

Mess and RUSI Vancouver Members News Mar 1, 2011

Wednesday Lunches

Thank you to all our Mess and RUSI Vancouver members as well as to members of other Messes and Associations for their continued support of our lunches we are the only Mess in the lower mainland with a regular lunch of any kind.

Both the Mess associates and RUSI are always looking for new members so, if you know any former military types or others who might enjoy our activities, bring them along to lunch and introduce them. Like most groups involving veterans, our average age is creeping up and we are losing members faster than we are gaining new ones.

Bob Chown is working up another **Ladies Lunch, for March 16th**. We encourage members to bring their significant others, special friends and/or any other person they can push, pull or drag to the Mess for lunch that day. A good way, also, to introduce potential new members to our group. Of course Ladies and guests are welcome at any lunch, we just encourage you to work a little harder to bring someone that day. Remember to explain our Dress Code to your guests before they arrive. Jackets and ties for men, equivalent for ladies.



Robert McKay is coming to talk about his new novel 'Soldier of the Horse' on **March 30th**. Robert's father served in the First World War, like so many of his generation, but somewhat uniquely in that he was in the cavalry — Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians), to be specific. His Dad was like many veterans, in that he didn't talk about the war very much, although he did recount a few of his escapades, focusing mainly on the scrapes that kept him from being promoted, but did keep him sane. Robert had long wanted to preserve some sense of his father's experiences, as well as tell a story about a little-known facet of Canadian history; the result is his first novel,

Soldier of the Horse, available March 2011 from TouchWood Editions. NOABC and RUSI Vancouver are combining their speaker program and this will be the first of the series

RUSI's Role in the Honour House Flag



Honour House is proud to have its flag created by one of Canada's leading flag designers RUSI member Arthur Hughes. Officially known as a vexilologist, Arthur has created many flags. His most famous design made the final-four list for Canada's new flag in 1965.

Arthur followed four principles for creating the Honour House flag:

- It must be recognizable from a distance.
- It must look the same on both sides.
- It must be easy to draw.
- It must not have any writing on it.



With these principles in mind Arthur took up the challenge. He wanted to incorporate the official colours of Honour House and provide a flag that would tell who we are instantly to viewers.

His design is classic in its simplicity. The white background speaks to the role of personnel in times emergency. The red maple leaf symbolizes Canada and the white letter H superimposed on the maple leaf identifies Honour House.

The dark blue horizontal bar represents the navy, the red in the middle the army and the light blue the air force. The gold lines symbolize all first responders - fire, ambulance and law enforcement

The Honour House flag now flies proudly outside Honour House and a copy is at New Westminster City Hall



RUSI President Jim Stanton and RUSI Director Cam Cathcart hold the Honour House flag just before it is raised for the first time.

Appointment to Board of Governors of Commissionaires BC



Royal United Services Institute – Vancouver President,

Maj (r) Jim Stanton CD, has been appointed to the Board of Governors of Commissionaires BC.

Jim brings to Commissionaires BC his experience as a highly motivated volunteer and businessman. Jim was one of the founding Directors of Honour House, sits on the Citizens Advisory Council for Vancouver Fire and Rescue Services, is a Board member on the Children's Wish Foundation and an active member of the PPCLI and Airborne Associations.

Under the leadership of BGen (R) Darrell Dean CD (also a member of RUSI Van although not currently active), Commissionaires BC is the premier security provider protecting people and property for companies and individual clients in British Columbia."

Jim joins a long line of RUSI Vancouver Executive members who have served on this Board of Governors, including Graham Jenkins and Vic Coroy.

From the 'Punitary'

A thief broke into the local police station and stole all the toilets and urinals, leaving no clues. A police spokesperson was quoted as saying, "We have absolutely nothing to go on."

Murphy's Rules of Combat Operations.

If your attack is going really well, it's an ambush.

RUSI Vancouver AGM - Change of Date

The date for this meeting has been changed to **March 23rd at 1330hrs.**

And another story from our favourite Naval writer

An International Flavour

By Len Haffenden

Herein, a brief look at four Naval Officers, from four different navies, and their deeds of daring-do. They are: **Walter Cowan**, English (1871-1956), **Stanley Darling**, Australian (1907-2002), **Günther Prien**, German (1908-1941), and **Zinovi Rozhdestvensky**, Russian (1848-1909).

Sir Walter Cowan began naval life as a 13-year-old cadet and at age 56 reached full admiral. He had the unusual distinction of having won two DSO's, 46 years apart! The first when he was 27 and the second at age 73, at which time he had been in the navy for 60 years; that's an awful lot of CD's and bars. Typically for his time, he served in several ships in different places as his career advanced. He joined the Nile expedition under Kitchener in 1898, commanding the gunboat Sultan, and was present at the battle of Omdurman. Cowan proceeded further up river to Fashoda and met Major Marchand and persuaded him and his French forces to turn around and not to pursue French influence in the area, as Egypt and the Sudan had been 'set aside' for the British Empire. For a Lieutenant aged 28 to assume such responsibility was not unusual for RN officers in Victorian times. For this service he won his first DSO.

In 1899 he attached himself, unofficially, to Kitchener's staff in South Africa, and later to General Robert's staff. He loved adventure. He received, however, a cool reception when back at the Admiralty in 1900 looking for employment, but the next year was assigned to a destroyer squadron, and later to a

cruiser squadron. During WWI, at the Battle of Jutland in 1916, his ship, the battle cruiser *Princess Royal*, was badly damaged. After several more commands he retired to the Reserve List in 1931. The outbreak of WWII saw him pestering the Sea Lords for an appointment. He was now 68! He knew which strings to pull and joined the Commandos, with the rank of commander, serving in North Africa. Later, he was attached to an Indian cavalry unit and was captured trying to hold off a tank with just his revolver. He was repatriated (his captors thought him too old to be of use) and almost at once he was back with the Commandos working in combined ops off the Dalmatian Coast, winning his second DSO. We could do with a few more men like Walter Cowan; he literally served for 85 years.

Stanley Darling (love the name) at age 18 joined the RANVR in 1925 and took a keen interest in anti submarine work. He was good at this and was loaned to the RN in 1940. He earned his three DSC's in only nine months while hunting U-Boats in the English Channel in 1944/45. He commanded several small HM Ships, such as trawler *Inch Marnock*, corvette *Clarkia*, and two frigates, *Loch Killin* and *Loch Lomond*. With his special skills he was attached to the famous 'Johnny' Walker's 2nd Escort Group, known for its aggressive hunter/killer procedures. On one patrol alone, shortly after the D-Day invasion of Normandy, Captain Darling sank U-333 and U-736 and assisted in the destruction of two other U-boats. In April, 1945, just before the war in Europe ended, he sank U-1036, his last U-boat. He spent the next few months in the Far East theatre attached to the British Pacific Fleet. By 1947 he was home, and recommenced his career with the ABC, the Australian Broadcasting Commission, where he had worked during the 1930's. He remained in the RANVR, becoming CO of the reserve training base HMAS *Rushcutter*. Needing a hobby, an outlet different from the navy, Stan Darling took up ocean yacht racing. He was indeed, a wizard of Oz.

Korvettenkapitän (Lt Cdr.) Günther Prien was one of the most successful U-Boat captains of WWII, sinking 32 ships totalling approx 200,000 tons. Mind you, 'successful' is a matter of perspective. It depends on which end of the torpedo you are. Although born in Saxony, Prussia, young Günther yearned to see the sea and first served in the German Merchant Navy from 1923 to 1932, then transferred to the Reichsmarine in January, 1933, the same month and year that Adolf Hitler was sworn in as Chancellor. The naval service name was changed to 'Kriegsmarine' in June, 1935. Prien was a good seaman; his first three merchant ships were all sailing vessels, the '*Hamburg*', wrecked off the Irish coast in 1925, the '*Oldenburg*' in which Prien got his Mate's ticket and a wireless operator's certificate, and the '*San Francisco*' in which he got his Master's ticket in 1932. With no work on the horizon, the navy beckoned. Once in the navy, after a few months on the light cruiser *Konigsberg*, he volunteered for the submarine service, rising quickly in it, receiving operational training in U-26 during the Spanish Civil War. His first and only command was a new type, U-47 in 1938, and he stayed with



her till sunk in March, 1941. It was in U-47 on September 16th, 1939 that Prien penetrated the defences of Scapa Flow, sank the battleship HMS *Royal Oak*, got out safely, and was lionized in Berlin. It was a tactical and propaganda coup. Hitler personally pinned the Knight's Cross medal on Prien's tunic. In a shocked Britain, the fleet moved to safer places, while the First Sea Lord, Winston Churchill, although appalled, had the decency to comment privately on the courage and initiative of the German sailors, qualities, he said, that he expected, to see in his own naval officers. Prien became known as "The Bull of Scapa Flow" and his crew devised a snorting bull insignia painted on the conning tower. The rest of his 7th Submarine Flotilla soon followed suite. Kept secret for some time was the fact that Prien fired seven torpedoes at *Royal Oak*, five of which were defective, but the other two were enough. Over 800 men

died. All good things come to an end, and on the night of 7-8 March, 1941, Prien's U-47 was caught on the surface by the destroyers HMS *Wolverine* and HMS *Verity* and depth-charged to destruction with a loss of the crew of 45. In passing, I might mention the losses for U-boat crews were in the range of 75%, the highest casualty rate of all units from both sides, during the war. 783 U-boats were sunk.

Kontre Admiral (Rear Adm.) Zinovi Rozhdestvensky, (hereafter Z-R) first came to my attention in my third year at UBC when I was assigned to write an essay on the naval aspects of the Russo-Japanese war (1904-05). It was an enjoyable piece of research. Z-R entered the navy at 17 and had a varied career including battle experience against the Turkish Navy in 1878. He was one of the Tsar's favourites, and for two years was Naval Attaché to London.



In February, 1904, the Russian Pacific Fleet at Port Arthur and Vladivostok was enjoying a pre-emptive strike by Japanese forces, which over the next few weeks either sunk, captured or made them irrelevant. The Tsar was somewhat put out by these humiliating defeats and ordered the Baltic Fleet under the command of Z-R to the Far East to balance things out and exact some revenge. Several of the Russian ships, and crews, were new, not fully trained, and nervous. While passing through the North Sea the panicky Russians fired on some British fishing trawlers thinking them to be Japanese torpedo boats!; though how such boats could have got there is beyond comprehension.

The short cut through the Med and Suez was denied the Russians because the Anglo-Japanese Naval Alliance was in effect. Hence, they had to take the long way, coal-burning their way around Africa and across the Indian Ocean; their progress noted steadily by international news agencies.

Admiral Zinovi Rozhdestvensky

Apparently, as the Battle of Tsushima Straits commenced, Z-R received a head wound from a shell splinter, was taken to his cabin, incommunicado, leaving his fleet without orders or direction. It was pretty well a foregone conclusion anyway, Admiral Togo had a modern fleet, based on British designs well worked up with previous battle experience, and the Baltic Fleet (now re-christened the 2nd Pacific Squadron) was almost at the end of its tether, having taken seven months to get there with no element of surprise, heavily fouled bottoms, and untested equipment. Only one Russian cruiser and a few smaller ships reached Vladivostok or an internment port; the other 40 odd ships were sunk or run aground. To cap the disaster, Adm. Z-R was captured and became a high-ranking POW.

The Japanese lost three torpedo boats and 117 men; the Russian losses were appalling, over 5,000 dead. President Teddy Roosevelt helped organize a peace treaty, and Z-R was sent home ~ to a court-martial. He was found responsible by his fellow admirals, but the Tsar had the sentence commuted. For some reason Z-R had difficulty after this in finding employment.



15th Field Artillery Regiment RCA
Officers' Mess
St. Patrick's Day
W hiskey T asting N ight

The 15th Field Artillery Regiment RCA welcomes you to attend their annual Whiskey Tasting event. There will be food, beverages, draw prizes, and of course, pipe music.

This is the annual fundraiser for the Regimental Fund which greatly appreciates your support.

Tickets are \$40.00 per person for Whiskey Tasting or \$30.00 if you are only having beer, wine, or soft drinks at the bar.

DATE: Friday March 4th, 2011

TIME: 7:00 PM

LOCATION: Bessborough Armoury
2025 West 11th Avenue
Vancouver, BC

DRESS: Business casual.
Kilts, to be sure, are welcome.
Lt Clint Godsoe,

CONTACT: Entertainment Representative
Email: cgodsoe@hotmail.ca



ST. PATRICK'S DAY "WEARING OF THE GREEN" PARTY



On

SATURDAY, MARCH 19, 2011

TIME: 1600 to 2100 hours

PLACE: Drill Hall – WOs' and Sergeants' Mess

PRICE: \$12.00 per person - DRESS CASUAL AND HATS WILL BE ALLOWED IN THE MESS. ALL RANKS AND GUESTS ARE WELCOME!

RSVP:

- e-mail – ghawthorne@shaw.ca
- telephone – 604.421.1521 (Gayle Hawthorne) by Friday, March 11th
- cheques payable to The BC Regiment (DCO) Association
- mail to:
Suite 208 - 1899 Willingdon Avenue
Burnaby, B.C.
V5C 5T1

AGENDA:

- **Meet and Greet - 1600 to 1700 hours**
- **Buffet: Irish Fare - 1730 hours to 1830 hours**
- **Snacks, lucky draws, surprises, games and a whole lot of fun!**
- **Prize for best "Irish Garb"**
- **Special Guests – Pipe Major Jimmy Knox, OBE, Royal Irish Regiment, with our very own Irish Pipes & Drums!**

HOPE YOU CAN MAKE IT AND MAY YOU BE IN HEAVEN HALF AN HOUR BEFORE THE DEVIL KNOWS YOU'RE DEAD

