



Mess and RUSI Vancouver Members News , 2011

Wednesday Lunches.

The last lunch of 2011 will be held on **Dec 21st** 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. On the last lunch we usually present Mrs Lum with a 'purse' to thank her for her hard work on the lunches. I will be collecting for this from now to the last lunch.

Our last speaker event of 2011 will be held on Nov 30th (**tomorrow**) 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.

The RUSI Vancouver Military History Evenings – Nov 30

From the King & Country History Television Series we present Hour of Darkness, Hong Kong, 1941. It was 70 years ago; in December 1941 that Canadians first engaged the enemy in World War Two. Some 2000 troops from Canada defended the British colony of Hong Kong against the invading Japanese Army. They held out for 17 days, surrendering on Christmas Day. Many were killed in battle but as many would die in Japanese POW camps.

Hosted by military historian Norm Christie, Hour of Darkness traces the origins of the battle; explore Canadian defensive positions, and visit the Sai Wan and Stanley war cemeteries and St Stephens Hospital. Christie pulls no punches in describing the futility of a battle in which only 1 in 3 Canadians would return home and one that most of Canada today is unaware.

Following the screening of the program LCol Romano Acconci, CD, Deputy Commander of 39 CBG, will place the Battle of Hong Kong in context and lead discussion on what lessons may have been learned from Hong Kong by Canada's military planners and strategists in the training and deployment of Canadian troops for the remainder of World War Two.

Please Note: On November 30th The Drill Hall doors open at 5:00 pm and the video presentation will begin at 5:45 pm in the BC Regiment Warrant Officer's & Sergeant's Mess. Admission is free. There will be a cash bar. Easy Park pay-parking accessed via West Georgia and Cambie or metered street parking available on Georgia, Beatty and Dunsmuir. Stadium Skytrain Station is nearby.

Upcoming Events at the Mess

The Commanding Officers Tea – Sunday, December 18th, 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.

A sign up list will be posted in the bar area for those attending other Mess events to indicate attendance. RSVPs to me would be appreciated, if you can't get to the Mess to sign up on the list.

New Year's Levée – Jan 1, 2012

The Regimental Messes will be open as usual on January 1st. 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) 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) 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.”

CPR and LdSH

On 23 Nov 2011, CPR ES44AC # 8939, the leader on IMS Train No. 110 from Vancouver to Toronto, stopped at Ogden, Calgary, AB. for a crew change. This unit carries the badge of the Lord Strathcona's Horse Regiment (since 14 Oct 2011) on each side of the cab. The cavalry regiment was privately raised by Donald Smith (Lord Strathcona) in 1900 to fight in the Boer War. Donald Smith was a founder of the CPR and drove the last spike in the transcontinental main line on 07 Nov 1885. For details of the partnership



announced on 14 Oct 2011 between the CPR and the Strathcona's, today an armoured regiment based in Edmonton, AB., see the CPR press release and the Strathcona's announcement:

<http://www.cpr.ca/en/news-and-media/news/Pages/c-and-lord-strathconas-horse.aspx>

<http://www.strathconas.ca/canadian-pacific-partnership/?id=745>

Pictures by Cor van Steenis, Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Travel discount for Vets.

The Victoria Clipper gives a fairly large discount to veterans. The regular fare for two for the sailing Victoria - Seattle and return is \$198.00. For veterans the cost is \$124.00. You must show the CF ID card at both locations,

CF Veterans are also eligible for a baggage fee exception when flying with WestJet, provided that they have their NDI 75 - Record of Service Card with them and present it to the WestJet agent at check in. This will enable them to check in a second bag without having to pay the \$20 fee to do so. Please note that overweight fees will apply if their bags are over 50 lbs and any additional bags (3rd bag or more) would be subject to fees as well.

NDI 75 card -The Retirees Record of Service card

New regulations are now in effect:

“A CF 75 card, now known as an NDI 75 card, shall be issued to any member of the CF who has completed 10 or more years of service in any component of the CF or who, at time of release, was entitled to an annuity.”

If you meet the above requirements, you can find an online application for the card at:

<http://www.rcl244.com/NDI%2075%20Application.pdf>

You fill out the document online, print it off and send it to the address shown on the form. Note the requirement for 2 colour photos.

People may also apply to the Director Military Careers Administration and Resource Management 3-2 at 613-996-7901 or 613-992-1228 but they will probably direct you to the online site or mail you an application form.

I have heard that they are now sending a temporary card for use until your photo card is produced.

Blunders, Naval, for Those in Peril of.

by Len Haffenden

The Naval Prayer and the Naval Hymn are familiar to most sailors, in which we pray for safety, from the dangers of the sea, and the violence of the enemy. Yet there is a third component, not mentioned in the prayers and supplications, which puts us needlessly in peril, and that is, from time to time, the stupidity and incompetence of those in charge. Recently, I came across a book called *Naval Blunders*, by Geoffrey Regan, 1993, UK, which includes most of the well-known naval blunders in history, and lots of new ones, too. Let us look at a few from the Royal Navy, the US Navy, and the German Navy.

Case Number 1, an oft-used classic example is that of Vice-Admiral Sir George Tyron, a big,



bearded, dominating man, whose orders were not to be questioned. His Mediterranean fleet was on exercise, eleven capital ships in two columns abreast on a sunny clear, 22 June, 1893. Tyron gave the order for the two columns to reverse direction, to turn inwards and steam the other way. His staff commander, Hawkins-Smith, with some trepidation, pointed out there was not enough room; the two columns were

six cables apart (1,200 feet) and such a manoeuvre would require at least eight cables. Even so, the order was given and disaster quickly followed. **HMS Victoria**, Tyron's nearly new flagship, was hit hard by the turning **HMS Camperdown**, and sank within ten minutes. This later gave rise to questions as to design flaws; why did *Victoria* sink so soon; were her sister ships equally vulnerable? As his ship was sinking, Vice-Admiral Tyron acknowledged the fault was his and decided to go down with his ship, but unfortunately he took 358 of his crew with him.



The wreck of HMS *Victoria*, has only recently been found 111 years after the tragedy of her sinking off the coast of Tripoli. She sits, bow down, about 3/4 of her length buried within the ocean floor, in 140 meters of water, standing bolt upright.

A most interesting footnote of this story is the strange one published elsewhere about the mystical appearance of Admiral Sir George Tryon in his home at the moment when he went down with his ship! Lady Tryon was having guests 'at tea' when one is said to have confronted her with a strange observation. She remarked to Lady Tryon, something like, "Oh how nice, I did not know that the Admiral, whom I just saw in the kitchen, was at home".

Case Number 2 brings us to another miscalculation at sea. One presumes the Navigating



Officer in the lead ship did well at high school math, but apparently not; he must have just squeaked through. On the evening of September 8th, 1923 a squadron of 14 American Clemson class destroyers under the command of Captain Edward Watson, was steaming line ahead down the coast from San Francisco to San Diego at a steady 20 knots, when it encountered fog near the entrance to the Santa Barbara channel. After a few minutes in this reduced visibility, and still at 20 knots mind you, the destroyer leader, the **USS Delphy**, DD-261, flashed a signal to the second

ship to turn a few degrees to port and follow me, and to repeat the signal back down the line. They all obeyed orders. The captain and navigating officer, aboard the *Delphy* was Lt Cdr Donald T Hunter, who was old school, with little faith in all these new-fangled radio compass signals from shore bases. He preferred to use dead reckoning, signal lamps, semaphore flags, loud hailers and megaphones ~ he was the "Ahoy there, Matey !" type of communicator. Captain Watson trusted Hunter, but with some misgivings, while the junior navigator, Lt. Lawrence Blodgett, was emphatic that they were not "here" but somewhere else on the charts, but being young, he was over-ruled. Later known as the Honda Point disaster, the *Delphy* was the first ship to run up on the unforgiving rocks of the California coast, followed by the next six ships. The eighth and ninth destroyers grounded but were able to free themselves, having slowed down beforehand, as they heard much loud crunching, banging and steam whistles being sounded ahead of them. The last five ships took evasive action and survived intact. The first seven varied from being damaged to a total loss. There was plenty of blame to go around at the inquiry and subsequent courts-martial, and several careers came to an abrupt end. Even so, most of the eleven officers accused did not suffer greatly. None was cashiered or reduced in rank. Captain Watson was moved down 150 names on the seniority list, Hunter was reduced 100 names on the list, and Blodgett was acquitted.

Of all things wonderful, Hunter was then assigned to a shore establishment to teach navigation!! For a while the 'crash site' became a tourist attraction till the final remnants were taken away. Casualties were light, considering the dangerous situation, there were 23 men unaccounted for. The US Navy lost more ships in this one incident than it did in its participation in the Great War of 1914-1918. The US President at the time was Calvin Coolidge, who seldom gave an opinion on anything, even the weather. He broke his silence this time, however, stating he did not want to interfere, but thought the sentences were too lenient. After all, over \$13 million in government property was gone; the ships were all fairly new: heads should have rolled. SecNav agreed to a review the cases, but very little came of it.

The ironic term "Friendly Fire" is not one I recall from my earlier days. I think it grew out of the American experience in Vietnam, where a lot of trigger-happy raw recruits and unhappy draftees shot at shadows and each other, which brings us to **case Number 3**, a friendly fire incident involving a complete lack of communication.

On February 22nd, 1940, six German destroyers of the first flotilla, led by Commander Fritz Berger in the *Friedrich Eckoldt*, headed out to the North Sea to intercept and break up groups of British armed trawlers operating near the Dogger Bank. This should have been a fairly routine exercise, named 'Operation Caviar'. The Luftwaffe was alerted, who then promised air support and reconnaissance till the ships got back. On a need to know basis, however, more people needed to know what was planned and what was happening. Events unfolded quickly. Early darkness had long fallen when about 7.40 pm aircraft were heard overhead. There was off and on spotty moonlight making it difficult to see insignia on the planes. As no recognition signal occurred, Commander Berger fired off a few machine gun bursts thinking they might be the RAF. The response was immediate: Warrant Officer Jager, the Luftwaffe pilot in one of the Heinkels, believing the ships below were British, dived down and released a stick of five bombs. With incredible luck, if that's the right word under the circumstances, he scored hits on two German destroyers. the *Leberecht Maas* and the *Max Schultz*, causing damage and subsequent explosions leading to their sinking. Commander Berger, however, had no faith in bombing accuracy, having been attacked several times before in daylight by the RAF without even a near miss; hence, he believed the explosions and sinkings were caused by torpedoes from enemy submarines, and so ordered extra lookouts. At this point mass hysteria occurred. Submarine sightings abounded; torpedo tracks were everywhere. A conning tower was spotted and Berger's ship turned to ram it, but it turned out to be the front half of one of his own destroyers slipping below the waves. Boats were lowered to pick up survivors, but, in the panic at being sitting ducks, Berger ran over his own launch killing the crew and the few survivors in it. Captain Bohmig in the destroyer *Theodor Riedel*, was so sure he had detected a British submarine, that he dropped a depth charge pattern, but someone had forgotten to set the timers, with the result he nearly blew up his own ship! Hearing the use of depth charges convinced the remaining two ships that there were enemy subs in the area. Commander Berger ordered what was left of his flotilla to head for home, reluctantly leaving over five hundred men in the cold water. Rear Admiral Otto Ciliax of Navy Group West was furious at this multi-level cock-up, especially as he was the one with the unpleasant task of informing Hitler.

RCN – Naden Band Christmas Concert.

December 8, 2011
7:30 pm at the
Vogue Theatre
918 Granville Street

Proceeds go to
The Salvation Army Toy Drive

Naden Band
of Maritime Forces Pacific
Christmas Concert

Adults \$10 Kids 9.5 plus
a new, unwrapped toy.

ADVANCE TICKETS :
At the Box Office
Call 604-369-1144
vogue theatre.com

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15Fd Regimental Society – Annual Burns Dinner



Col. R. Grant Smith

Honorary Colonel

15th 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 15th 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:

15th Field Regimental Society

RSVP to:

Col Grant Smith

7460 Sunnybank Avenue

Richmond, BC V6Y 1G5

Tel: 604-271-5530

Email: Gradon@telus.net

From the 'Punitary'

A rubber band pistol was confiscated from algebra class, because it was a weapon of math disruption.

Murphy's Rules of Combat Operations.

The only time you've got too much fuel in an aeroplane is when it's on fire.

DID YOU KNOW...

If it had been opened a little earlier in 1888, we might be calling it Lansdowne Park. If it had been opened five years later, it might have been Aberdeen Park. But the Governor General of Canada when the park was dedicated was Frederick Arthur Stanley, Baron Stanley of Preston, and so "Stanley Park" it was...He also gave us the Stanley Cup!

Excerpt from 'Vancouver Then & Now' by Chuck Davis, 2001, Magic Light Publishing, Ottawa.

...And we wouldn't have it today if the military had not 'protected' it