



## Mess and RUSI Vancouver Members News 15 Nov, 2011

### Wednesday Lunches.

The last lunch of 2011 will be held on Dec 21<sup>st</sup> and lunches will resume on Jan 4, 2012. Our last lunch is always a 'Ladies' lunch so bring your significant other and other guests for a pre-Christmas treat.

Our last speaker event of 2011 will be held on Nov 30<sup>th</sup> and will feature our member, Eric Mold, describing his and Canada's roles in the 1950's Cold War era. Eric flew Canadian bombers armed with nuclear weapons – a most secret part of our history that most Canadians know little of.

Still haven't received any information on the evening talk, other than the topic is Hong Kong.

### Upcoming Events

#### **St Cecilia Dinner – Nov 19<sup>th</sup>**

The Band's St Cecilia Dinner is this Saturday. Doors open at 1800hrs. If you haven't purchased you tickets yet, you are too late.

#### **St Barbara's Day Special Guest Night – Dec 4<sup>th</sup>**

The St Barbara's Day Special Guest Night is set for Dec 4<sup>th</sup>. RSVPs with payment are required by this Friday. For those of you not familiar with military customs, this is a Mess dinner where members come unaccompanied. Guests are always welcome but they should have some kind of Artillery or military connection and, as at any military dinner, should be registered in advance of the evening so place cards and seating plan can be updated.

#### **The Commanding Officers Tea - SUNDAY DECEMBER 18<sup>TH</sup>, 1330 - 1700HRS**

(We used to call this the Christmas Tea). The cost is \$15.00 per person, which includes sherry, Mrs Lum's delicious hors d'oeuvres, as well as coffee and tea served by Regimental Ladies. The Regimental Band is sending one of its combos to entertain us as we mingle. The bar will be open for those of you who want more than sherry. Dress is semi-formal – suit and tie (or Regimental blazer and tie) and Cocktail dresses for the Ladies.

RSVPs (to me) would be appreciated. A sign up list will be posted in the bar area for those attending other Mess events to indicate attendance.

## New Year's Levée – Jan 1, 2012

The Regimental Messes will be open as usual on January 1<sup>st</sup>. Officially, the Messes open at 1100hrs but the Regimental members of the Officers Mess and the WO & Sgts Mess exchange New Years' greetings around 1030hrs. The usual light lunch will be served starting around noon. Everyone welcome. This is considered a 'formal' event for the Regimental members so others should wear blazer and tie (equivalent for ladies) at least.

## Regimental Society Annual Burns Dinner (See invitation)

BURNS SUPPER 2012 will be held Saturday January 28, 2012 at the BCIT Aerospace centre in Richmond.

Tickets will be on sale soon. **If you order (and pay) before December 15, 2011 you will receive the early bird price.** If you attended last year please bring another couple with you. The goal is to raise funds to assist our military families...will you stand with them?

### **Featured Performers**

The Pipes and Drums of the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada  
The Band of the 15th Field Artillery Regiment, RCA  
The Vancouver Welsh Men's Choir.

For tickets call Grant Smith 604-271-5530

## Military Ball - 2012

The Vancouver Garrison Officers' Society has announced that the 2012 Military Ball is confirmed for **24 March 2012** at the Vancouver Hyatt Regency. Ticket prices this year will be the same as 2011- \$110 per person, but, as an added incentive, the price for 'early birds', who **purchase their tickets by cheque or money order prior to 31 December 2011** will be at a discounted price of \$100.00 each. A ticket order form can be found on the Ball website ([www.militaryball.ca](http://www.militaryball.ca)) on the 'ticket' page. Print, fill in and forward, with cheque or money order, to our mailing address: Military Ball, 2025 West 11th Avenue, Vancouver, V6J 2C7  
Hotel reservation details to be released before the end of the year. The website ([www.militaryball.ca](http://www.militaryball.ca)) is now up and running with current information available. We have not yet negotiated the Mil Ball room rate with the hotel so you could reserve now but the hotel won't have any special rate program set up. When the special rate comes available, it will be posted on the website, with a link to the hotel reservation area. Keep your eye on the website. Mark your calendars and get a group of friends together for another evening of good food, good company, and dancing until midnight."

## Discovering Dalgas

By Greg Nesteroff - Nelson Star

Nelson's Agner Dalgas (centre, pointing) in the field with Major-General A.G. McNaughton, Commander of the 1st Canadian Division, to his right

*Courtesy Corinne Dalgas*



This summer, Major(r) Ian Newby passed through Nelson as part of a tour by the Military Vehicle Preservation Association and appeared in a front-page photo in the *Star*. Not long after, at an auction house in Aldergrove, he discovered at the bottom of a

box of junk a World War I officer's leather map case with the hand-lettered inscription:

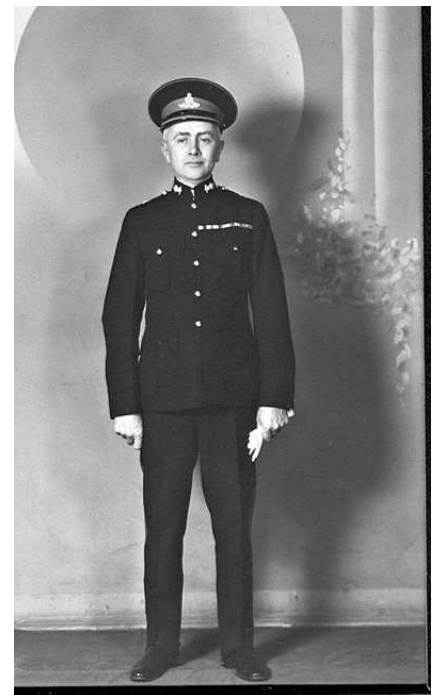
*Orderly Room Outfit  
Captain A.E. Dalgas, RE  
3 Section  
177 T Company RE*

(RE stood for Royal Engineers and T for Tunnelling.)

Newby bought the map case and started looking into Agner Emile Dalgas, whom he soon learned had lived in Nelson. According to Sylvia Crooks' *Homefront and Battlefront: Nelson BC in World War II*, Dalgas was born and raised in Denmark, where he graduated from officers' training school at 19. He then served in the Danish army for five years before coming to Canada with his family in 1910 and settling at Crescent Valley. Capt. Dalgas worked as a civil engineer until World War I began, then went overseas with the 7th Battalion and transferred to the Royal Engineers of London, where he became commander of the 177th Tunnelling Company. He received the Military Cross and Italian Silver Medal for valour in the field.

Afterward, Dalgas and his wife lived in Nelson and he worked as an engineer for the BC Department of Public Works. In the 1930s, Crooks writes, he "ardently advocated revival of the organized militia and formed a military institute of former officers who met regularly."

When World War II began, Capt. Dalgas was promoted to major and commanded the 111th (Nelson) Field Battery, overseeing its recruitment and



Agner Dalgas

training. The 111th was among the first contingents to go overseas, and Dalgas, “pointing to two flags on the wall, one representing the Legion and one the 111th, declared that one was already covered with honours, and the 111th would follow in that tradition.”

Dalgas accompanied his men to Edmonton where he was assigned to training duties, but was determined to go overseas himself. Told he was too old, he waived rank, travelled to Ottawa, lied about his age and joined the 4th Field Artillery as a gunner.

Once in England, the army learned his real age, so he was promoted from private to sergeant and made an instructor with the Canadian School of Artillery. Many men who served under him in Nelson before the war and during its early days made a point of looking him up, Crooks says. One wrote: “There never was a finer man than he, and I am filled with admiration for his indomitable spirit and moral courage and determination.” He added his hope that Dalgas would return to Nelson with his old rank of major.

Dalgas did become a captain again before finally reaching the front in early April 1945.

However, nine days before the war in Europe ended, as the Canadian 2nd Corps advanced into northern Germany, Dalgas’ jeep ran over a mine. He died aged 57.

His wife Alicia learned of his death on the same day she received a letter from him, in which he told her he was “way past the Rhine.”

Dalgas was buried in Holten Canadian War Cemetery in Holland.

### **MORE LAYERS TO THE STORY**

The story doesn’t end there. Newby, who acquired Dalgas’ map case, had “one of those experiences that literally raises the hair on the back of the neck.”

He knew he’d heard Dalgas’ name somewhere before, and remembered an instructor at artillery school in Shilo, Manitoba who taught him a trick handed down from World War II.

“We had a plotting board which was essential for the accurate shooting of our guns, and which had to be kept dry and legible despite weather or environmental conditions,” he says.

Over these plywood boards they placed paper targets, marked with grid squares, and on top of this clear cellophane covers sealed around the edges with tape.

“We then were supposed to pin a pivot and range arm with large tacks, which of course resulted in many holes which let in water and ruined the paper beneath. We were told to file off the points and use adhesive tape, which preserved the integrity of the waterproofing.”

The invention was credited to Agner Dalgas of the Canadian School of Artillery in England.

Newby has since spoken to Dalgas’ granddaughter Corinne, an instructor at BCIT. She didn’t know about her grandfather’s illustrious history, but when she cleaned out the basement of the family home in Nelson, she found his medals and uniform, and still has them.

A couple of summers ago, Sylvia Crooks also discovered Dalgas’ World War I diary in the Touchstones archives, part of the H.H. Currie fonds.



**Dalgas’ mapcase**

“It’s very interesting,” she says. “It’s a diary from the 7th Battalion, which was the first contingent of men that left Nelson in August 1914. They were among [the victims of] the first gas attacks. Something like 17 of them lost their lives.”

The diary also mentions Dalgas’ transfer to the 177th Tunnelling Company: “He recorded how sad he was to leave the 7th, and the men he’d been with.”

It’s not clear how the diary found its way to the archives, although the Currie fonds are a collection of World War I items, and Crooks speculates Dalgas’ widow donated it. Nor is it clear how the map case ended up in the auction house. Newby has also been in touch with English author Iain McHenry, who is completing a book about the 177th. He sent McHenry a copy of Crooks’ book, pages from Dalgas’ diary, and other information.



Retired Major Ian Newby visited Nelson this summer.

An archaeological group known as the La Boisselle Project has been excavating tunnels left untouched since 1918, and just last week Newby watched a TV special called *The First World War From Above*.

“Amazingly, there was major coverage of the tunnelling war and the La Boisselle crater in particular,” he says. In one shot, you could see a memorial to Dalgas’ 177th. The original was knocked down during the final German offensive in 1918, so Dalgas made an impassioned plea for permission to return after the armistice and rebuild it.

This was granted and the new memorial stood until it was replaced by a permanent stone marker in the 1920s. A wooden plaque and copper plate inscribed with the names of the tunnellers hung in a London church until recently, when it was moved to the Royal Engineers’ Museum.

## **Wounded soldiers face sack under new British Army redundancy plans**

Wounded soldiers are to be dismissed from the Army under plans to double the number of personnel being made redundant, a leaked memo discloses.

*Soldiers pray before the two minutes silence at the 3 Command Brigade homecoming parade and Armistice service at Plymouth Hoe*

*Photo: Ben Birchall/PA Wire*

*By Thomas Harding,  
Defence Correspondent*

10:13PM GMT 11 Nov 2011

A classified document, seen by The Daily Telegraph, says 2,500 wounded soldiers,

including 350 who have lost limbs, will not be exempt from the extensive cuts.



The internal memo, sent to senior commanders in Afghanistan, also discloses that 16,500 personnel will be made redundant by April 2015 – more than double the number originally proposed. Any decision to sack wounded soldiers is likely to prove highly controversial. The efficiency drive has been ordered because the Army has so many wounded soldiers that able-bodied recruits are being turned away and its fighting strength is being diminished. Details of the full scale of the redundancy programme came as millions of people paused to pay a silent tribute to the nation's war dead yesterday.

The ceremony was particularly poignant at Camp Bastion in Afghanistan, where soldiers marked the death of the 385th British serviceman to be killed since 2001.

The memo states that wounded soldiers who have been “temporarily downgraded will not be exempt”. They could be dismissed in the next round of cuts, likely to start after Christmas. It also says that those who are too injured or sick for redeployment will be “looked at in more detail”.

The memo has been seen by soldiers serving on the front line in Afghanistan, who are outraged that they could be made redundant if they are wounded.

In the past month, six British soldiers have suffered double amputations or worse as a result of Taliban bombs. An officer serving with a unit in which a soldier suffered a triple amputation earlier this month said the memo had badly damaged morale.

“We now know that not only will we be left with a life-changing injury serving our country over here but we will more than likely be kicked out of the Army,” he said.

A soldier serving on the front line said his colleagues were stunned to learn of the memo.

“We cannot believe that if we get injured we are at risk,” he said.

“But at the end of the day we are fighting for our mates so we just crack on.”

The policy has angered some wounded soldiers and their families. Lance Bombardier Ben Parkinson, 26, lost both legs and suffered brain damage after a Taliban bomb blast in 2006. Diane Dornie, his mother, said: “This proves that the Military Covenant is just a collection of words convenient for politicians.

“Ben was promised five years ago he would never have to leave the Army but that promise cannot be held to now because there have been so many wounded. An organisation as big as the Armed Forces should be able to find jobs for those who want to stay.”

The document also makes clear that the Army intends to slash more personnel than has been publicly announced.

In last year's Strategic Defence and Security Review, the Army was to be reduced by 7,000 soldiers from 102,000 by 2015. This was quietly increased by a further 5,000 earlier this year. But the memo shows that without any debate the Ministry of Defence has decided that by April 2015 a total of 16,500 soldiers will be axed.

Under the first round of redundancies earlier this year, 2,000 soldiers were sacked, including 150 of the 3,500-strong Ghurkha brigade.

The document discloses that on Jan 10 next year a total of 12,000 soldiers will be told that their jobs are at risk, with 2,300 of them to be made redundant.

Soldiers fighting in Afghanistan will be told if their positions are at risk and offered the opportunity to take voluntary redundancy.

However, troops not in Afghanistan will be vulnerable to compulsory redundancy. They include personnel in the “rear operations group” who are fully-trained and ready to fill in for dead or wounded.

The document states: “ROG [rear operations group] personnel are not exempt from T2 [the second wave of redundancies]. However, key posts will be taken into account”

The third and fourth waves of redundancies will see a further 13,000 soldiers made redundant by April 2015.

The document states: “The total number of personnel selected for redundancy in T1-4 will be approximately 15.5k-16.5k. All redundancy tranches are scheduled to be complete by April 15.”

Bryn Parry, the founder of the Help For Heroes charity, called on the Government to install a respected figure to act as a “champion of the wounded” to deal with the long-term needs of the injured.

Brig Richard Nugee, the head of Army manning, declined to comment on whether wounded soldiers would be among those at risk of redundancy but said no final decision had been made. He said: "The Army is still considering the criteria including size and shape for Tranche 2 and any subsequent redundancy. Nothing has yet been agreed."

He added that wounded, injured and sick soldiers would be assessed "individually" and that soldiers would only leave the army if it's the "right decision".

*In Canada, disabled soldiers in the Regular forces can continue to serve and some had even returned to Afghanistan but, in the Reserves, I believe that disabled soldiers are kept in until their medical treatments are completed and then they are released.*

## **An Evening with Senator Romeo Dallaire**

*“Canada’s Changing Role in the World Stage” Sat November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2011*

**Date/Time:** November 19th, 2011  
6 pm for 7 pm

**Place:** HMCS Discovery.

**Attendees:** Ex-Cadets,  
open to acquaintances and  
other military affiliates.

**Dress:** Business Suit or Uniform.


**Cost:** \$25 per person;  
Finger foods, bar available.



1. Preferred Payment Method - By PayPal:
  - a. Click the button below, and follow the instructions.
  - b. On check-out, either use your PayPal account profile, or process payment as Guest.
  - c. RSVP is not required because your payment records indicate your attendance.
  - d. Your Receipt is your Ticket to enter – please print it off and bring to the event.
2. By cash:

- a. You must RSVP with the number of attendees, and advise that you are paying at the door.
  - b. No-shows will be invoiced for committed tickets.
3. By check:
- a. You must RSVP with the number of attendees, and advise whether you will pay in advance or at the door.
  - b. Up to 2 weeks before the event, mail checks to Konrad Mech, 5552 Swordfern Place, North Vancouver, V7R4T1 per prices below. Otherwise, bring them to the door.
  - c. No-shows will be invoiced for committed tickets.

**BUY TICKETS THROUGH PAYPAL** Once your order is placed, click VIEW CART and Check Out



Col. R. Grant Smith  
Honorary Colonel  
15<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment of Artillery, RCA  
and  
President of the Regimental Society

Requests the Pleasure of Your Company  
at a  
**Burns Supper**

**FEATURING**  
The Vancouver Welsh Men's Choir,  
The Pipes and Drums of the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada  
The Band of the 15<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment, RCA

To be held  
January 28, 2012  
BCIT Aerospace Centre  
3800 Cessna Drive  
Richmond, BC

Dress: Scottish Attire, Black Tie,  
Mess Dress, Business Suit

Cocktails: 1800  
Dinner: 1900  
Tariff: **Before Dec 15 \$90 per**  
**After Dec 15 \$110 per**

**Cheques Payable to:**  
**15<sup>th</sup> Field Regimental Society**

**RSVP to:**  
Col Grant Smith  
7460 Sunnybank Avenue  
Richmond, BC V6Y 1G5  
Tel: 604-271-5530  
Email: [Gradon@telus.net](mailto:Gradon@telus.net)



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**ST BARBARA'S DAY  
SPECIAL GUEST NIGHT**

TO BE HELD AT THE

**BESSBOROUGH ARMOURY  
2025 WEST 11<sup>TH</sup> AVENUE, VANCOUVER, BC**

ON

**SATURDAY, THE THIRD OF DECEMBER, 2011**

AT

**SIX O'CLOCK FOR SEVEN O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING**

RSVP BY 18 NOVEMBER 2011 W/ PAYMENT:  
CAPTAIN W BOSSENCE  
[WILLIAM.BOSSENCE@FORCES.GC.CA](mailto:WILLIAM.BOSSENCE@FORCES.GC.CA)  
OR 604-666-4372

2025 WEST 11<sup>TH</sup> AVENUE  
VANCOUVER, BC  
V6J 2C7

TARIFF: \$ 75.00 CAD OR USD  
PAYABLE TO "15 RCA OFFICERS' MESS"  
DRESS: MESS KIT OR BLACK TIE, WITH  
DECORATIONS

## From the 'Punitary'

The fattest knight at King Arthur's round table was Sir Circumference. He acquired his size from too much pi.

## Murphy's Rules of Combat Operations.

Exceptions prove the rule, and destroy the battle plan.