

## Van Arty Assoc and RUSI Van Members News Feb 25, 2014

### Wednesday Lunches

Renovations to the kitchen are proceeding slowly. There are several projects underway at the moment and the contractors are trying not to disrupt our lunches.

Guests and visitors are always welcome at lunch. People these days, especially civilians, don't think about dress much and, if not pre-warned, will show up in very casual dress so, to avoid embarrassment, please make them aware of the dress requirements (suit/blazer and tie, equivalent for ladies) before they come.

### WW1 Soldiers' Writing Unearthed in Somme Tunnels

*Archaeologists have uncovered a labyrinth of World War One tunnels left untouched for nearly 100 years and found poems and the signatures from three soldiers from a Cumbrian regiment. But who were those men and what does this find tell us about their experiences?*



*This graffiti is from two of the soldiers, Pte Obadiah Henderson and Pte William Chard. The messages read: "Pte Obadiah Henderson 11 Border Lonsdale 15272" and: "Pte W Chard 11 Border Regt B.E.F France"*

Under the site of the 1916 Battle of the Somme in northern France lie hundreds of artefacts, including ammunition and discarded food tins. And on the walls are perfectly legible signatures and poems written in pencil. "It is such an amazing piece of history and it's so fresh," said genealogist Glen Phillips. "The signatures have been there for nearly 100 years and because the tunnels have been sealed up, they are as fresh as the day they were made... like a doodles on a notebook these days."

Historians and volunteers have spent the past few years in La Boisselle exploring this part of the Western Front which has remained untouched since the end of WWI. An appeal is now on to trace the descendants of the men who scribed their personal messages there. "When I first saw them I was blown away," added Mr Phillips, who is part of La Boisselle project. "The thought of being able to share that with some of the families of some of those men is what really motivates me and drives me on to do this research."

The Somme was not only one of the bloodiest battles of World War One, but one of the bloodiest in history. More than 1.2 million men are believed to have died during the main battle, but a group of soldiers fought their own private hidden war underground. The tunnels, 80ft (24m) down, were dug so that troops could plant explosives below enemy lines. Most of the British work in the tunnels was done by miners, many of them from the north of England, but a lot of infantrymen were pressed into service underground too.



*If in this place you are detained,  
Don't look around you all in vain,  
But cast your net and you will find,  
That every cloud is silver lined. Still"*  
*Anonymous poem found in the tunnels*

The three messages on the tunnel walls are from Privates William Carr, William Chard and Obadiah Henderson who all left Carlisle to go overseas with the 11th Lonsdale Battalion in November 1915. All of these men helped the tunnellers prepare for the Battle of the Somme and all attacked on the first day of battle on 1 July 1916. Pte Obadiah Henderson was from Riding Mill in Northumberland and worked as a farm labourer before volunteering to go to war. Pte William Chard was a joiner from Longtown, Cumberland. Both of these men survived the Battle of the Somme and returned home after. Pte Carr was wounded on the first day of battle and returned home to Carlisle to recuperate after being shot in the leg. He then returned to war in the Battle of Arras, serving for the 2nd Battalion, during which he suffered fatal wounds and died on 24 June 1917.

Stuart Eastwood, curator of the Border Regiment Museum at Carlisle Castle, is now helping La Boisselle Project to try and find the soldiers' descendants. He said war diaries from their time in France stated the three men were providing working parties for the royal engineers and there was "no mention" of them working underground. "The fact that the names of these three soldiers were found scrawled in pencil on the walls of one of the chambers during the excavation work is absolutely fascinating. "It means that they weren't just working parties for the royal engineers, these were ordinary infantrymen who were underground backing up the tunnellers and no doubt hauling bags of rubble as well. "They were taking the same risk that the tunnellers faced, so if something went wrong underground, whether it was a natural thing like a collapse or fighting underground, they would be there as well." About 90% of the Lonsdale Battalion came from Cumberland and Westmorland and few numbers from County Durham, Northumberland and Lancashire. Mr Eastwood said it would be "absolutely marvellous" to find the descendants of the men. He said: "Anything like this is really important, it's another little snippet that can help build up the picture of what happened during WWI. "It was very local and somebody would know somebody who had served or who was serving, so it was very poignant indeed."

Peter Barton, author and historian for La Boisselle Project, said: "Finding graffiti like this, particularly names, is probably the most thrilling part of this project... to find the names of the men who actually served here and then to be able to try and find their families, that gives it an entirely different dimension. "Very often we think of World War One as something rather

impersonal, we talk about it in tens of thousands of casualties, but each one of those was a man with a history and a legacy. "I bet there wasn't a day went past when they didn't think about these tunnels."

## **Canada's pathway to the stars began with the Silver Dart**

*On February 23, 1909, the Silver Dart took flight in Nova Scotia. That first powered flight changed travel in Canada forever; air travel became a reality and an industry was born. By Joanna Calder February 21, 2014*

The 20th century found a youthful Canada building its nationhood. The Dominion of Canada was still closely aligned with Great Britain and, even though the British Empire was beginning to fade, close links remained between the former colonies and Britain. The advent of two new forms of transportation – the automobile and the airplane – would both have a profound effect on Canada. “Four years after the Wright brothers achieved the first power-sustained controlled airplane flight, Alexander Graham Bell, J.A.D. [Douglas] McCurdy . . . Frederick Baldwin [both of whom were engineers], Lieutenant Thomas Selfridge [an American army officer] and Glenn Curtiss [an American motorcycle racer], with financial backing from Bell's wife Mabel, founded the Aerial Experiment Association,” Senator Joseph Day told his fellow senators on February 23, 2009 – the 100th anniversary of the Silver Dart’s flight. The AEA was formed in Halifax, Nova Scotia, in September 1907, under Dr. Bell’s leadership. The team used the Curtiss factory at Hammondsport, New York, as their summer base and Dr. Bell's laboratories in Baddeck as their winter headquarters.



“The AEA began conducting experimental flights with Bell's first idea — a large tetrahedral kite called the Cygnet. Subsequently, Bell devised plans for airplanes, or aerodromes as he called them. The Silver Dart was their fourth flying machine, after some success with the Red Wing, the White Wing and the June Bug,” continued Senator Day. The first successful powered, heavier-than-air, controlled airplane flight in Canada took place at Baddeck, Nova Scotia, on February 23, 1909, when the Silver Dart took to the air, piloted by J.A.D.

McCurdy.

The launch of the Silver Dart was “helped by volunteers on skates, many of whom were students given the day off for this momentous occasion,” said Senator Day. It “was pushed onto the ice at Baddeck Bay, a sub-basin of Bras d'Or Lake. After gliding along the ice, the Silver Dart lifted off, rose nine metres and flew for one and a half kilometres at 65 kilometres per

hour. “The flight represented unprecedented success in Canadian aviation as the result of hard work, determination and innovation.”

The day after the Silver Dart’s first flight, Mr. McCurdy flew four miles in a complete circle returning to his starting point. Not only were these flights the first in Canada, they were also recognized by the Royal Aero Club of the United Kingdom as the first successful heavier-than-air flights by a British subject anywhere in the British Empire. Mr. McCurdy and Mr. Baldwin formed the Canadian Aerodrome Company to continue their aviation experiments. They sought the interest of the Department of Militia and Defence for possible military applications of the aircraft and were given permission to make some flights during the annual militia training camp. They shipped the Silver Dart to what is now Canadian Forces Base Petawawa in Ontario and, on August 1, 1909, made four demonstration flights. However, the biplane was wrecked in a heavy landing during the final flight. Militia Department officials and officers who witnessed some of these flights were not impressed. It was decided to await the outcome of similar tests and experiments which were being conducted in Britain. Mr. McCurdy and Mr. Baldwin offered to sell their aircraft to the government and instruct officers to fly them, but they were rejected.

In the next few years, one officer at Militia Headquarters made repeated efforts to have the Department form an aviation section, but these proposals were declined because "no funds were available". When the First World War began August 4, 1914, Canada had neither pilots nor aircraft in the armed forces. In fact, when the war broke out, Douglas McCurdy spoke to Colonel Sam Hughes, Canada’s Minister of Militia and Defence, about forming a Canadian Air Force. Colonel Hughes, who was not yet a believer in airpower, declared, “My boy, the aeroplane is the invention of the devil . . . and will never play any part in such a serious business as the defence of the nation!” That would change, however, as the employment of aircraft during the war took on greater and greater importance. A failed effort was made to form a Canadian Aviation Corps in the autumn of 1914, but Canadian men flocked to join Britain’s Royal Flying Corps, the Royal Naval Air Service and later – when those two organizations amalgamated – the Royal Air Force.

In the post-war years, those Canadian airmen built the foundation of the organization that on April 1, 1924, became the Royal Canadian Air Force.

*February 23 has been designated Canada’s National Aviation Day – an opportunity to recognize our aviation pioneers and celebrate Canadians who make safe air travel possible.*

## **South Korea to repatriate China's Korean War soldiers**

*South Korea will repatriate the remains of 425 Chinese soldiers killed in the Korean War 60 years ago.*

Hundreds of thousands of Chinese troops are thought to have died in the war. They fought for North Korea against UN forces, including soldiers from the United States and South Korea. The Chinese troops are currently buried at a military-controlled cemetery in Paju, just south of the border with North Korea. It was established in 1996 as the final resting place of Chinese and North Korean soldiers killed in the conflict, which took place from 1950-53. The bodies

were originally buried in smaller sites around the country. Some graves are named, but most are identified only by nationality.



*Chinese troops are currently buried at a military-controlled cemetery in Paju. The authorities will dig up the remains, clean them and put them into coffins before sending them back to China in a process that will take several months.*

Over recent decades, South Korea has repatriated a few dozen Chinese soldiers through North Korea and using the United Nations, but nothing on this scale. The offer to send back the remains was first made by South Korean President Park Geun-hye when she visited China in June. South Korea has also offered to repatriate the remains of North Korean soldiers in the cemetery, but so far Pyongyang has not taken up the offer.

## **Budget 2014: Military wings clipped again**

*Funding to be restored in future, government says. By James Cudmore, CBC News Feb 11, 2014*

The Defence Department was effectively stripped today of more than \$3 billion it had planned to spend on major new military purchases in the near future, in what amounts to the second major setback it's faced in as many weeks. In its latest budget, the Conservative government announced it will reclaim the \$3.1 billion in cash it had planned to allocate to the military over the coming years but restore it four years hence, so the gear can be bought then. "To ensure that funding for vital National Defence equipment is available for planned requirements, the government is shifting \$3.1 billion of National Defence funding for major capital procurements to future years in which key purchases will be made," the budget said. The budget cut will have the effect of preventing the military from buying some gear for which it had lobbied long and hard to win approval.

A series of major procurement delays has prevented the military year after year from spending all the cash it's been allocated. Finance Minister Jim Flaherty said the government plans to take that cash back until the military is sure it can spend it. "We're not reducing spending on the armed forces," Flaherty told reporters. "There is no point in having money there to spend, if they can't spend it, which they can't." In 2008, the government announced a major new military investment plan called the Canada First Defence Strategy that detailed hundreds of billions of dollars in defence capital acquisitions. It included new ships, helicopters, fighter jets, armoured vehicles and more. But the military has had a hard time closing on the deals, despite the billions in allocated cash. Sahir Khan, a senior fellow at the University of Ottawa, said Flaherty's budget move reflects this military failure. "It's a result of the fact the government has had a challenge in procuring this equipment," he said. "Then we're back to the challenge of does the military have the equipment it needs to discharge its obligations." Khan suggested the failure to buy new gear was not just a military problem, but a government-wide

problem that has led to a widening gulf between what it promised in its Canada First Defence Strategy and what it is actually able to deliver. “The budget documents, as they often are, are very short on details, but they certainly invite a series of questions from parliamentarians and Canadians about what actually is going on with defence procurement strategy with the government,” Khan said.

Last week, the government announced a series of reforms to defence procurement that saw effective control and responsibility stripped from the military and handed to bureaucrats at the government’s contracting department, Public Works and Government Services Canada. The move was viewed as a radical remake of defence procurement and the end of a years-long war — one that was lost by the military. The list of slipped, stalled or failed procurements is lengthy and includes maritime helicopters to replace Canada’s 50-year-old Sea King helicopters, search and rescue planes, armoured vehicles, army trucks and even rifles for Canada’s Arctic and northern ranger force. In the past, the military had received permission to “reprofile” cash it could not spend on certain purchases, and spend it on others. In recent years the government has even allowed the military to keep as much as \$1.5 billion in so-called “lapsed cash.” The government is apparently no longer willing to allow the military to keep and “reprofile” cash allocated for procurements it’s unable to complete.

Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau said the government has failed to properly manage the military or control the procurement system. "What this government has demonstrated is a complete incompetence on the level of defence procurement and spending," Trudeau said. "What they are doing now is pushing off for four years getting the kind of equipment to our men and women in uniform that they need, delaying the kinds of jobs that often come through solid defence procurement." The problem with lapsed or failed procurements is that they exert additional financial pressure on the military. It frequently costs more to operate and maintain old and tired equipment than it does to operate new gear. 'The budget has come down quite significantly'- Defence economist Dave Perry. These costs will now arise as the military still struggles to implement a series of government budget cuts from previous years that have taken a dramatic toll on the military’s ability to spend. “The budget has come down quite significantly,” said Dave Perry, defence economist at the Conference of Defence Associations Institute. “The net impact on all of that on the current fiscal year is that there is roughly \$4 billion less money for defence than the government said there would be when it issued the Canada First Defence Strategy.”

That calculation includes the \$3.1 billion announced today, which is spread across four budget years. It also includes roughly \$1 billion per year in reductions attributable to a government spending review, another \$1.12 billion per year under the Deficit Reduction Action Plan, and other lapsed or lost cash. Perry said that means the military is now being hit on two fronts: the regular budget it uses to fund its operations and maintenance; and now also on procurement. “I think right now the challenge is the plan,” Perry said. “Because the government doesn’t seem to have any kind of commitment to retain the funding” it had promised in the Canada First Defence Strategy. “The government overall is cutting program spending across government, and if you want to keep on doing that you can’t keep spending what they wanted to on

defence.” And on that front, it appears the government has already begun a reckoning. Although the details are still hidden, the government is currently conducting a so-called reset of that Canada First Defence Strategy.

It’s not clear when that review will be complete. But the military has had a hard time closing on the deals, despite the billions in allocated cash. Sahir Khan, a senior fellow at the University of Ottawa, said Flaherty’s budget move reflects this military failure. “It’s a result of the fact the government has had a challenge in procuring this equipment,” he said. “Then we’re back to the challenge of does the military have the equipment it needs to discharge its obligations.” Khan suggested the failure to buy new gear was not just a military problem, but a government-wide problem that has led to a widening gulf between what it promised in its Canada First Defence Strategy and what it is actually able to deliver. “The budget documents, as they often are, are very short on details, but they certainly invite a series of questions from parliamentarians and Canadians about what actually is going on with defence procurement strategy with the government,” Khan said.

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## **Fund Raising and Whiskey Tasting**

The 15<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Regiment RCA and the 78<sup>th</sup> Fraser’s Highlanders welcome you to attend a Fund Raising and Whiskey Tasting event at our Armoury. There will be food, draw prizes, and music.

**See poster at the end of the newsletter for more details**

## **RUSI Vancouver Society AGM**

RUSI Vancouver Society AGM will be held on Wednesday March 12, 2014 at 1330hrs at Bessborough Armoury.

A separate notice was sent out to registered members earlier today. If you are a member and **did not** get the earlier notice, please email me at [bob.mugford@shaw.ca](mailto:bob.mugford@shaw.ca) so I can correct my membership list.

## Military Ball Renamed

The date for the 2014 Ball has been set for **May 10, 2014 at the Vancouver Hyatt Regency Hotel**. 39CBG is getting more involved in the running of the event and has renamed the Military Ball the 'BC Army Gala'. The Gala website is: <http://bcarmygala.ca/> and tickets can already be purchased on the EventBrite site at: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/bc-army-gala-tickets-8508578387> More information can be found, including an order form for direct purchase of tickets, on the Gala website and Gala's Facebook link: <https://www.facebook.com/britishcolumbiaarmygala>

## Who is it?



**Last Edition.** Well, I guess another generation has faded away. We didn't get one reply on this picture. It is definitely in the Officers Mess in the early 50s. Probably a Ladies Dining In, New Year's Eve party or a post Military Ball breakfast. If you have any information please pass it to us.

**This Week's picture** What is this thing? Amongst the papers and other ephemera left by the late Vic Stevenson were some photo albums, now in the possession of his daughter. The museum was privileged to be allowed to borrow such for scanning of any photos relating to military history. Among those photos was proof that Vic would take shots of anything and everything related to artillery, and the military in general. In fact, he even took photos of ships and aircraft, possibly for use as target identification.



So, from that treasure trove, we've selected a few shots for your amusement (in the old meaning of 'intellectually stimulating'). The first is herein illustrated. Your task, should you be willing to take up the challenge, is to identify the item, right down to the mark. As for the location, it is recorded as being at Esquimalt in 1949. A bonus would be to identify how many personnel it took to operate the device. Answers can be sent to the editor, or to the columnist, John Redmond ([johnd\\_redmond@telus.net](mailto:johnd_redmond@telus.net)).

## From the 'Punitary'

Einstein developed the Theory of Relativity – it was about time too.

## Murphy's other Laws

The usefulness of any meeting is in inverse proportion to the attendance.

## Quotable Quotes

I believe that it will be possible in a very few years for a person to take his dinner in New York at 7 or 8 o'clock in the evening and eat his breakfast in Ireland or England the following morning. - - *Alexander Graham Bell, "Flying Machines of the Future", 1892*

**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 welcome you to attend a Fund Raising and Whiskey Tasting event at our 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, of course, are welcome.

**DATE:** Friday March 7th, 2014

**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

**TO RESERVE YOUR TICKET CONTACT:**

LCol James Barrett

Cell: (604) 916-1766

E-Mail: [barrettjd007@gmail.com](mailto:barrettjd007@gmail.com)

Reserve your tickets early to not miss out on a great night!

All profits will go to support the activities of the 15th Field Regimental Society. Tax receipts will be issued for all donations on request.





*The  
British Columbia  
Army Gala  
2014*



*Celebrating*  
**A LEGACY OF SERVICE**  
*Dinner and Dance*

Come and enjoy a distinctive evening of fun, friendship and tradition. The BC Army Gala is open to anyone who has served, is a friend of the military or who wants to have an enjoyable evening with a unique group of people!

**DO NOT DELAY. LIMITED SEATING AVAILABLE!**

Venue: Hyatt Regency Vancouver  
Date: Saturday 10 May, 2014  
Time: 7 p.m. 'till late  
Dress: Mess Kit, Black Tie or equivalent



For all ticket information, including Early Bird Specials, please visit the BC Army Gala web site or phone (604) 225-2520 ext 2496.

[www.bcarmygala.ca](http://www.bcarmygala.ca)

# Thailand Curry Lunch



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

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



- Date:** Thursday, February 27, 2014
- 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 February 21, 2014)
- RSVP:** For more information or to register, please contact Bill Diamond at [Bill@DukeaBear.com](mailto:Bill@DukeaBear.com) or 604.618.3607 (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 21, 2014

***NEXT PLANNED LUNCH: Thursday, March 27, 2014***



and

# VANCOUVER WELSH MEN'S CHOIR

with

Soprano ~ Suzann Kingston

presented by

**The Vancouver Welsh Society**

**Saturday, March 1, 2014 7:30 pm**  
**Michael J Fox Theatre**  
**7373 Macpherson Avenue, Burnaby**

**TICKETS:**

**Adults \$25**

**Seniors \$22**

**Students \$10 (with ID) Children under 12 no charge**

**Book on line:**

**[vwmc.ca](http://vwmc.ca) (no fees)**

**Call:**

**Orpheus Choir info line 604 515-5686**

**Vancouver Welsh Men's Choir at 604 878-1190**

**Vancouver Welsh Society Ticket line 604 742-1378**

**[vwmc.ca](http://vwmc.ca)**

**[welshsociety.com](http://welshsociety.com)**

**[vancouverorpheus.org](http://vancouverorpheus.org)**

