



## Van Arty Association and RUSI Van Members News Feb 19, 2019

Newsletters normally are emailed on Monday evenings. If you don't get a future newsletter on time, check the websites below to see if there is a notice about the current newsletter or to see if the current edition is posted there. If the newsletter is posted, please contact me at [bob.mugford@gmail.com](mailto:bob.mugford@gmail.com) to let me know you didn't get a copy.

**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 -** We need your support to keep the lunches going. Hope all you regular attendees can keep coming. The Mess serves a great 5 course buffet meal for only \$20. Hope to see you all there. Guests are always welcome, and we encourage members to bring their significant others and friends. Dress - Jacket and tie, equivalent for Ladies. For serving personnel, uniform of the day is always acceptable at lunch.

**Upcoming events – Mark your calendars** See attached posters for details.

- Mar 01** 15 Fd & 78<sup>th</sup> Fraser Highlanders Scotch tasting
- Mar 13** RUSI Speaker - current and future relationship between China and Canada
- Apr 10** RUSI Speaker - Canada's role in Bomber Command during WW2

### RUSI Speaker Series for 2019

The popular RUSI Speaker Series continues March 13 with special guest speaker Dr James Boutilier who will provide insights on the current and future relationship between China and Canada. This is followed on April 10 with a presentation on Canada's role in Bomber Command during WW2 with Col (Ret'd) Keith Maxwell. RUSI Vancouver thanks the Commanding Officer of 15Fd RCA and the Officer's Mess for their cooperation.

## **World War 2 – 1944**

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

**Feb 20<sup>th</sup>:** 8<sup>th</sup> US Air Force commences "Big Week", a massive series of attacks on German aircraft production as 940 bombers and 700 fighters are sent out and only 21 aircraft fail to return. US troops on Eniwetok start breaking the Japanese defences apart. A ferry with a load of heavy water en-route to German laboratories is sunk by Norwegian resistance fighters. Popov's Second Baltic Front drives on Kholm.

**Feb 21<sup>st</sup>:** Prime Minister Tojo displaces Sugiyama as head of the Army, while the Naval Minister Admiral Shimada does likewise to the Navy Chief of Staff Nagano. The Soviets take Kholm and Solsty while making progress towards Krivoy Rog. On the second day of "Big Week", 900 US aircraft raid factories around Brunswick.

**Feb 22<sup>nd</sup>:** The Germans bug out of Krivoy Rog. The weather is not cooperating with Big Week, and mistakes are made – particularly when US bombers hit the Dutch city of Nijmegen, killing some 200 civilians. Courage in wartime can be found in unlikely places – like a Liverpool Arms Factory making shell fuzes that finds out the hard way that some of their production lot are defective when two women are killed as one explodes. Twitchy fuzes are nerve wracking business at the best of times; a factory full of them is a nightmare. Richard Arthur Samuel Bywater is the factory development officer on the site, and promptly organizes the evacuation of the factory when he realizes the whole place is in danger of going up. He then spends three days with three volunteers securing 12,724 fuzes, of which some 4,000 were defective. He receives Britain's highest award for civilian courage – the George Cross.

**Feb 23<sup>rd</sup>:** 20,000 tons of shipping is sunk at Tinian and Saipan by carrier aircraft from TF-58. The Soviets begin another series of attacks between Luga and Pskov. Eniwetok is safe in US hands as are 66 Japanese prisoners out of a force of 3,400; the US loses 300 dead and 750 wounded. Lucas is sacked as commander of VI Corps at Anzio for Truscott. The NKVD round up 521,247 Chechens and Ingush and send them to Siberia.

**Feb 24<sup>th</sup>:** Today, Dno in the North and Rogachev in the Centre fall into Soviet hands. US troops in New Guinea reach Biliau at Cape Iris. Big Week continues with another raid on Schweinfurt, but 49 US aircraft are lost out of 800; and the RAF piles on another attack on the city this night, losing 33 out of 730 bombers. The Finnish Prime Minister, Risto Ryti, makes some subtle inquiries to the Soviets about a peace treaty.

**Feb 25<sup>th</sup>:** The Luftwaffe's "little blitz" on London is called off. The RAF and US 8th AAF "Big Week" surge finishes with another double strike on Augsburg, causing much damage to the historic centre of the city.

**Feb 26<sup>th</sup>:** Porkhov is taken by the Soviets. The Soviet response to the Finnish peace feelers comes in – Helsinki is subjected to a 12-hour bombardment by 600 Soviet bombers.

## **First Used Australian Fighter Jets Arrived in Canada Last Sunday**

Canada is paying Australia \$90 million for the aircraft.

*David Pugliese, Ottawa Citizen February 15, 2019*



*This file photo shows a CF-18 at Cold Lake in 2014.*

The Royal Canadian Air Force was showing off its first two used Australian fighter jets on Sunday at 4 Wing Cold Lake in Alberta. Representatives from the Royal Australian Air Force and the RCAF marked the arrival of the F-18 jets that morning. Only local media were invited to cover the event. The aircraft will be used to bolster the RCAF's CF-18 fleet. Pat Finn, assistant deputy

minister for materiel at the Department of National Defence, told Postmedia in a recent interview that he expected the first two jets in the spring but there was hope they could arrive earlier. The two aircraft will be prepared for flying as quickly as possible. "I would say it could be by the summer the first couple are on the flight line and painted with the maple leaf," Finn said.

A second group of planes would arrive later this year. Eighteen of the Australian F-18 aircraft will eventually be flying for the Canadian Forces, while another seven will be used for testing and spare parts. Canada is paying Australia \$90 million for the aircraft. The federal government originally estimated the purchase of the Australian jets would cost around \$500 million, but Finn said that price reflected every aspect of the associated deal, not just the cost of purchasing the jets. Canada is also acquiring extra spare parts; the Australian jets will have to be outfitted with specific Canadian equipment and software and testing will be needed. The \$500-million project estimate also included \$50 million in contingency funds to cover any problems and another \$35 million for the salaries of all civilian and military personnel involved over the life of the project. An additional \$30 million will be spent on new infrastructure needed to accommodate the aircraft. Those costs add up to \$360 million, Finn said. But DND also plans to upgrade its existing fleet of CF-18s with new communications gear and equipment required to meet regulations to operate in civilian airspace, improvements which the Australian jets will also eventually receive at a cost of around \$110 million, an amount that brought the original estimate to nearly \$500 million.

The Liberal government had planned to buy 18 new Super Hornet fighter jets from US aerospace giant Boeing to augment the Royal Canadian Air Force's CF-18s until new aircraft

can be purchased in the coming years. But in 2017 Boeing complained to the US Commerce Department that Canadian subsidies for Quebec-based Bombardier allowed it to sell its C-series civilian passenger aircraft in the US at cut-rate prices. As a result, the administration of US President Donald Trump enacted a tariff of almost 300 per cent against the Bombardier aircraft sold in the U. In retaliation, Canada cancelled the deal to buy the 18 Super Hornets, which would have cost more than US\$5 billion. Instead of buying the new Super Hornets, the Liberals decided to acquire the used Australian jets. Defence Minister Harjit Sajjan has said the extra jets are needed to deal with a “capability gap,” as Canada does not have enough fighters to handle its commitments to NATO as well as protecting North America. But Conservative MPs say the capability gap doesn’t exist and was concocted by the government to delay a larger project to buy new jets, a competition that might end up selecting the F-35 stealth fighter that during the 2015 election campaign the Liberals vowed never to purchase.

In the fall of 2016, then Royal Canadian Air Force commander LGen Mike Hood told senators that the Liberal government brought in a policy change which required the RCAF to be able to meet both its NATO and North American air defence commitments at the same time. That, in turn, created the capability gap, he said. Hood said he was not told about the reasons for the policy change. In November 2018 Auditor General Michael Ferguson issued a report noting that the purchase of the extra aircraft would not fix the fundamental weaknesses with the CF-18 fleet which is the aircraft’s declining combat capability and a shortage of pilots and maintenance personnel. “The Australian F/A-18s will need modifications and upgrades to allow them to fly until 2032,” the report said. “These modifications will bring the F/A-18s to the same level as the CF-18s but will not improve the CF-18’s combat capability.” “In our opinion, purchasing interim aircraft does not bring National Defence closer to consistently meeting the new operational requirement introduced in 2016,” the report added. The Canadian Forces says it is bringing in new initiatives to boost the numbers of pilots and maintenance staff.

## **Design Unveiled for the future Canadian Surface Combatants**

*Esprit De Corps*      *February 14, 2019*

On February 8, the Government of Canada unveiled the selected design and design team for the Canadian Surface Combatants. This marks another important step towards the construction of Canada’s future warships. The Canadian Surface Combatant project is the largest, most multifaceted procurement ever undertaken by the Government of Canada. The important step reached today, the selection of the design and design team, is the result of one of the most complex evaluation and selection processes in recent Department of National Defence’s history. Through this process, the Government has identified a design based on BAE’s Type 26 design, also known as the Global Combat Ship, as the starting point for the design of our future warships.



*Artist's impression of a future Canadian Surface Combatant.*

*Image courtesy of Irving Shipbuilding Inc.*

National Defence has worked to ensure that our future warships will defend Canadians and Canada for the next 40 years. Assessing the nature of future threats and how to protect our country and allies is not a simple task. Our warships will be equipped with

state-of-the-art technology to respond to the challenges ahead. They will remain flexible and continue to adapt as security environment will continue to evolve. The work is not finished yet, however. Our Navy has unique requirements. Canada has the world's longest coastline along three oceans and a climate of extreme weather conditions. That is why this next phase is so important. Whether monitoring and defending Canadian waters, or leading international naval operations in open oceans and highly complex littoral environment, our Navy needs the right equipment to continue to protect Canada and Canadians, wherever they are.

National Defence experts, together with ISI and Lockheed Martin Canada will now refine and finalize the selected design to incorporate capabilities specific to Canada—such as support for our Cyclone helicopter—and to ensure these ships will meet the needs of the Royal Canadian Navy today and well into the future. In only a few years, construction of the first vessel will begin, here at home, in Halifax. But this project will not only benefit workers from the East coast. Canadians from across the country will participate in this, the largest project our defence policy, Strong, Secure, Engaged, is delivering. This project is truly a Canadian project. Our future warships will safeguard Canadians, and Canada's sovereignty and prosperity well into the future.

## **Last Real-Life Great Escape Prisoner Dies Aged 99**

The last surviving member of the real-life Great Escape team has died.

*15 February 2019*



*Dick Churchill was described as "tenacious, resilient and incredibly brave"*

Former squadron leader Dick Churchill was one of 76 airmen whose escape from the Stalag Luft III camp in Nazi Germany in 1944 was immortalised

in the Hollywood film starring Steve McQueen. Mr Churchill, who lived in Crediton, Devon, died on Wednesday, aged 99. Chief of the Air Staff Sir Stephen Hillier said: "He was from a selfless generation who offered bravery and sacrifice to secure our freedom." "On behalf of the RAF as a whole I would like to offer my condolences to the friends and family of Flt Lt Richard 'Dick' Churchill, one of the RAF personnel involved in the Great Escape. "He will be sorely missed. Per Ardua." Air Vice-Marshal David Murray, of the RAF Benevolent Fund, said Mr Churchill "embodied the spirit of the RAF - tenacious, resilient and incredibly brave in the face of adversity." Mr Churchill's death followed that of Australian pilot Paul Royle, who died in Perth, aged 101 in 2015. The survivors formed a sort of club and kept in contact through the Sagan Select Subway Society newsletter, of which Mr Royle and Mr Churchill were the last two recipients.

*Mr Churchill was among 76 airmen who escaped through a 102m-long tunnel.*



### The Great Escape

- Stalag Luft III opened in spring 1942, and held air forces personnel only
- At maximum it held 10,000 prisoners of war, covered 59 acres, with five miles (8km) of perimeter fencing
- Some 600 prisoners helped dig three tunnels, which were referred to as Tom, Dick and Harry
- The "Great Escape" happened on the night of 24 to 25 March 1944
- Seventy-six men attempted a getaway through tunnel Harry, which was 102m (336ft) long and 8.5m deep
- Seventy-three of them - including Mr Churchill - were recaptured by the Germans within three days. Two-thirds of them were executed on Hitler's orders
- The camp was liberated by Soviet forces in January 1945

A spokesperson for the RAF Benevolent Fund said it is believed there are at least two remaining RAF veterans who were held at Stalag Luft III, which now stands in Poland. They are named as Charles Clarke, who was not involved in the escape, and Jack Lyon, who was in the tunnel when the plot was uncovered.

## **Home-Duty Conscription as a Tool to Battle Societal Malaise**

*Esprit de Corps Joe Fernandez February 14, 2019*

On 23, April 2018, ten people were killed by a man who ploughed through a Toronto crowd with a rental truck. The suspect, Alek Minassian, is reported to be a member of Incel, an online extremist group that promotes hatred of women and immigrants. On the surface, suspect

Minassian more closely resembles the recently convicted Québec Mosque mass-murderer Alexandre Bissonette. That the causes and ideologies they acted in the name of are polar opposites is merely a difference in branding. Minassian and Bissonette are young men who turned to the Internet because they felt unconnected to, and alienated from, mainstream society. In this regard, they resemble Anders Breivik and the Kouachi brothers who carried out the Charlie Hebdo massacres. With the exception of suspect Minassian, there is one other thing all of these men have in common. Not a one of them did military service. Suspect Minassian volunteered for the Canadian Armed Forces but did not make it past the selection phase. This suggests a tool to combat the isolation and social malaise that caused these men to do with they did.

That tool is to reintroduce conscription for home duty, a tool which can be multi-use, and can be implemented using infrastructure in place, as well as the examples of Ulster and France. Canada already has the Royal Canadian Army, Sea and Air Cadets, which take on recruits at the age of 12 years. Making service in the Cadets mandatory, (the choice of branch being left to the individual), offers the possibility of drilling into Canadian teenagers a discipline that is not uniformly standardised across Canadian households. Such discipline would emphasise service to Country before self, thereby counteracting the impulse to indulge in self-pity and to run away to the Internet in the face of adversity. Such discipline would also assist the education process in encouraging conscripted Cadets to pay attention to their teachers just as they would to their NCO's. This latter effect could counter drop-out rates and would also be transferable to successful college and university experiences for Cadets, being conducive to them earning their diplomas and degrees, as opposed to allowing them to perceive higher education overwhelmingly as a vehicle for Spring Break.

Teaching Canadian adolescents the concept of service to Country before self, and reinforcing this concept on a regular basis, would not only counteract the instinct to become self-indulgent, but also teach them they are part of the greater Canadian community; instilling in them a duty to protect and assist that community, rather than harm it because of their own personal frustrations. Learning is a lifelong process, and if learning is based on membership within an institution, there is the risk that skills, such as discipline, will degrade once an individual leaves that institution. This is plausibly a reason why some Canadian Veterans have problems adjusting to the entirely undisciplined civilian world. Furthermore, Canadians cannot remain Cadets forever. Ulster and France offer answers to this stage of the problem. From 1969 to 1992, Ulster had the locally raised eleven battalion Ulster Defence Regiment to help protect the community from Sinn Fein/IRA. Since December 1944, France has had the Compagnies Républicaines de Sécurité as a reserve and back-up force for the French National Police. The UDR provided extra manpower to the Royal Ulster Constabulary and the British Army and carried out patrols in certain areas, as did and do the CRS. Unlike the regular British Army, the UDR was meant strictly for home use and never deployed on foreign adventures. While there are some CRS personnel who serve in France's embassies, the vast majority of its 13,000

members and 60 companies serve within France herself. Canada could easily repurpose some companies of its forty-nine Reserve infantry Regiments as entirely conscript Home-Service Companies tasked with continuing the discipline of the Cadets and with police backup along the UDR/CRS line, reinforcing the ethos of community over self-indulgence.

## **Fairbairn-Sykes Blade**

ww2dbase



The Fairbairn-Sykes commando daggers originated from a design by British Shanghai Munciple Police officers William Fairbairn and Eric Sykes in the 1930s. In 1940, both of them retired from the Shanghai Munciple Police. Amidst the European War, Winston Churchill advocated for the formation of a small commando force to "set Europe ablaze" while the British military recuperated from the devastating losses in early months of the war; in Nov 1940, Fairbairn and Sykes were consulted by the director of the company Wilkinson Sword

Limited John Wilkinson-Latham to develop a fighting knife for the commando units that were beginning to form. Fairbairn and Sykes, following the same design philosophy as they had in China, developed a dagger that was double-edged for both slashing and stabbing and heavy at the hilt for better balance. The first prototype was made by Wilkinson's head of experimental workshop Charles Ross, which was accepted by the British War Office, resulting an order of 6,000 to 7,500 examples at the cost of 13 shillings 6 pence each (about US\$4.25); various military units such as the Special Operations Executive also placed orders, totaling about 1,000 examples.

The first of the first pattern daggers were delivered in Jan 1941, and the second pattern daggers with simplified design for faster production began to be seen in Aug of the same year, superseding production of the first pattern. In Oct 1942, an order for 38,700 second pattern daggers was placed. On 6 Feb 1943, Wilkinson received two orders, 10,000 all-black daggers at 17 shillings 6 pence each and 154,000 daggers at 17 shillings and 4 pence each; these would prove to be the final orders of the war. In late 1943, the design was simplified further; these mass-produced daggers were generally called third pattern Fairbairn-Sykes daggers. Allied commandos trained in the use of Fairbairn-Sykes daggers were taught to cut the enemies' arteries in the arms, deep under the shoulders, necks, and stomachs to dispatch opposition quickly, though messily.

Wilkinson Sword's records show that 6,779 first pattern, 40,923 second pattern, and 163,565 third pattern were made for the British government; these figures did not include private sales (the company, for example, sold these daggers to private parties from its Pall Mall shop). Other companies such as Sheffield Cutlery also produced these daggers during the war in large quantities. The Fairbairn-Sykes commando daggers design was known to have influenced

many fighting knives produced around the world, such as the United States Marine Corps' Raider stiletto.

## Vancouver Artillery Association Yearbook Updates

Your Website editor has been away in Ottawa at the annual Conference of Defence Associations and has been somewhat neglectful in uploading new material. He's also been busy updating The Royal Regiment of Canadian Artillery website.

Check it out here: <http://rca-arc.org>

Here's some more recent updates on our VAA website:

2019 – President VAA at the National War Monument

<http://www.vancouvergunners.ca/2019.html>

2019 – Yorke Island update <http://www.vancouvergunners.ca/yorke-outreach.html>

1976 – Change of RSMs <http://www.vancouvergunners.ca/1976.html>

1950 – Vic Stevenson's COTC days <http://www.vancouvergunners.ca/cotc-1950.html>

Keep those stories, calendar events and pictures coming! Contact Leon Jensen at [president.vcrgunners@gmail.com](mailto:president.vcrgunners@gmail.com)

## Who Is It

**Last Week:** British Ordnance QF 13-pounder field gun and Limber at the Imperial War Museum. This particular gun was part of L Battery of the Royal Horse Artillery. It took part in the Battle of Néry on 1 September 1914, during which it was the only British field Gun that was able to keep firing during the battle until reinforcements arrived. L Battery was almost destroyed as an operational unit in the engagement, losing all five officers and a quarter of its



men. It was withdrawn to England in order to reform. It did not see active service again until April 1915, when it was sent to Gallipoli. Three men of L Battery were awarded the Victoria Cross for their part in the battle and the battery was later awarded the honour title of "Néry", the only British Army unit to have this as a battle honour.

*An artist's impression of the last gun of "L" Battery in action*

**This Week:** Recently, I visited the National Army Museum in London (the big one, not the tiny one in Ontario). It has been completely re-done from its rather "show it all" past exhibits. There are now themes, such a "Can You Be a Soldier", and "Society and the Army". In addition, there are special exhibitions. The one on now, "Alfred Munnings: War Artist, 1918", highlights paintings of the Canadian Cavalry Corps, and the Forestry Corps, in France. This is an excellent exhibit, bringing together, for the first time in 100 years, all the artist's paintings



done as an official war artist. This display, and others, are accompanied by special lectures, one of which I was privileged to attend, hearing from the curator of the Munnings exhibit how the artist became the one to record the life of our soldiers in that last year of the Great War. Having filled my head with art, I then ventured into one of the galleries, which was replete with interactive displays, artefacts dating from even before I was born, and a virtual RSM, whose main function seemed to be to scare small children.

One can then imagine my fright when I came upon this display of bones from a human leg. They were placed behind glass, in order to prevent dogs from devouring them (there is a very good café in the museum, by the way, for people), along with a picture of their owner, a stalwart-looking soldier. Which brings us to our question of the week: who owned these bones, and why are they in the museum? Were they left over from a resident of the nearby Royal Hospital (home to the Chelsea pensioners)? Let us

know by contacting the bipedal editor, [bob.mugford@oulook.com](mailto:bob.mugford@oulook.com) or the author, John Redmond ([johnd.redmond@telus.net](mailto:johnd.redmond@telus.net)). Keep on truckin'!

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

What is a sweater? Something a child has to put on when a parent feels cold.

### **Murphy's Other Laws**

If you think of something really profound to say – don't say it!

### **Quotable Quotes**

It's a lack of faith that makes people afraid of meeting challenges and I believe in myself.  
*Muhammed Ali*



# **JOIN US RUSI VANCOUVER SPEAKER SERIES**

---

**Wednesday, 13 February 2019**

**From 5:00 to 7:00 pm**

**Officers Mess – Bessborough Armoury**

**Subject: “The Charge of Flowerdew’s Squadron: 100 Years Later”**

**Speaker: Robert Mackay**

---

## **Upcoming Topics & Speakers**

**13 March 2019 – “Canada - China Relations: Predatory, Promising or, Problematic”**

**Speaker: Dr. James A. Boutilier – Advisor to MARPAC Command**

**10 April 2019 – “Canada & The WW2 Bomber Command Campaign”**

**Speaker: Colonel (Ret’d) Keith Maxwell, OMM, CD**

**EVERYONE IS WELCOME**

**RSVP TO [LHCCATHCART@GMAIL.COM](mailto:LHCCATHCART@GMAIL.COM)**

Hosted by RUSI Vancouver with the cooperation with LCol. Pierre LaJoie, Commanding Officer, and President and Members of the 15Fd Officers Mess.

## 15 Fd and 78<sup>th</sup> Fraser's Highlanders Scotch Tasting

### THE ANNUAL 2019 15<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Regiment RCA & The 78<sup>th</sup> Fraser's Highlanders Fund Raiser and Scotch Tasting Night

The 15<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Regiment RCA and the 78<sup>th</sup> Fraser's Highlanders invite you, and any like-minded guests of your acquaintance, to attend our annual fund raising and whisky tasting event at the historic Bessborough Armoury. There will be food, draw prizes, and music. There will be whisky!

For the Full 'Whisky Fleet', Tickets are **\$55.00** per person by Credit Card, Cheque, or by exact change, otherwise your \$60 in bills will be gratefully accepted towards our good cause. Bernard Rowe, who will be relieving you of your burden of carrying cash will meet you at the front door and will be most appreciative. For those who are driving, or prefer the options from the No-Host bar, you pay a meager **\$25.00**.

**Only 50 tickets will be sold for the full whisky fleet! Bring guests!**

Dress is business casual. Kilts and highland dress, of course, are most welcome.

**DATE:** Friday – March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019

**TIME:** 1800 hrs – 2300 hrs

**LOCATION:** 15<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Regiment RCA  
2025 West 11<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:barrettjd007@gmail.com)

All profits raised by the 15th Field Regimental Society and the 78<sup>th</sup> Fraser Highlanders Fort Fraser Garrison will go towards supporting the 15 Field Centennial Projects next year in 2020.

Tax receipts will be issued for all donations upon request.