



**Vancouver Artillery  
Association News**



**RUSI News**  
Vancouver

## Van Arty Association and RUSI Van Members News June 21, 2016

**Newsletter on line.** This newsletter, and previous editions, are available on the Vancouver Artillery Association website at: [www.vancouvergunners.ca](http://www.vancouvergunners.ca) and the RUSI Vancouver website at: <http://www.rusivancouver.ca/newsletter.html> . Both groups are also on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=vancouver%20artillery%20association> and <https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=rusi%20vancouver>

**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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.

**NOABC Lunch – 29 June** - Lieutenant Commander Lucas Kenward, RCN will speak on "Operation Caribbe" *Note: This event has changed venues. If you wish to attend, contact Dave Reese at [dreese@telus.net](mailto:dreese@telus.net)*

### Yorke Island visit – Aug 2016

The Regt and Association are planning a visit to Yorke Island in August. For details, visit the Association website at: <http://www.vancouvergunners.ca/whats-new/yorke-island-2016>

We need to see how many are interested, so check the details and let me know ASAP

### World War 2 - 1941

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

**June 22<sup>nd</sup>:** The deadliest aspect of the Second World War gets underway as the Germans invade the Soviet Union. In the invading force Germany has 140 Divisions: Army Group North under Field Marshal Leeb with 26 Divisions in two Infantry Armies and Hoepfner's 4<sup>th</sup> Panzer Group; Field Marshal Bock's Army Group Centre with 51 Divisions in two Infantry Armies with Guderian's and Hoth's Panzer Groups; Army Group South with Rundstedt's 41 German divisions with 14 Romanian and two Hungarian Divisions; 21 Finnish Divisions join the attack. Altogether, some 3,000,000 men, 625,000 horses, 7,100 guns, 3,300 tanks (of which 1,900 are light models) and 2,800 aircraft are being used. Opposite them, the Soviets are in disarray and off-balance with a poor set of commanders (excepting Marshal Zhukov as the Chief of the General Staff) and appalling readiness rates for their 24,000 tanks and 8,000 aircraft. The offensive begins at 0300 hours and exceptional progress is made everywhere on the first day –

with some formations plunging 70km inside Soviet territory. Italy and Romania declare war on the USSR, while Churchill pledges support for the Soviet Union. Communist Parties around the world suddenly abandon their peace movement campaigns.

**June 23<sup>rd</sup>:** In Syria, the Vichy counter-offensive at Marjayoun is halted by Australian troops, who will then reverse it over the next several days. A large convoy battle erupts around Convoy HX –133 when 10 U-boats attack it – over the next six days, seven merchant ships and two U-boats will be sunk. The frontier battles inside the Soviet Union continue to go well for the Germans, except at Brest Litovsk where the town's centre is still holding out.

**June 24<sup>th</sup>:** The Germans capture Vilna and Kaunas. Roosevelt announces that he intends to send aid to the USSR.

**June 25<sup>th</sup>:** Encirclement looms for the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Soviet Armies at Bialystok as the Panzers drive for Grodno and Minsk while Hoth and Guderian's forces encircle a number of badly shaken Soviet formations at Baranovchi. Army Group North has taken Daugavpils and are crossing the Dvina. The Swedes permit the Germans to move one division through its territory to move from Norway to Finland.

**June 26<sup>th</sup>:** Finland declares war on the USSR and turns its divisions loose to re-occupy its old territories in Karelia and towards Leningrad. Among the Russians in the path of the advancing Germans, everything is ill-coordinated and disjointed. The 27 obsolescent DB-3 bombers of Captain Nikolai Gastello's Aviation Regiment are being sent off in pairs to do what they can to the oncoming Germans with low-level attacks (for which these bombers are particularly unsuited). Of the 26 that do not return, one is Gastello's aircraft, but his wingman does. Lieutenant Vorobiev reported that Gastello attacked a column of German tanks, made a second pass so that his aerial gunners could use their machineguns, but that German defensive fire set Gastello's aircraft alight. In response, Gastello apparently crashed his burning bomber into a cluster of tanks. Even in these desperate days, his commanders send a reconnaissance flight to ascertain the truth of the matter and determine that a large aircraft had crashed into some German tanks where Vorobiev said Gastello's aircraft had crashed. It will be hard to develop more evidence, especially as Vorobiev joins the other aircrew of the regiment in death a few days later. Nonetheless, Captain Nikolai Gastello is declared to be a Hero of the Soviet Union.

**June 27<sup>th</sup>:** Hungary declares war on the USSR. Churchill and Stalin agree to an alliance dedicated to Hitler's defeat. To show willing to the Iron Guard and the Germans, Antonescu orders the eradication of the Jewish Ghetto in Iași, Romania. Over the next two days, some 8,000 are murdered in an intensive pogrom, and some 5,000 survivors are stuffed into a freight train that shuttles back and forth until most of the occupants are dead from thirst.

**June 28<sup>th</sup>:** As the Germans close on Lvov, the NKVD empty their prisons and execute the inmates – killing 10,000. They will do the same in many other towns. General Dmitry Pavlov, commander of the Western Front, is relieved of command by Andry Yeremenko and is sent back to Moscow – where he is shot for incompetence on July 22<sup>nd</sup>.

## **Rim of the Pacific Exercise 2016 Begins June 30**

06/14/2016 By Terri Moon Cronk DoD News, Defense Media Activity

WASHINGTON, June 14, 2016 — The biennial Rim of the Pacific exercise that begins at the end of June will boast participation from 27 nations and 25,000 service members, 45 ships, five submarines and more than 200 aircraft, Defense Department Press Operations Director Navy Capt Jeff Davis told Pentagon reporters today. Known as Rimpac, the exercise is slated to operate June 30 through Aug. 4 in and around Hawaiian waters and Southern California, Davis said.



*Service members from partner nations maneuver amphibious assault vehicles toward shore during a simulated beach assault as part of the Rim of the Pacific Exercise 2014, July 29, 2014. The exercise provides a training opportunity that helps participants foster and sustain the cooperative relationships that are critical to ensuring the safety of sea lanes and security on the world's oceans. Navy photo by Petty Officer 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Corey T Jones*

In its 25<sup>th</sup> iteration this year since its 1971 inception, Rimpac is the world's largest international maritime exercise, Davis said, adding that it "provides a training exercise opportunity that helps participants foster and sustain cooperative relations that are critical to ensuring the safety of sea lanes and security of the world's oceans." China is one of the 27 nations participating in this year's exercise, Davis said. "Chinese participation in Rimpac will be in compliance with US legislation and regulations," he said. "The US Navy has operational security safeguards to protect US technology and [US] tactics, techniques and procedures from disclosure. That's the case for all nations that participate in Rimpac."

## **Improved Support for Veterans and Their Families**

Budget 2016 reaffirms commitment to Veterans

St John's - The Honourable Kent Hehr, Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, spoke at the Royal Canadian Legion's 46<sup>th</sup> Dominion Convention in St John's today to highlight the Government of Canada's support for Canada's ill and injured Veterans and how Budget 2016 will enhance that support. To help Veterans and their families as they transition from military to civilian life, Veterans Affairs Canada will build on an existing suite

of programs and supports with enhancements to financial benefits, restored access to critical services and more front-line staff.

- Increasing the Disability Award to a maximum of \$360,000 will mean more money in the pockets of Veterans who suffer from illnesses such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as a result of service.
- Increasing the Earnings Loss Benefit to 90% of a Veteran's pre-release salary will ensure former members undergoing rehabilitation have the financial support they need.
- Expanding access to the Permanent Impairment Allowance by introducing an individualized assessment will ensure Veterans are more appropriately compensated for the impact of a service-related impairment on their career.
- Finally, Veterans Affairs Canada will re-open nine offices across the country and hire additional case managers so that each serves no more than 25 individuals. Additionally, a new office will open in Surrey, B.C., and outreach to Veterans in the North will be expanded by working with local partners.

Budget 2016 delivers \$5.6B in additional benefits and takes historic steps to treat Veterans with care, compassion and respect.

### **Quick Facts**

- The Government of Canada will make it easier for Veterans' families to access the Funeral and Burial Program for a dignified burial. The Department plans to increase the estate exemption from \$12,015 to \$35,279 and also apply an annual cost of living adjustment to this amount.
- Plans are also underway to expand the scope of the Commemorative Partnership Program to allow funding for the building of new community war memorials and to streamline the application process.
- The new Have Your Say consultation tool, available on the Veterans Affairs Canada website, invites Veterans, stakeholders and Canadians to their provide feedback on Veterans' issues and priorities.
- The Minister of Veterans Affairs remains committed to all items in his mandate letter, including pensions for life.

## **Improvised Weapons in the Syrian Campaign**

Makeshift weapons are becoming more dangerous with highly sophisticated, commercially available kit. **May 21, 2016**

The “hell cannons” of Aleppo pack a deadly punch. Cobbled together in Syria by militant groups fighting to overthrow the autocratic regime of Bashar al-Assad, they use an explosive charge at the bottom of a pipe to hurl a propane cylinder crammed with 40kg or more of explosives and shrapnel. A finned tail welded to the cylinder shields it from the launch blast and provides stability in flight. The Ahrar al-Sham brigade reckon the cannons can hit targets 1.5km

away. Fuses detonate the cylinder upon impact or, using a timer, after it punches into a building. This is all the better to demolish several floors with a single strike. The use of improvised weapons in conflict has a long and bloody history: from the Irish shillelagh, a walking stick that doubles as a club—especially effective when the knob at the top is loaded with lead—to the Molotov cocktail, as the glass petrol bombs the Finnish army hurled at Russian tanks during the second world war came to be known.



The modern equivalents are more high-tech and, like Aleppo's hell cannons, far deadlier. This comes from a combination of more sophisticated and easily available "off-the-shelf" equipment, and the

internet providing a ready medium to spread new weapon-making ideas. The upshot is a reshuffling of the cards in modern warfare, says Yiftah Shapir, a weapons expert at Tel Aviv University and a former lieutenant colonel in Israel's air force. Any side that begins with a technological advantage will see it erode quickly as the underdogs improve their improvisation capabilities. The ominous consequences have led America's Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), an arm of the Pentagon, to try to keep up with developments by soliciting worldwide for new ways to make weapons using commercially available materials and technologies. More than 20 experts are now reviewing hundreds of submissions. To better assess the risks, some of the most promising designs will be built as prototypes and tested. This could earn their inventors awards of up to \$130,000.

The DARPA experts need to move fast. Only a few years ago the Syrian rebels were lobbing small bombs with slingshots made from lengths of rubber tubing. Now some of the hell cannons are being mounted on vehicles and fitted with recoil springs to absorb the launch explosion. This improves stability, which in turn enables greater accuracy with follow-up shots. Some designs are no longer fired by lighting a fuse, but at a safe distance with a car battery wired to the propellant charge. Bigger cannons heave oxygen cylinders and, astonishingly, even large household water-heaters packed with enough explosives to destroy a cluster of buildings. Improvised weaponry typically is not as fearsome as that made by defence companies. But it is a lot cheaper and often effective enough, says Vincent Desportes, formerly a general in the

French army and a military attaché to the US. Despite receiving arms shipments from Iran and Russia, Syria's regime still uses its own improvised "barrel bombs"—devastating devices made by filling oil drums with explosives and scrap metal. Hizbullah, a Lebanese militia fighting to keep Mr Assad in power, also weaponises non-military materials. The group uses Google Earth to find and hit targets with rockets more accurately, adds Mr Shapir.

Even defence firms are turning to more commercially available equipment to make weapons. Lasers used to cut and weld materials in industry, for example, are now so powerful that Boeing bought a 10kW model to put into its High Energy Laser Mobile Demonstrator (HEL MD), a system it has assembled for the American army to shoot down drones and incoming mortar shells by firing a laser beam at them. Just think of HEL MD as "a welding torch" with a reach of kilometres, says David DeYoung, head of the Boeing unit that built it. While the off-the-shelf laser is powerful enough for its role, IPG Photonics of Massachusetts is now selling a 20kW laser.

Smartphones are useful in making weapons. They contain GPS navigation and frequency-hopping technology, which transmits signals that are hard to intercept or jam (both were military developments). Other useful things inside include accelerometers, compasses, gyroscopes, motion detectors and sensors for orientation, measuring magnetic fields and capturing reflected infra-red light (to turn off the screen when it detects the phone is close to the ear, saving battery power and preventing inadvertent touches). All of that can be used for missile guidance and communications, adds Mr Shapir. The guidance and remote-control systems sold with consumer drones offer additional capabilities. Some of the improvised weapons suggested to DARPA are highly advanced, says John Main, head of Improv, as the agency's programme has been named. Once Improv's own analysis of the proposals is complete DARPA may make some of the plans publicly available to raise awareness of potential risks. Two decades ago, assessing threats from an adversary involved getting ten experts in a room for a few days. Now, says Mr Main, thanks to the profusion of information and readily available advanced technologies, we need "a very, very large 'red team'" of hundreds of outside technologists to brainstorm the types of attacks that might be concocted.

Part of the problem is that anyone can buy not just sophisticated hardware but also a 3D printer to make basic weapon components, says Rear-Admiral Brian Brakke, deputy director of operations at the Pentagon's Joint Improvised-Threat Defeat Agency. In Iraq and Syria, Islamic State has been working on dropping improvised bombs from remotely controlled model aircraft. These might carry bigger payloads than the small quadcopters widely sold as drones to hobbyists and commercial operators. The jihadist group has also begun developing remote-control systems for driverless vehicles to deliver huge improvised explosive devices without suicide-volunteers, Mr Brakke believes. Of considerable concern is that many manufacturers of improvised weapons may not respect bans on devices deemed by many nations to be beyond the pale. Some of the barrel bombs being dropped by Syria's air force contain chlorine, an ingredient prohibited by the 1997 Chemical Weapons Convention. Half a century of conflict has left the Colombian countryside littered with improvised mines. Many have been fashioned

by FARC guerrillas without the use of any metal, which is prohibited by a 1996 international convention because the devices cannot be found with metal detectors. Some rely on pressure from a foot pushing down on a syringe which squirts a reactive agent into a glass jar filled with explosive, says Camilo Serna Villegas, chief technologist with the Colombia Campaign to Ban Landmines, an NGO based in Bogotá. With peace efforts now in progress, FARC and government forces have begun clearing some minefields, but it is a painfully slow process that can involve ground being searched by hand. The risk of nasty biological attacks has risen, too. Commercial drones used for spraying new biopesticides derived from natural materials could be adapted to spray more sinister stuff, says Piers Millett, a former deputy head of the United Nation's implementation team for the Biological Weapons Convention.

Recent developments in biotechnology have moved the boundaries as well. So-called "biohacking" groups have begun experimenting with homespun processes, much as early computer hackers did with information technology. The biohackers see DNA as a form of software that can be manipulated to design new biological processes and devices. Some of the amateur labs are still relatively crude, but nevertheless there is concern that they could be used to create killer bugs or provide training for bioterrorists. America's FBI has been watching developments and even organising some biohacker gatherings. That may seem reckless, but the idea is to encourage responsible behaviour and self-policing rather than risk a crackdown that drives the movement underground. The array of deadly things that can now be improvised with modern materials and technologies is terrifying. At least knowing what is possible will provide some idea of where the dangers now lurk. That, in turn, should help deliver some defence against the weapons-improvisers.

## **Canada's Military History in the Middle East.**

A well-known Toronto journalist, Sonia Verma, is doing a book project on Canada's military history in the Middle East. She is seeking veterans of the United Nations Yemen Observer Mission (UNYOM) which took place in 1963/64 for interviews. If you know of a veteran who served with UNYOM, please let me know.

Thank you.

Ray Kokkonen, President, Canadian Peacekeeping Veterans Association  
506-627-6437 [www.cpva.ca](http://www.cpva.ca)

### **Who is it?**



**Last Week:** Last week's lady is a Prestonian Class Frigate - in service from about 1953 to 1967 - if one excludes the River Class time before they were converted in the 1950s. We haven't gotten any ID on the ship but we can exclude HMCS Victoriaville, which was disarmed and continued for another ten years or so as the diving tender Granby. We think the location is Vancouver's outer harbour and it appears that the ships were giving short cruises to local military personnel sometime in the early 1960s.

**This Week:** After our nautical theme of last week, we couldn't quite leave the salt sea air, as it is so refreshing; especially to those of us living under the great brown bubble that covers this city. So, again from the collection of Vic Stevenson, comes an intriguing shot, guaranteed to arouse interest in both Jack Tar and Tommy Atkins (or Jean-Guy and Dave, his Canadian cousins).



The photo, taken in the early 1950s, shows two army chaps, one sensibly standing on terra firma, whilst the other balances precariously on the stern (non-pointy end for Tommy) of an odd little boat. In the background, across the sea, is a line of majestic mountains.

Further research by the Department of Heritage and History has firmly established that this is not located in Saskatchewan. We'd like to thank the Ministry of Truth for funding this research to the tune of \$125,000.

However, as we have run out of funds, it is up to you, dear learned reader, to tell us exactly where this photo was taken, and what the purpose of the speedy little black and yellow boat was. Here's a hint: if you are or were a flyer, you might recall that Fairey Battles in Canada were similarly painted and employed for the same purpose.

Your guesses can be sent to the editor, or to the author, John Redmond ([johnd.\\_redmond@telus.net](mailto:johnd._redmond@telus.net))

### **From the 'Punitary'**

In 1895, John Campbell invented lubricating oil. Before that, he was just squeaking by.

### **Murphy's other Laws**

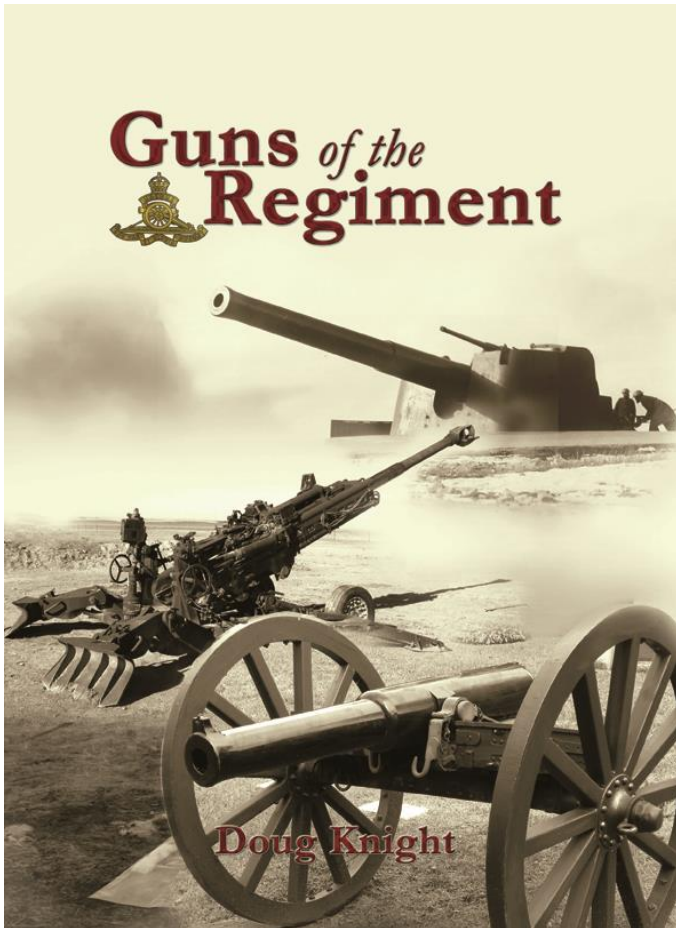
You're never too old to learn something stupid.

### **Quotable Quotes**

The pen is mightier than the sword, but the wise person carries both. *Jack Campbell*



## "Guns of the Regiment"



Doug Knight, a good friend of our Association and Museum, has produced a book on the guns of the Canadian Artillery. 425pp, illustrated throughout.

Since Confederation, the Royal Regiment of Canadian Artillery has used more than 130 types of gun, howitzer, mortar, and rocket. Each gun was purchased or manufactured to fill a role in the defence of Canada, or in support of Canadian foreign policy. It then served with the Regiment, and was modified, modernized, or upgraded as necessary. Finally, it was transferred into the reserves, and later, a few retired in museums or as monuments.

*"Guns of the Regiment"* will be an invaluable resource to anyone with an interest in the weapons used by the Canadian artillery. Each gun has its own section, detailing its development and its career in the Regiment at home and overseas. Special sections deal with

the manufacture of the guns, the organization and operation of the Regiment, and the mechanization of the artillery in the 1930s. Every gun is illustrated by at least one photograph, many of which have never been previously published. Retail price - CDN \$79.95

**Pre-Order - for shipping on 3 July go to: <http://www.servicepub.com/>**