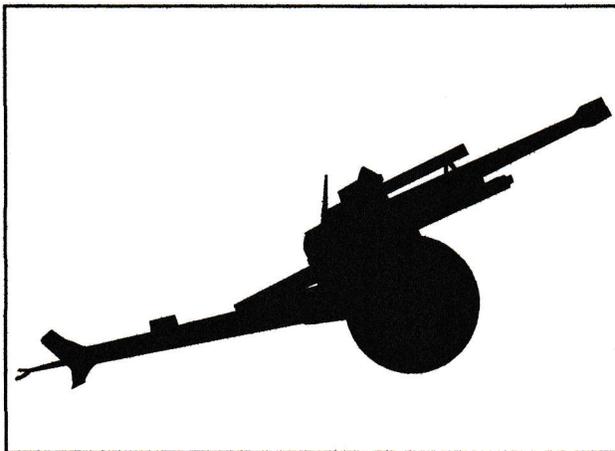




NEWSLETTER

FIFTEENTH FIELD REGIMENT RCA OFFICERS' MESS

2025 West 11th Avenue, Vancouver, BC V6J 2C7



27 November 2002

Published by authority of
LCol Dean Drysdale, CD
Commanding Officer,
15th Field Regiment, RCA

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

1. UPDATE BY LCOL DEAN DRYSDALE, CD, COMMANDING OFFICER

Many thanks to the Regimental Association for allowing me the opportunity to update the members on the state of the unit.

Recruiting and Individual Training

We have reversed the recruiting slump which has afflicted the unit in recent years. We swore in 24 new soldiers in June and were able to find training for all who wanted to go. Most returned to us in the fall and the unit was able to man all four guns during the Thanksgiving weekend. Our current recruiting drive is well underway and looks as if it will be even more successful than it was last year.

Our summer training also saw one new junior officer, three new numbers one and three new junior leaders returning to the unit. Congratulations all.

Our greatest challenge now is the recruitment of more junior officers. We are having some success here but I would urge you to send us many bright young people you think might like to give soldiering a try.

Budgets and Collective Training

We continue to operate within a very tight budgetary framework. In the current year, we will be training most Tuesday and Thursday evenings, we will go to the field for two weekend exercises, we will run a communicators' course, and we will fire two salutes. Gone are the two week-long exercises in August and March from years past. Gone is most Saturday training. And gone is all training in the month of June. The money is just not there. We continue to look for innovative ways to squeeze more training into the time and money available but it is a challenge.

Taskings and Infrastructure

The Area Commander is hosting a series of 'Town Hall Meetings'. These are designed to facilitate his decision making process with regard to missions and capabilities of individual units within the framework of the mobilization plan. This process carries with it the prospect of getting an additional tasking - namely a mortar platoon -which would allow the unit to grow its establishment. It also carries with it the perennial threat to armouries and infrastructure. Our position will be that we would like to have the mortar platoon tasking for Aldergrove along with a new Armoury in that location. We will further be taking the position that we need to retain Bessborough Armoury.

The 'Town Hall Meeting' will be held on 8th January 2003, at the Seaforth Armoury. I would encourage all to attend.

2. WEDNESDAY LUNCHEONS

Wednesday luncheons will not be served on Wednesday 20 and 27 Dec 02. Luncheons will resume on Wednesday 8th January 2003. Members are again reminded that dress for the luncheons is business suit or blazer and flannels or sports jacket and slacks, with shirt and tie. Also, please remember that Ladies are most welcome at our Wednesday luncheons.

3. HONOURS AND AWARDS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF UNIT COMMENDATION

For many years the President of the USA has awarded the *Presidential Citation* to a unit or sub-unit of the American Forces, or to any similar organization of a foreign armed force, for distinguished action in battle. A battalion of the PPCLI received the "Presidential Citation" for its performance in Korea.

Now, the Canadian Government's Director of History and Heritage has announced approval of the award of the Canadian **COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF UNIT COMMENDATION**.

The insignia for the **COMMENDATION** is a gold bar with the Vice-Regal lion in full colour. The insignia shall be worn for life by members of the unit, or attached to the unit, on duty and directly involved in the activity for which the **C-IN-C UNIT COMMENDATION** was awarded. Individuals posted to the unit subsequent to the award of the **COMMENDATION** shall wear the insignia only for as long as they are on strength of the unit.

It is expected the Governor General will be announcing shortly the award of the **COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF UNIT COMMENDATION** to the 2nd Bn PPCLI Battle Group for its participation in the Medak Pocket Operation in the Former Yugoslavia in September 1993. Hereunder is the Citation:

Citation

2nd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry Battle Group

The 2nd Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry Battle Group (2PPCLI BG) is awarded the Commendation for courageous and professional execution of duty during the Medak Pocket Operation in the Former Yugoslavia in September 1993. Under conditions of extreme peril and hazard, facing enemy artillery, small arms and heavy machine gun fire as well as anti-tank and anti-personnel mines, the members of the 2 PPCLI BG held their ground and drove the Croatian forces back. The exemplary actions of the 2 PPCLI BG caused the Croatian Army to cease their ongoing tactics of "ethnic cleansing" in the sector, without question saving many innocent lives.

Three members of the 15th Field Regiment RCA who served in the Medak Pocket are entitled to wear the insignia for life. They are:

Sgt Rob Garrett, CD	(currently serving with 15th Fd)
Bdr Rae	(Former member)
Bdr Garnet Woodward	(Former Member)

4. RCA BAND REPORT

By Captain Richard Van Slyke, MMM, CD

It has generally been a quiet year for the Regimental Band as we are suffering the same budget cuts as the other Brigade units. However, November has been reasonably active. We recently completed two Remembrance Day concert performances at the Terry Fox Theatre in Port Coquitlam on 9-10 November to outstanding crowds. Then on 11th November we supported the presentation of commemorative medals from the Dutch people to the WWII liberators of Holland. This was followed by a performance at the Orpheum Theatre as part of *We'll Meet Again* in aid of the BC Entertainment Hall of Fame.

In the near future, we will be: supporting the Canadian Forces Recruiting Centre's street festival on Alberni St at Thurlow St on the afternoon of 30th November; playing at the Saint Barbara's Day Dinner on 7th December; and on 9th December playing for the Armed Forces Appreciation Night at GM Place when the Canucks play the Flames. From 17-22 December MWO Surges, WO Tempest and myself will participate in the *Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic* in Chicago, meeting with over 1200 suppliers, music publishers and military musicians from all over the world.

We have just completed our third recording session and will be spending the winter months editing and producing a new CD for distribution early in 2003.

Wednesday 26th February 2003 the Band will be inspected by a team from the Canadian Forces Music Centre in Ottawa. We look forward to maintaining our position as the top-ranked band of the competing 26 Canadian Forces Reserve Bands in Canada. On 1 March 2003, we will be holding our *Annual Musicians Mixed Mess Dinner* where we will be honouring friends of military music with the Order of St Cecilia - the patron saint of musicians.

It has been announced that the following members of the RCA Band have been awarded the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal:

Capt Richard Van Slyke, MMM, CD
MWO Kenneth Surges, CD
WO Cheryl McHugh
WO James Tempest, CD
Sgt Ward Blair
MBDR Patricia Kostuk, CD
MBDR Scott Weaver

Bdr David Jeffs, CD
Bdr Brian Smith, CD
Bdr Nathaniel Senff
Bdr Malcolm Sings
Bdr Ronald Toth
Bdr Edward Trovato, CD
Gnr Joseph Foster

5. REGULAR FORCE SUPPORT STAFF

Since the last Newsletter was published the following changes have taken place in our Regular Force Support Staff:

Captain Chris Byrne was posted to 15 Fd Regt 1996 and departed for Larkhill to attend the Long Sound Ranging course in April 1999. Prior to his departure he wrote:

I would like to take a few moments to pass on some thoughts as I prepare to leave the unit.

Prior to my posting to the unit in 1996, nothing had prepared me for the type of work that I would be expected to do, or for working with the people for whom I have had the distinct pleasure to do so. With the exception of working with a Military Concentration in Gagetown, as well as running a Reserve FOO course, my exposure to the Reserves was superficial at best. Upon learning of my posting to Vancouver, I studied the requisite material to prepare me to do my job (classes of service, reserve administration and training methodology...)

I realized early on that this unit is a function of unique people who comprise the unit as well as some very longstanding traditions. There was more to this unit than the complex myriad of rules, directives and policies. The best that I could to achieve would be to help the unit to achieve its mission, and hopefully have some fun along the way, training safely and get paid on time... 🍷

It is I that have learned during my time with 15th Field Regiment. I have learned the value of developing and trusting your Senior NCOs. I have learned that all persons, both serving and non serving, have ideas and must be encourage to participate in the activities of the unit. I have learned that junior officers must be given every opportunity to practise that art of leading troops, no matter how good an officer he or she happens to be. I have learned that you can ask a great deal more of a person than what is in his job description, but you had better have a good reason for doing so and you must be prepared to reward that same dedication. The last and most important lesson that has been imparted to me is that the unit starts and ends with the soldiers. No legislated programs will ever replace the tenet of maintaining simple human decency towards one another.

Allow me to say *thank you* for making these the most enjoyable and memorable years of my career. This posting has been wonderful to me and my family, not simply because of the location, but because it afforded me the opportunity to contribute to an exceptional unit.

Ubique,

CAPTAIN C. BYRNE, CD, RCA

[Ed's note: Capt Byrne has since been released from the Canadian Army and is now serving with the Royal Artillery].

Captain Jean-Pierre (J P) Dorris, CD replaced Captain Byrne during the summer of 1999. Capt Dorris, who came to us from 39 Brigade Group HQ, has written:

For the past two years I have ben working as the G3 Individual Training at 39 CBG HQ. Prior to that I was an Instructor in Gunnery at the Artillery School in Gagetown. I am an Add IG but don't let that fool you in believing that I can be of no help to the Unit. Above all my AD qualifications, I am also qualified in Arty Staff Duties and FOO. Prior to my tenure at the School, I was a member of 4th Air Defence Regiment in Germany. I am married and have no children yet but I do have a very friendly Springer Spaniel called "Maple" *[Ed's note: That's changed! In September twin girls arrived - Danielle Camille and Roxanne Michelle].*

Prior to the Regt closing down for the summer, we sent our troops to Wainright for Ex TOTAL RAM. We experienced some technical difficulties due to the cancellation of last year's exercise. Our soldiers still managed to perform to the appropriate level and the exercise resulted in some training recommendations, which we incorporated into our fall exercise.

The highlight of the fall was a live fire exercise held in Fort Lewis, USA. This exercise was significant since it was the first time that our new 105mm C3 were fired live. The BSM kept the first round's casing and I'm sure that it will find its way into a suitable location for all to enjoy. The exercise was also different than those exercises held in the past couple of years as 5 FD and 15 Fd were able to deploy two distinct fire units. Both batteries operated under a simulated Regimental HQ and this proved to be a valuable training experience.

The Regt then planned for participation in EXERCISE COUGAR SALVO. We were given permission to go to Yakima, USA which proved to be the highlight of the Training Year since not too many present members of the Regt have deployed there. Some time will be spent looking for lost vehicles as well as OPs having to give a few *add 800s*.

FROM NOTES BY CAPT JP DORRIS, CD

Our current Support Staff

Upon the departure of Capt Dorris, the Regt was for some time without RSS personnel and happy was the day when we learned that Captain Noel RR Dykes, CD and WO George Dempsey were being posted to us.

Capt Dykes served formerly as a sergeant in 15 Fd Regt. He transferred to the Regular Force in 1983, served as BC 4 AD Regt and qualified as an AD IG, and a jumper. He has served two tours in Egypt as a reservist. His full biography is posted on the notice board in the Mess.

WO George Dempsey also was a reservist who transferred to the Regular Force in 1983 and was posted to 15 Fd in the rank of sergeant in the early 90s as part of the 10/90 cadre. Currently, he is attending his Senior Leaders' Course until 13 December 2002.

6. UPCOMING SOCIAL EVENTS

Saint Barbara's Day Special Guest Night: The Commanding Officer and his Officers request the pleasure of your company at their annual *Saint Barbara's Day Guest Night* to be held at the Bessborough Armoury, 2025 West 11th Avenue, Vancouver, BC V6J 2C7, on Saturday, the 7th December 2002 at six o'clock for seven o'clock in the evening. **Tariff: \$70.00 CAD or \$46.50 USD payable to 15 RCA Officers' Mess. Dress: Mess Kit or Black Tie w/miniatures. RSVP, with payment, to Lt D.P. Gayton, CD at the above address.**

[Ed's Note: In our newsletter dated 4 April 2001 we published a photo taken at the last Saint Barbara's Day Dinner of the 1900s. Quality in reproduction was more than somewhat lacking and several of our readers were not hesitant in informing us of their unhappiness with the photo. Because of the uniqueness of the Dinner, we are enclosing a colour photo as a memento of that event].

Soldiers' Christmas Dinner: Saturday 14 Dec 02 at 1400 hrs, unit officers serving.

Children's Christmas Party: 1100 hours Sunday 15 Dec 02. Personnel who wish to have their children attend this party should inform WO Walker at 666-4387 of the number of children who will be attending.

Commanding Officer's Christmas Tea: Sunday 15 Dec 02. This annual event is being held from 1430 to 1730 hours. Dress: Business suit or blazer and flannels. Cost: \$12.00 per person, payable at the door.

New Year's Day Levee: Wednesday 1 Jan 2003 being held from 1100 to 1500 hours. Dress: Business suit or blazer and flannels. Medals to be worn. The Mess absorbs the cost for this annual function.

Ladies Dining Out Dinner - Valentines Day: Feb 03. The Mess Committee is planning two Ladies Dining Out Dinners: one dinner at the Vancouver Club and a second dinner at the Royal Vancouver Yacht Club. Details later.

Officers' 58th Annual Military Ball: Saturday 5th April 2003, Hyatt Regency Hotel, Vancouver. Tickets for the Ball are \$79.50 CAD or \$61.50 USD per person. When the first post-war Military Ball was held in 1946, the returning officers began debutante presentations as a way of acknowledging their pride in these young ladies. The tradition has continued uninterrupted since that date. Ticket order information is available on the Military Ball website at www.militaryball.ca. If you know a young lady who would enjoy the "Cinderella" experience, please check the website www.militaryball.ca/debutantes.html.

Annual Fireworks Finale Dinner and Showcase: August 2003. The Mess is re-booking the 35th and 36th floor suite of the *Wall Centre* for this 2003 event. Attendance limited to 30. Cost last year was \$75.00 per head and included dinner, wine and champagne to view the show from the 320 degree balconies, two level suite. When announced, tickets go quickly.

7. LAST POST

It is with regret that we announce the passing of the following Associate Members:

7 Jun 1999	Colonel Graham F Blyth, CD)	Served with RCA
11 Nov 1999	Major Alexander St Clair MacPherson, CD)	See Annex 'A'
23 Oct 2001	Major JM (Mel) Oughton, CD		Served with the RCA
28 Jul 2002	Major Lorne A Mackenzie, MC, CD.		Served with 8 th Cdn Recce (14 Hussars)
19 Oct 2002	Captain Selwyn Rocksborough-Smith.		Toronto Scottish Regt

"The muffled drum's sad roll has beat the soldier's last tattoo.
No more on life's parade we shall meet the brave and fallen few."
We shall remember them.

8. MUSEUM REPORT

By LCol RV Stevenson, CD, Curator 15th Field Museum

It has been a long break since you last heard from us. Our restoration of the Field Artillery tractor has taken much longer than anticipated. The main hold up has been the body section which had to be completely rebuilt. It is at the stage where the storage lockers are being finished and then it can be taken from the body shop to be painted under the direction of Captain John Hawthorn, CD who has the cab and chassis ready to receive the body. It was hoped that the *Bessborough Armoury History* would have been completed this past summer but the Human Resources Department did not see fit to fund a summer student for the first time in nine years. The draft of the History is now just over 100 pages of text and photos. The restoration of the Point Grey Battery is an ongoing project and the search for a six inch gun has been unsuccessful so far. We managed to thwart the permanent sealing of the door to the underground magazines which was included as part of the university's plan for cliff erosion prevention. A book on the architects of BC will include information on LCol RT Perry who was the Bessborough Armoury architect, one of the original officers and later the Commanding Officer of the Regiment. The book's author would like to know when and where LCol Perry died. He returned to England about 1935 so if you have any answers or clues please let us know. We were fortunate to have Bdr C Hui load the *Canadian Forces Artifacts Management System* on to our computer and enter the museum's list of artifacts.

Enclosed with this Newsletter is an application for membership in the *Royal Canadian Artillery Museum and Archives Society*, Bessborough Armoury, 2025 West 11th Avenue, Vancouver, BC V6J 2C7. There is no membership fee to join this Society and I urge all those receiving this Newsletter to join. The larger our membership the easier it is to seek donations from potential donors. Please complete the application and bring it in or send it in to-day.

6. NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new Associate Members:

Lieutenant-Colonel Albert G. Baylis, CD	Seaforth of Highlanders of Canada
Colonel John P Beer, MBE, EM, CD	Formerly RCA
John C Boden, Esq	Formerly RCN Air Arm
Captain Alexander W. Brown	Formerly 10 th Baluch Regt
Flight Lieutenant John D. Chapman	Formerly RAF
Lieutenant John K Hedgecock	Formerly 688 LAA Regt (TA)
Colonel Sam Jones	Formerly US Army Infantry
Major Robert Mugford, CD	Formerly 15 Field Regt RCA
Sathie Rajan, Esq	
Colonel Neil Robertson, CD	Formerly RCA
Lieutenant Leslie A. Strike, KCSJ	Formerly RCA
William J. Tupper, Esq	
P Bernard Rowe, Esq	

APPENDIX "A" TO
NEWSLETTER DATED
27 NOVEMBER 2002

OBITUARIES

Major Alexander St Clair MacPherson, CD

On 11 Nov 1999, the 15th Field Regiment, RCA Officers' Mess lost one of its early members with the passing of Major Alexander St Clair MacPherson, CD.

Clair joined the 15th Fd Artillery Brigade NPAM in 1934 aged 15. At age 18 he became a Sergeant Major with 58 Battery. In 1940 he was posted to 108 Anti-Tank Battery, CASF in Lethbridge. In 1941 he reverted to Gunner to get overseas. By 1943 he was Captain in a field regiment with 1st Div in Italy. In 1944, he returned as a major to England to become an Air OP pilot, RCA.

On his return to Vancouver he joined the 43 HAA Regt at Bessborough as a BC until he moved to Kitimat. Some years later he returned to Vancouver to found Kerrisdale Travel and rejoined the Bessborough Mess as an associate member until 1990 when he moved to Langley. He was a member of the Royal Canadian Legion, the Lions Club and the Masonic Order. It is fitting that he passed away at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month.

Colonel Graham F Blyth, CD

In 1929, at age 16, Graham Blyth enlisted in the 15th Field Artillery Brigade as a gunner. At that time, the unit was horse mounted and one of his duties after parade was to return the string of horses to the stables on the west side of Camosun St at about West 37th Ave. (on the Endowment Lands). He would then walk over to Dunbar and catch a street car home, the ticket having been provided by the Orderly Room.

He later transferred to the 15th Coast Artillery where he became a sergeant. Following the outbreak of WWII he proceeded to the Gordon Head Officer Training Centre to qualify as a 2nd Lt. Soon after he went to England and there was posted to the newly formed Cdn Intelligence Corps where he became Chief Instructor and later 2 i/c of the unit.

Shortly after D Day he led five counter-intelligence detachments to Normandy, thence through France to Antwerp, Belgium where he was injured by a V-1 flying bomb. After recovery he served with counter-intelligence at Canadian Army HQ in Holland.

Following his return to Canada he joined the 43rd HAA Regt in 1947, once again at Bessborough Armoury. He was made Adjutant and later a BC. From 1954 to 1958 he commanded the unit as LCol. Following this he was further promoted to Colonel as Commander 24th Militia Group (made up of all militia units in lower mainland BC).

In 1972 he was made Honourary LCol and later Honourary Colonel of his old Regiment, now part of the 15th Field Regt, again at Bessborough. He retired in 1982 and from then until his death was an honoured and active member of the 15 Fd Regt RCA Officers' Mess Association.

15th Field Artillery Regiment



Royal Canadian Artillery

Museum and Archives

Society

Bessborough Armoury
2025 West 11th Avenue
Vancouver, B.C. V6J 2C7

Application for Membership

Surname	Given Names	Rank (optional)

Address _____		City _____	Prov. _____
Postal Code _____			
Phone (home) _____		Phone (bus) _____	
Phone (mobile) _____		E-mail _____	
Date _____		Signature _____	