio appeals for dogowners to lend their pets to the war effort. This led to the first batch of animals at the training school -- though the sheer number of people trying to get rid of their dogs during the war soon made it somewhat of a shelter.

Among these animals was the 2-year-old dog Brian. In Jan. 1944, Bailey wrote in his notebook: "One of the dogs selected from the training school in Hertfordshire was 'Bing' a 2 year old

Alsatian-Collie cross. Bing had been called Brian by his civilian owner, Betty Fetch, and was the smallest of his litter and due to wartime rationing he was given up." In addition to Brian, now called Bing, Bailey took two other dogs into training: Monty and Ranee, both Alsatians (also known as German shepherds). These three would number among Britain's paradogs during the war, with Ranee being the only female parachuting dog in the war. Training began with getting the dogs used to loud noises. At the base in Larkhill Garrison, the dog handlers had the dogs sit for hours on transport aircraft with their propellers spinning. They also trained the dogs to identify the smell of explosives and gunpowder in addition to familiarizing them with possible battlefield scenarios, such as what to do if their master was captured, how to track down enemy soldiers and how to behave during firefights. Training on the ground lasted roughly two months. But then the dogs started what wasn't part of the training of the other search dogs in the war: parachuting maneuvers. The dogs' slim bodies proved to be advantageous because, during their test jumps, they could use the parachutes that had actually been designed to carry bicycles. In order to make it easier to get the dogs to jump out of the aircraft, they weren't given anything to drink or eat beforehand. On April 2, 1944, Bailey wrote in his notebook about the first jump with the female Alsatian Ranee. He notes that he carried with him a 2-pound piece of meat, and that the dog sat at his heels eagerly watching as the men at the front of the line jumped out of the plane.

Then it was their time to jump, which Bailey describes in this way:

"After my chute developed, I turned to face the line of flight; the dog was 30 yards away and slightly above. The chute had opened and was oscillating slightly. (Ranee) looked somewhat bewildered but showed no sign of fear. I called out and she immediately turned in my direction and wagged her tail vigorously. The dog touched down 80 feet before I landed. She was completely relaxed, making no attempt to anticipate or resist the landing, rolled over once, scrambled to her feet and stood looking round. I landed 40 feet from her and immediately ran to her, released her and gave her the feed." Jump, land, eat: With each training jump, the dogs started enjoying their job more. In fact, the dogs sometimes allowed themselves to be thrown out of the planes or leapt out without any coaxing.

Then came the day that the dogs had trained for, D-Day, June 6, 1944: The three planes carrying the members of the 13th Battalion took off at 11:30 p.m. on the previous night and headed for France. At 1:10 a.m., or only 30 seconds behind schedule, the airplanes reached Normandy. Each plane held 20 men and one dog. Everything seemed to be going according to plan until the hatch was opened. The planes were surrounded by bangs and whizzes, and loud salvos of flak threw yellow light onto the gray clouds. Bailey and Bing flew on the same airplane and were the last ones in line to jump. But after Bailey boldly sprang out of the hatch, his four-legged pupil turned around and holed up in the back of the aircraft. In battalion records, it says that the jump master on board, who was responsible for coordinating the jump, was forced to unplug his radio equipment, catch the dog and toss him out of the plane. What's more, Bing's jump reportedly didn't go as smoothly as his training jumps had: Shortly before setting his four feet on the soil of occupied Europe, Bing was hanging in the branches of the tree his parachute had got caught in. He then had to wait for two hours until his comrades found him with two deep cuts in his face, most likely from German mortar fire.

In what followed, as one soldier in the 13th Battalion later noted, Bing and the other dogs proved to be very useful, especially for locating mines and booby traps. "They would sniff excitedly over it for a few seconds and then sit down looking back at the handler with a quaint mixture of smugness and expectancy," he wrote, noting that the dogs would then be rewarded with a treat. "The dogs also helped on patrols by sniffing out enemy positions and personnel, hence saving many Allied lives," he added. However, in addition to being saviors, the dogs were also victims. Monty was severely wounded on D-Day, while Ranee was separated from her battalion shortly after landing in Normandy and never seen again. But they were later replaced by two German shepherds who had switched sides and soon became friends with Bing.

Bing survived the war and went on to receive the Dicken Medal, the UK's highest honor for animals that have displayed "conspicuous gallantry or devotion to duty while serving with any branch of the Armed Forces or Civil Defence Units." The medals are awarded by the People's Dispensary for Sick Animals, a British veterinary charity, and have been bestowed on dogs, pigeons, horses and a cat (for getting rid of rats on a naval ship despite injury). But that was not the last honor for Bing's service: When he died in 1955, the former paradog was buried in a cemetery of honor for animals northeast of London. Today, one can also find a true-to-life replica of this four-legged hero in the Parachute Regiment and Airborne Forces Museum in Duxford. He is naturally shown wearing his parachute and next to his medal of honor, which bears the words "For Gallantry" and "We Also Serve."

#### Let's Attack Quebec!

or, It Seemed a Good Idea at the Time - by Len Haffenden

One of Murphy's laws states that if anything can go wrong, it will, and at the worst possible time, but there is no need to aid and abet the process, let alone willingly. Competence, or the lack of it, can be a tricky thing. For nearly 300 years, promotion in the Royal Navy was based on two things, seniority, and who you knew (and how well you knew them.) Merit had a role to play, but to be noticed, needed a sponsor. Given enough time and with well-placed co-operative relatives, a lowly Midshipman could gradually rise to flag rank: enter Rear-Admiral Hovenden Walker. (One reason I chose this man for an article was the similarity of our names, Hovenden and Haffenden; it gives one pause.) Walker was born in Ireland, c.1666, the second son of a military middle-class family. Although a mediocre student, a place was found for him in the navy.

Walker was a cautious man with a nondescript career so far, with some conveniently overlooked failures behind him while he was attached to the West Indies Squadron. To his surprise (and that of some others) in March of 1711 he was promoted to Rear-Admiral and given a knighthood at the same time. While Walker's achieving flag rank raised a few eyebrows, what happened next caused several severe intakes of breath among his contemporaries. On the 3rd of April, 1711, this shiny new admiral was appointed Commander-in-Chief of a large fleet of about 75 vessels and ordered to attack New France! That is, take the fleet up the St. Lawrence River, while it was still summer, and capture Quebec City! Such an idea was not new in itself; the Admiralty had been thinking about it for some time, especially the First Sea Lord, Henry St. John. (We now know that it can be done and indeed was done under the command of Admiral

Sir Charles Saunders and General James Wolf in 1759.) However, the logistics and responsibilities set before Admiral Walker overwhelmed him. With several senior and more experienced officers looking on, Walker was now in charge of two 80 gun 'ships-of-the-line', seven lesser warships, two bomb ships, sixty troop transports carrying about 7,500 soldiers and Royal Marines, and some auxiliary vessels.

Now comes the quirky and unfathomable part of this strange tale. The Admiralty, via Henry St. John, was worried that the French would find out about this planned expedition, and came up with a wildly impractical plan to confuse the French. They would load the ships with just enough stores, food, and ammunition for three months, as if the fleet were only going to the Mediterranean. As there was almost no security along England's south shore, and as the docks and navy yards were riddled with French spies, and buying an English docker a drink or two loosened his tongue as to what was going on; it was nearly impossible to keep anything secret. Even so, the fleet sailed in early May, woefully short of nearly everything, with just three months supplies (typically, a trans-Atlantic expedition carried enough provisions for at least eight months.)

Arriving in Boston in late June, Walker was in for some surprises. He had been there before as a young officer on the frigate HMS Dartmouth in 1687 and was well received. This time it was not a warm welcome. Boston was now the epicentre of anti-English feeling, although their merchants were willing to sell what stores they had to Walker's fleet at grossly inflated prices. The trouble was, there really wasn't enough materiel to go around. Boston and its coastal villages and towns were just not set up to re-provision such a large fleet at such short notice, even if they wanted to.

Another critical problem for Walker was the shortage of St. Lawrence River pilots; there weren't any, at least none with a volunteer aspect to their character. Walker had been misled in England on this matter, being told there were experienced pilots available in the Boston area with up-to-date charts. In the event, the Massachusetts Governor appealed for such men to come forward, and do their duty. None did. Worse, the few charts Walker was able to acquire were useless, not agreeing with each other in any respect. Somewhat disheartened, Walker talked to colonial fishing boat captains and to old salts who had taken part in the Phips expedition against Quebec in1690, men who had been in the Gulf. Their advice did not help. The mouth of the St. Lawrence, said they cheerily, was full of strong currents, fierce storms, rip tides, shoals and fog!

And now, losing confidence, Walker found out the one pilot he had with him, a Captain Southack, had exaggerated his qualifications slightly; he had in fact seen the river, but had not yet found the time to go up it. In desperation, Walker latched on to a captured French naval officer, and alleged St. Lawrence River pilot, a Captain Paradis, who for a generous fee would lead the expedition. Walker decided to leave the two 80 gun ships behind and sailed at the end of July with most of his other ships, reaching the Gulf of St. Lawrence two weeks later. This time, his ships were not only short of supplies, but also short of personnel. None of the crews was at full strength The four weeks spent in Boston harbour had induced a feeling of adventure and curiosity in many of the sailors and soldiers, with the result of an ever increasing number of desertions and a strong urge to jump ship.

Flying his flag in HMS Edgar, Walker's fleet reached Anticosti Island in another week, but could not get past it. They were stymied by strong head winds and the now all too familiar fog banks. The next few days, August 18 to the 24, were a living hell for Admiral Walker. In the patchy mists and fogs, he lost his sense of direction. He thought his ships were in mid-stream drifting to the south shore, which had deep water. In fact, he was over twenty miles off course and his ships were being driven by strong winds to the rocky north shore, which had reefs and shallow water. A young and terrified officer woke the Admiral up, saying breakers could be seen (and heard) off the port side. All measures were now taken to save the fleet; they were ordered to raise sail and stand off to mid-channel.

More by chance than good planning, the wind shifted, and losses were kept to eight ships run aground: one store ship and seven troopers, but sadly, with the accompanying loss of about 750 soldiers and 150 sailors. The gale abated, and the weather improved enough for Walker to patrol the area for two days, trying to save as much stores and as many survivors as possible. He called his captains over for a council of war (a well-known procedure to help share blame if an inquiry were to be called in the future.) They deliberated, saying unkind things about colonial merchants and treacherous river pilots, but with September just around the corner, and only a few weeks supply of food available, the decision was an easy one; they sailed for home, arriving in Portsmouth with half-starved near mutinous crews on 8/9 October, 1711.

Walker took a coach to London, reported to the Admiralty, and was greatly relieved when there was to be no inquiry (yet). He was not censured, and was even offered a future command. Such largesse was because his Tory friends were still in power. While in London, Walker received the astonishing news that the Edgar had blown up, killing all of the skeleton crew aboard and destroying most of his papers, maps and journals. This made it very difficult later for him to prepare his report. Besides, the Admiralty did not want too much digging up at this time, as a lot of the blame for the failed mission could be laid at the feet of the Naval Commissioners who thought up this misadventure in the first place. In March of 1712 he was appointed to head a squadron out of Jamaica. In late 1713 he was back in England on half pay, acting as a JP, and enjoying country life. The winds of change now cooled off Walker's career. In August, 1714, Queen Anne died and George 1st became King. He brought in a Whig government, and one of the first things they wanted was a full account from Walker as to the debacle in the summer of 1711. In March of 1715 he was ordered to prepare his report, and with a few surviving documents, a small pocket diary, and his memory, he did his best to oblige. Then came a sharp blow; in April of 1715, without warning or a formal hearing, he was stripped of his rank and his half pay.

The report was finally published in 1720. It could never be complete, thanks to the unfortunate loss of the Edgar. The report was self-serving, with Walker pointing the finger of blame almost anywhere but at himself. He lived a few more years, before dying of a stroke, spending time in Europe, South Carolina, Ireland and England, thanks to the generosity of his family and Tory friends.

#### Who is it?

**Last Edition**. This picture shows Col Blyth, who was Hon Col of the Regt for several years,



sitting in the SW corner of the main Mess room. Note that the old vinyl folding doors are still in place and the w/w carpet hasn't been installed yet. The young woman with the baby is Maj Peter Erwin's (retired Director of Music) wife, Irmgard Erwin. That is their youngest, Geoffrey, on her lap. He was born in 75 so this pic must have been taken at the Children's' Christmas party in 1976.

**This Week's picture** A Happy New Year to one and all! To change pace a bit this New Year of the Horse, we will feature some of the "Colours" of the Regiment over the years. As all of you know, the Colours of the Royal Regiment of Canadian Artillery are its guns. Surprisingly, the current gun, the C3, is an upgrade of a gun (the US Army M2/M101) that first saw service



in the early 1940s. In fact, its design pre-dates that of the gun which it replaced (the 25 pdr), itself an icon of Canadian gunnery. This makes the original design of the C3 older than the age of any serving member of the Regiment.

So, going back in time, can you name this gun, and the years in which it served? Bonus points for giving the proper title of the Regiment way back then.

Note: This picture may be a bit confusing to some as the gun is in full recoil. Answers can be sent to the editor, or to the columnist, John Redmond (johnd\_redmond@telus.net).

#### From the 'Punitentary'

I saw a sheep scratching itself at the Petting Zoo – turns out it had fleece!

#### Murphy's other Laws

In matters of financial dispute, the Bank's balance is always smaller than yours

#### **Quotable Quotes**

We've got to learn there are going to be hard things in our lifetime, but it's love that gives you the strength. It's being nice to people and having a lot of fun and laughing harder than anything, hopefully every single day of your life. - *Drew Barrymore* 



Lieutenant Colonel

#### Kent A Wickens CD

Commanding Officer

and

Colonel

#### R Grant Smith OStJ, CD, ESM

Honorary Colonel and President of the Regimental Society

of the



### 15th Field Artillery Regiment, RCA

Request the Pleasure of the Company of You and Your Guests

# Burns Supper

#### FEATURING

The Band of the 15<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Regiment, RCA

The Pipes & Drums of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police

to be held on

## January 29, 2014

at the

London Aviation Centre 4580 Cowley Crescent, Richmond, BC

Dress:

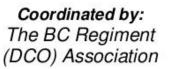
Scottish Attire, Mess Kit, Formal or Business Dress (no causal wear please) Cocktails: 1800hrs Dinner: 1900hrs Tariff: \$100pp RSVP to: Col Grant Smith
7460 Sunnybank Avenue
Richmond, BC V6Y 1G5
Email: roy.grantsmith@gmail.com
Tel: 604-271-5530

Cheques Payable to: 15th Field Regimental Society

# India Curry Lunch



Hosted by: The British Columbia Regiment Officers' Mess





Date: Thursday, January 30, 2014

Time: 11:45 am - 1:30 pm

(bar opens at 11:45am) (presentation at 12:01pm) (lunch starts at 12:20pm)

Location: Officers' Mess - The BC Regiment

620 Beatty Street, Vancouver, BC

Dress: Business Attire (jacket & tie, ladies similar)

Price: \$30/person (\$5 discount for those that confirm

attendance by January 24, 2014)

RSVP: For more information or to register, please contact

Bill Diamond at Bill@DukeaBear.com or 604.618.3607 (Please advise of any dietary needs with your RSVP)

Payment by cheque or cash will be accepted at the door Cheques are payable to: The BC Regiment (DCO) Association No cancellations after January 24, 2014

NEXT PLANNED LUNCH: Thursday, February 27, 2014