



## Van Arty Association and RUSI Van Members News Dec 27, 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 Holiday Stand down** - The Unit is stood down from Dec 12 - Jan 6. Last lunch was Dec 7 and the first lunch of 2017 will be Jan 11.

**Upcoming events – Mark your calendars** Details to follow in future editions

Jan 1 **New Year's Levée** Mess opens at 1100hrs

Feb 4 **Regimental reunion dinner** - details TBA Note change of date

**There will be no full newsletter until the New Year. I am putting out an abbreviated newsletter mainly to keep the World War 2 entries up to date and to publish important news and event updates. Next full newsletter will go out on Jan 3, 2017.**

### World War 2 - 1941

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

**Dec 27<sup>th</sup>:** PM Curtin declares that "Australia looks to America for protection", but Manila looks to Open-City status to protect itself. More British commandos land in Lofotens; they depart after a successful raid with 250 Norwegian volunteers. The eagerness of Norwegian volunteers for Allied service is embarrassing to the Germans and there will be repercussions for the families of the volunteers.

**Dec 28<sup>th</sup>:** German assault troops make headway against the ring of forts around Sevastopol. The Japanese force withdraws in both Luzon and Malaya. The American, British, Dutch and Australian (ABDA) joint command for Southeast Asia is established.

**Dec 29<sup>th</sup>:** British armor takes some losses near Benghazi from a quick German counter-attack. 51<sup>st</sup> and 54<sup>th</sup> Soviet Armies make additional landings on the Crimea, forcing a redeployment of the Germans around Sevastopol.

**Dec 30<sup>th</sup>:** US and Filipino Troops fall back to their last holding positions to complete the withdrawal of Leyte's defenders into the Bataan Peninsula. This withdrawal is superbly

conducted and is part of an initial strategy for the defence of the Philippines; but many supplies have been neglected and the premise of an immediate relief effort is faulty indeed. The Soviets liberate Tula and the Volkhov Front has rolled the Germans near Tikhvin back to their starting positions. The Japanese on Malaya are nearly along a line between Kampar-Kuantan.

**Dec 31<sup>st</sup>:** Since June 22<sup>nd</sup>, the Soviets have lost 5,000,000 men dead and wounded, 3,000,000 have been taken prisoner while 20,000 tanks and 30,000 artillery pieces are lost – but they are still full of fight as their continuing offensives west of Moscow make clear. Nowhere are they penetrating German lines today, but the attrition of German manpower and resources is more than the Wehrmacht can bear in the future even if they are causing more casualties to the Red Army than they are receiving themselves.

## **1942: The Year of Turning**

Thus far, the war is mostly going the way the Axis wants it to go. The Japanese are rampaging through the Pacific achieving the impossible almost everywhere and seemingly unstoppable. Despite the reverses before Moscow, Hitler knows his forces are superior in terms of tactics, technology and operational art to anything the Soviets can assemble. He remains the master of Europe and is able to pursue some of his pet projects such as escalating the genocide of the Jews. Even the Italians find their forces are slowly improving and becoming more proficient although they are hungrier for resources than either Germany or Japan.

Everything seems possible now in the first half of this year. The capture of the Suez Canal can be achieved. Britain can be starved out by the U-Boats as Allied shipping losses outstrip their ability to build more. It may be possible to link up with the Japanese somewhere in Asia and chase the Soviets to the Ural Mountains. For the Japanese, surely the United States and Britain will sue for peace but it has been so easy to beat them so far that this might be unnecessary, even unwelcome, and glittering new prizes seem in reach in all directions. For the Axis, all it will take for total victory is to push a bit harder, to reach a bit more. That heroic extra effort to grasp victory will be rewarded. Meanwhile, standing to lathes in frozen fields as new factories are constructed around them, teenagers, women and old men are building tanks and guns for their fathers, husbands and sons now fighting for Holy Mother Russia in the Red Army. It has now become clear that the Nazis just don't hate the Communists; they hate the Russian people themselves. For ordinary Russians, the war is about more than ideology, it is about survival.

The Axis leaders might despise the Americans as soft, indolent and decadent. Yet Americans are lining up in the millions to volunteer for war; abandoning the comforts of home for Spartan barracks and the tender ministrations of shrieking drill instructors. For them, dealing with Germany and Italy will be business but settling accounts with the Japanese will be a pleasure. Britain and the Dominions have now harnessed all their strength, will and ingenuity with the full confidence that they are no longer alone. War winning weapons are starting to come off the production lines and the men who will have to learn how to use them are now being trained.

There have been too many defeats and some more to come but the down payments on victories are being made.

This is the year everything turns.

### **January 1942: The 'Final Solution' is Implemented**

**General:** A grim year looms for the Allies in the Atlantic, 91 U-boats are operational and 158 more are on the way. This month 110 Allied ships with a total displacement of 419,000 tons will be sunk or captured around the world. The RAF will bomb Bremen, Brest, Emden and Hamburg this month, and the Axis will hammer Malta continually to restrict its ability to interfere with African supply routes. Even before the implementation of the 'Final Solution' the mass murder of European Jews is well underway, this month in the Warsaw Ghetto alone 5,123 will die from disease and starvation.

**Jan 1<sup>st</sup>:** Representatives from 26 nations meet in Washington to endorse the Atlantic Charter; the signatory countries call themselves the United Nations. German troops stage a counter-offensive towards Kerch in the Crimea; the Kalinin Front recaptures Staritza. Jean Moulin is parachuted back into France with directions to unify all the French Resistance groups and make them loyal to de Gaulle.

**Jan 2<sup>nd</sup>:** Manila is now in Japanese hands. The Soviet West Front captures Maroyaroslavets to the south of Moscow. The Axis garrison trapped in Bardia since the start of Operation Crusader surrenders.

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

What do you call Santa's helpers? Subordinate Clauses.

### **To My Readers and Contributors**

Many thanks to all my newsletter readers everywhere. Whenever I attend events and meet people who are on my newsletter list they always tell me how much they enjoy them so I know my efforts are appreciated. Hopefully, I can keep them going for a few more years before I have to find someone else to take on the task. Thanks too to the alert readers who pick up my errors. I do my best but some will slip through from time to time.

Of course, I couldn't do the newsletters without the support of the small army of intrepid 'reporters' who feed me a constant stream of articles and web links to items of interest. I would name them all except it would take a couple of pages and I'm always afraid I might miss one or two, so many thanks to all of you for your support. Please keep up your efforts.

Best Wishes to Everyone for a Happy and Prosperous 2017

## “The” Burns Supper: Saturday, 21 January, 2017



Fort Fraser has hosted a Burns Supper since the 1980's; and your editor has attended most, if not all, of these wondrous events over the past 20 years. Based upon that experience I feel qualified and safe to say *'tis a poor deil who's missed one – he/she hasnae lived well!*

The evening is all about good fellowship, friendly banter and fine fare.

Add to that the Kilt, the Tartan sash, the Pipes and The Haggis – not to mention a wee dram o' the *uisgue batha* – and you complete the formula for what my

parents called a “swell affair” and what many have lately called “the best party of the season”.

### **Bigger & Better:**

Lately our Burns Supper has been straining the limits of the capacity of the mess and the “classroom” with over 85 seated for dinner. There is, however, plenty of room “below decks” (as the matelots say), on the 15FD parade deck.

There we find plenty of elbow room for diners, Pipers can manoeuvre more elegantly, and speakers can be more easily seen and heard by all.

For the 2017 Burns Supper the Garrison would like to encourage all members to attend and **bring 2 or 3 guests or at least 1 guest couple.**

The intent is:

- a) to optimize the number to make use of the parade deck and
- b) to introduce the 78<sup>th</sup> to prospective members and participants, in other words to show-off!

Burns Night on the Parade, we are certain, will include a most entertaining line-up of musical and poetical talent, some interesting whisky choices, and opportunities to win worthwhile draw and auction prizes.

Please be sure to advise the PMC ([scand@shaw.ca](mailto:scand@shaw.ca)) of your intent to attend and the number of guests accompanying you. RSVP/ASAP as the saying goes.

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