



Van Arty Association and RUSI Van Members News Feb 9, 2016

Newsletter on line. This newsletter, and previous editions, are available on the Vancouver Artillery Association website at: www.vancouvergunners.ca and the RUSI Vancouver website at: <http://www.rusivancouver.ca/newsletter.html>

Wednesday Lunches The 15 Field Officers Mess serves a 5 course, 'homemade' meal for only \$15- you won't find a better meal - or a better deal, anywhere. If you are in the area on a Wednesday, drop in and join us for lunch. Jacket and tie required, equivalent for ladies. We are now pushing the 3rd Wed lunch each month as the Van Arty Association lunch and encouraging members to attend. Come meet some old friends and help with the Yearbook project.

RUSI Luncheon Speaker – Feb 10th - DART presentation

Lt Col Edward M. Izatt, Commander, Canadian Forces Disaster Assistance Response Team will give a presentation in the lecture room at the Armoury after lunch (1330hrs) on Wednesday, Feb 10th. He will speak to us on DART activity after the earthquake in Nepal last spring.

On April 25, 2015, a 7.8 magnitude earthquake devastated Western and Central regions of Nepal, killing more than 8,000 people. Members of the DART, (CF Disaster Assistance Response Team), began deploying to the region the next day. In all, approximately 200 soldiers, sailors and aviators assisted in various tasks such as engineering, medical aid, liaison services, and mapping. By the end of the mission, the DART had distributed water filtration units; enabled access to clean safe drinking water for approximately 3,400 people; treated more than 700 Nepalese patients; provided 750 maps and imagery products to the Nepalese and foreign militaries, NGOs and UN agencies; removed more than 3,000 cubic meters of rubble and cleared roads allowing access to approximately 204,000 Nepalese; enabled public safety announcements; and distributed more than 355 crank radios to connect with relief efforts.

Whiskey Tasting - Friday – March 4th 1800 – 2300 hrs



The 15th Field Artillery Regiment RCA and the 78th Fraser's Highlanders welcome you to attend our annual Fund Raising and Whiskey Tasting event at the historic Bessborough Armoury. There will be food, draw prizes, and music. *See poster at the end of the newsletter.*

World War 2 - 1940

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

Feb 9th: The British advance in the Desert stops at El Agehila; Wavell has to spend troops and attention on Greece, East Africa, and shoring up Palestine in response to growing Axis activity

in Iraq and Syria. Moreover, he has advanced about as far as his supply situation will let him – it is simply impossible to advance further. The RN demonstrates its ascendancy again, sinking five ships as *Renown* and *Malaya* bombard Genoa's harbour while *Ark Royal's* aircraft call on Leghorn and La Speiza.

Feb 10th: Wavell is instructed to support Greece. 4th Indian Division bounces off the Italian defences at Keren. For centuries, the Dutch have not had a “Jewish Problem”, which has irked the Reichs-Kommissar, Dr Seyss-Inquart; but German ingenuity can rise to any occasion. So, today, the tiny Dutch Nazi party and a collection of thugs known to local police stage a pogrom in a Jewish neighbourhood in Amsterdam – and now that a “problem” is proved to exist, measures can be taken to “solve” it.

Feb 11th: Rommel lands in Libya. Admiral Darlan is nominated as Petain's successor (as well as the Minister of Information, Chief of the Navy, Interior Minister and Foreign Minister). Britain's African troops take Afmadu in Somalia.

Feb 12th: General Garibaldi is appointed Commander-in-Chief (CinC) for the Italians in Libya.

Feb 13th: HMS *Formidable* launches strikes on Massawa (which it will continue to do for the next two weeks) because German mining operations at the mouth of the Suez Canal temporarily prevent its transit into the Mediterranean.

Feb 14th: Admiral Hipper pulls back into Brest, its Feb cruise is its most successful foray and eight ships were sunk. The first German troops arrive in Libya. Hitler tries to convince reluctant members of the Yugoslavian government to become a German ally. Kismayu in Somaliland is taken by British-African troops.

Feb 15th: Angered by transfers to Germany for war work and the new anti-Jewish measures of Seyss-Inquart, Dutch workers go on strike in several cities, this results in punitive fines and greatly increased repression.

Feb 16th: British African troops start to cross the Juba river in Somaliland.

Canada's 'Frozen Chosen' at Top of the World - in the Dark Since Oct 14

Matthew Fisher at CFS Alert *National Post, February 1, 2016*

CFS ALERT, Nunavut — The 79 Canadians who inhabit the northernmost community on Earth last saw daylight on Oct. 14 at 12:30 p.m. The sun will next crest the horizon here at 10:41 a.m. on Feb. 28. When it does, Canada's “frozen chosen” will hold a party to celebrate its return. The Cold War never ended at Alert, the Canadian Forces' remotest outpost. It abuts the Arctic Ocean atop Ellesmere Island, closer to Moscow than to Ottawa and further from the capital than Halifax is from Vancouver. And since it opened in 1956, the top-secret military installation has developed a near-mystical reputation within the Forces. Those stationed here gather radio signals and other electronic intercepts from Vladimir Putin's Russia, passing them on to military analysts in the south. They live and work in a Lego-like maze of well-heated, brightly

lit buildings that includes a tanning salon, two gyms, two bars and an excellent chow hall. For much of the year they are surrounded by perpetual darkness, sharing their patch of land with polar bears, muskox, Arctic fox, wolves and giant white hares that thrive in one of the most severe climates outside Antarctica.

And severe it is, with weather that can turn drastically in the space of just a few minutes. When Storm Condition One is declared at the station, lifelines are strung between the buildings to help people find their way between them. Storm Condition Two is called when winds exceed 80 km/h, if the wind chill dips below -55 C or when there is zero visibility. When that happens everyone must ride out the storm wherever they happen to be in the facility at that moment, with water, emergency rations and sleeping accommodation available in every working location. The station hosts Environment Canada meteorologists and scientists conducting research in the High Arctic, and its existence is part of a flag-waving exercise by Ottawa, helping underpin Canada's claim on its Arctic Archipelago. But the principal reason the Canadian military came to and remains in Alert is the presence of the Russians on the far side of the North Pole. "The location of Alert is an unusually advantageous capability for the defence of North America," says Col. Steve Moritsugu, who oversees signals intelligence gathering at CFS Leitrim in eastern Ontario, where the intercepts harvested at Alert are analyzed to NORAD's great benefit. "There is not much else up there, so there is not much noise. It is a unique place to collect signals." "The chief psychological concern is with people withdrawing into themselves," says Alert's top medical official, physician assistant, Chief Petty Officer Second Class Danny Williams of St. John's, who began his second tour at Alert last Friday. With no doctors or nurses present, Williams is responsible for the physical and mental health of everyone posted at the station.

Living in such close quarters, in a place where months of 24-hour daylight are followed by months of 24-hour darkness, has been known to play with people's minds. "We need to see that people are taking care of themselves," Williams says. "That is why we conduct room inspections. If you don't work well with others, you won't stay very long." The station offers a range of activities to maintain morale. Everyone at Alert may make one video conference call and one telephone call every day to communicate with family and friends down south. There are clubs promoting hobbies like photography and sewing. The messes allow each person a ration of two beers a day, and a place to catch hockey games and other programming broadcast live from the south. Access to a tanning machine, and the ability to soak up some Vitamin D, is considered an essential of life. There are expeditions to fish for Arctic char, weather permitting, and in the summer, mountain biking and treks to collect crystals and pyrite. "Life anywhere is about who you are with, and I had fantastic people with me," says Maj. Walt Michalchuk, an aerospace engineer whose six-month tour as Alert's commander ended on the weekend. Christmas was especially fun. People at the station came together as a family. There is a great sense of pride at serving here. Even my children in Ottawa, who are only three and seven, understand this. They told their friends I was away with Santa Claus."



“Life anywhere is about who you are with and I had fantastic people with me,” said Major Walt Michalchuk, an aerospace engineer whose had just completed a six month tour as commander of CFS Alert, the world's northernmost military base at the top end of Ellesmere Island. Matthew Fisher / Postmedia News

That family is a mix of army and civilian. Many of the soldiers are not long out of boot camp. They make an interesting contrast with the contractors for Nasittuq Corp., mostly grizzled men in their fifties and sixties who maintain the equipment that provides the station's power and water. “More than half of us are ex-military so we understand the culture,” says Brian Mahle, a Nasittuq contractor who served in the Canadian Airborne Regiment decades ago and who has been operating heavy equipment at Alert for four years, working shifts of eight weeks on and eight weeks off. Despite the isolation, Mahle says the lifestyle ends up suiting most of those, civilian or military, who deploy to Alert. The station's isolation makes its maintenance an extraordinary challenge. Everything, from building a new water-treatment plant to changing a light bulb, requires advance planning. Most supplies are hauled north by ship in the late summer to Thule, Greenland. From there they are ferried to Alert by air every fall and spring in a biannual mission known as Operation Boxtop.

Its remoteness means the biggest nightmares looming over the station are the threat of catastrophic fire — of necessity, Alert has its own tiny fire department — or life-threatening medical emergency. “Spooling up a bird from Trenton,” to use CPO Williams' terminology for getting a medevac aircraft to Alert, can take several days. Three military aircraft have crashed nearby over the years, including a C-130 Hercules that went down 20 kilometres short of the station in October, 1991, killing five of the 18 people on board. The best demonstration of how tenuous is Alert's connection to the south comes via the madcap but deadly serious weekly winter air link. Having asked the Canadian Forces for more than 30 years for permission to go to Alert, I unexpectedly got the OK to go last week. To get here I boarded an RCAF C-17 transport plane at CFB Trenton on the relatively balmy shores of Lake Ontario.

Because of high-altitude icing, strong crosswinds, low visibility and a technical glitch in a fuel line that was repaired by RCAF engineers during an unplanned layover at a U.S. air base at Thule, it took five days for the C-17 to complete the 8,948-kilometre round trip from Trenton. Our journey burned a colossal 141,000 litres of JP-8 jet fuel. Our stay on the ground at Alert

lasted only 95 minutes. “The biggest reality of operating in the north is the weather,” says Lt.-Col Cathy Blue, who, as the chief of logistics and engineering at CFB Trenton, is responsible for supplying CFS Alert. “The environment is harsh and you can’t get away from it.” Visiting Alert last week for the second time, Blue observed that the Forces’ presence at the top of the world is “the same as operating in Afghanistan. “It is not just the flights. Everything to do with Alert is expensive and complicated.”

Ottawa to Overhaul Support Units for Wounded Soldiers

Murray Brewster Ottawa — The Canadian Press Feb. 04, 2016

National Defence is embarking on an overhaul of its oft-maligned support units for ill and injured soldiers, The Canadian Press has learned. The re-organization was one of three recommendations made in an internal review of the Joint Personnel Support Unit (JPSU) system, which was delivered last September to the country’s top commander, Gen. Jonathan Vance. The assessment team, led by Brig.-Gen. David Anderson, identified myriad problems with the system, which is supposed to help physically and mentally wounded soldiers heal and return to their units — or prepare for medical release. His conclusions echoed earlier assessments by the Canadian Armed Forces Ombudsman in 2013 and that of the defence department’s chief of review services, which studied the problems in 2015.

Soldiers have complained that the JPSUs and their subordinate Integrated Personnel Support Centres are chronically under-staffed, but there’s also concern that those transferred into the organization lose the social support of their home combat units, frustrating both the unit and the soldiers. Word of the planned overhaul was apparently poorly communicated and caused anxiety Thursday among a number of units, most notably at Garrison Petawawa, Ont. The reorganization, called the “hybrid option” in Anderson’s report, puts the support centres under the command of individual formations and brigades.

Defence Minister Harjit Sajjan confirmed the reorganization is about to begin, but wouldn’t discuss specifics, other than to say no centres would close and that caring for the wounded would remain a top priority. “We’ll be enhancing the capabilities because they do provide an important resource for our troops,” Sajjan said. A spokeswoman for National Defence said the restructuring of the administration will be ongoing and a final decision on how the new system will work has not been made. “The whole point of the JPSU review is to improve service to soldiers who need it — that is our bottom line,” said Maj. Holly-Anne Brown. Anderson’s report, a copy of which was obtained by CP, said there are approximately 1,400 clients in the system and nearly 50 of the existing 297 staff positions at the centres are vacant.

On one base of 8,000 personnel, there is only one person manning the support centre where 160 injured soldiers are posted, the assessment noted. Because the centres operate under a separate structure, the review team said base commanders often “hold a negative view of the JPSU structure, based primarily on their lack of understanding of the function and purpose of the JPSU.” Part of the reorganization is meant to address that, but the military is also fighting an

uphill battle of optics among the troops it's trying to help. "Derogatory terms are used by clients themselves to describe other clients who they perceive as being lazy or playing the system," said the report. The review also recommends renaming the units to counter the stigma they currently carry.

Allies Wait for Greater Defence Commitment from Canada

Matthew Fisher | February 4, 2016



An RCAF C-17 is silhouetted against the polar sky in winter twilight at the US Air Force base in Thule, Greenland, before flying further north to Canadian Forces Station Alert. Matthew Fisher/Postmedia News

THULE, Greenland — It was about -30 with the wind chill and the Arctic fox gamboling in the snow near the Top of the World Club on this US air base in northern Greenland was blissfully unaware that a new variant of Washington's old enemy, Homo Sovieticus, is preparing five new nuclear missile regiments and building or rebuilding 17 Arctic bases on the far side on the North Pole. But others are paying attention.

Vladimir Putin visits a research institute at the Franz Josef Land archipelago in 2010. AP Photo/RIA Novosti, File

Responding to Russian behaviour in Ukraine and the still-growing threat the Kremlin's forces pose in the High Arctic, Syria and along a broad arc across Eastern Europe, Barack Obama announced this week that the US would quadruple to \$3.7 billion its spending on what used to be, and perhaps still should be called the Cold War. The defence of the north matters far more than it did a few years ago because, despite serious budget challenges, Russian President Vladimir Putin is spending massively to build up his military forces there. One of Russia's signature projects is a sprawling base and improved airfield on Alexandra Land. Located at the west end of the Franz Josef Land archipelago, Alexandra Land is situated at 80 degrees north and is only about 1,200 kilometres from Canadian territory.



Perhaps most impressive of all, Russia has been building a new fleet of nuclear icebreakers in St. Petersburg. Among them is a mammoth 173-metre \$1.6-billion flagship to be completed next year. The Russian spending blitz on the Far North is meant to buttress its claim to a large chunk of the Arctic Ocean against rival claims to some of the same waters by Canada, the US and Denmark, on behalf of Greenland. Thule was originally built as a nuclear bomber base after the Second World War. It was from here that B-52 Stratofortresses and other long-range bombers from Strategic Air Command patrolled the north for several decades, making thousands of flights over northern Canada. The bombers and the vast hangars that dominated Thule when I first visited here in the 1980s are long gone, but the base remains crucial to the defence of Canada and the US. It is from here that the 21st Space Wing runs a global network that provides missile warning and space surveillance to the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD). It also maintains a fairly recently upgraded early warning radar.

Few Canadians would be aware of it, but Thule, with its 3,000-metre runway and a harbour that is ice-free in September and October, is also a vital cog that allows Canada to contribute to the NORAD jigsaw. It is from this remote Greenland airfield — where there was a brief period of twilight at high noon last week — that the RCAF ferries supplies to its top-secret listening post at CFS Alert, which collects electronic data on what the Russian military is up to for analysis and interpretation by experts in the south. Although he never mentioned Russia by name, Col. Steve Moritsugu, who oversees signals intelligence gathering for the Canadian Forces, confirmed in an interview from Ottawa that Alert was “a good location” that would remain open “for the foreseeable future” because of “the advantageous contribution it made to the defence of North America.” Adding to the burden being placed on Canada’s seriously beleaguered treasury and interfering with the Trudeau government’s pledge to focus on making Canada a leader in peacekeeping rather than participate in combat operations, Washington has signaled it will ask NATO countries to deepen their commitment to and spending on collective defence against Russia when it convenes its annual leaders’ summit in Poland this summer.

Who is it?

Last Week: We didn’t get any IDs on the Officers but they are standing in front of a Mack NM6, Truck, 6 Ton, 6x6, Cargo, of 43MAA Regt. The Regt also had some NM8 Gun Tractors, which had pintle hooks on front and rear and a brake lever for the gun on the dashboard. 15 Fd got two of those when 85 Bty became a Med Bty, with two 155s, in the mid-60s.



This Week: This week’s vintage photo comes as part of our popular “Chaps Standing at Attention” series. These chaps are, as one can easily see from their stance, bearing, and superb breeding, officers. The badges on their headgear can be seen under magnification to be, from left to right: Artillery, British Columbia Regiment, general officer (red tabs, too), and possibly a de-kilted member of the Canadian Scottish Regiment. Their dress is summer pattern service dress, with the arty officer getting right into the season with his shorts and shades. The event

would appear to be a parade during the war. Similar photos from other files show a motorized artillery unit driving by what appears to be the same group of gentlemen.



Your task, dear sleuth-like reader, is to help us identify the year (if you were there, which I doubt), the people, and the location (which, to tell the truth, I think I know from the lamp post in the background; however, I won't spoil the fun by telling you that right now). Your educated opinions can be sent to the editor, or to the author, John Redmond (johnd.redmond@telus.net). Thank you for helping us out. As always, you can email the editor for a picture you can zoom in on. - Bob.mugford@outlook.com

From the 'Punitary'

What did the boy cat say to the girl cat on Valentine's Day? You're purrr-fect for me!

Murphy's other Laws

Things get worse under pressure.

Quotable Quotes

The most exciting phrase to hear in science, the one that heralds new discoveries, is not 'Eureka!' but 'That's funny...' *Isaac Asimov*

15th Field Artillery Regiment RCA & The 78th Fraser's Highlanders Fund Raiser and Scotch Tasting Night

The 15th Field Artillery Regiment RCA and the 78th Fraser's Highlanders welcome you to attend our annual Fund Raising and Whiskey Tasting event at the historic Bessborough Armoury. There will be food, draw prizes, and music.

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 casual. kilts, and highland dress, of course, are welcome.

DATE: Friday – March 4th, 2016

TIME: 1800 hrs – 2300 hrs

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

**DO NOT MISS OUT!
TO RESERVE YOUR TICKET CONTACT:**

Major James Barrett

Cell: (604) 916-1766

E-Mail: barrettjd007@gmail.com

All profits will go to support the activities of the 15th Field Regimental Society and the 78th Fraser Highlanders Fort Fraser Garrison.

Tax receipts will be issued for all donations upon request.

Taste of India Curry Lunch



*Hosted by:
The British Columbia
Regiment
Officers' Mess*

*Coordinated by:
The BC Regiment
(DCO) Association*



- Date:** Thursday, February 25, 2016
- Time:** 11:45 am - 1:30 pm
(bar opens at 11:45am)
(lunch starts at 12:25pm)
- 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 Feb 17, 2016)
- RSVP:** For more information or to register, please e-mail Charlotte Yen at corporate@hplaw.ca
(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 February 15, 2016

BC Regiment Association

invites you to the



St. Patrick's Day Party

Where: BC Regiment Drill Hall
620 Beatty St, Vancouver

When: Sunday March 13, 2016

Time: 13:00hr – 17:00hr
(Meet & Greet 13:00hr,
Lunch 13:45hr)

Cost: \$20 RSVP by March 6

RSVP: Sandra Young 604-543-0368 or
sandymay@shaw.ca

Prize for St. Patrick's Day best dressed

Lunch: Irish Stew, Salad, Buns & Dessert

Door prize giveaways

Lucky Draw prize raffles: \$20 arm's length or 3 tickets for \$5
50/50

Come down for the St. Patrick's Day Parade 11:00-12:30hr Howe & Georgia Streets and then come warm up with some hot stew, catch up with some friends and listen to the BC Regiment Association Irish Pipes & Drums.