



Mess and RUSI Vancouver Members News Mar 22, 2011

Wednesday Lunches

Nest week (**March 30th**) Robert McKay is coming to talk about his new novel 'Soldier of the Horse' 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.

Condolences

There are a few people connected with the Mess that have suffered losses in the last couple of weeks. Two have lost parents:- Mrs Susan Moogk, Secretary of the Regimental Museum and Achieves Society, lost her father recently as did CWO Ben Lum, RSM of the newly combined Service Battalion and husband of our esteemed cook/caterer. These people are mourned but they lived long and productive lives, raising good families and contributing much to society.

The saddest is the loss of 4 year old Matthew Veuger, grandson of LCol Peter Veuger, former Hon LCol of the Regiment, and his wife Suzanne, who spent many hours helping with his treatments. He passed away recently after a long battle with Leigh's disease. Unless you have had this happen, we can only vaguely understand the depth of what Peter, Suzanne and the rest of Matthew's family are feeling.

We send our sincerest condolences to all.

RUSI Vancouver AGM – Tomorrow

March 23, 2011 at 1330hrs in the Parry room, adjacent to the Mess.

German Armed Forces honour RMC professor

By Tori Stafford/The Whig-Standard

An assistant professor at RMC was given an award Sunday normally reserved for members of the German Armed Forces.

Major Pierre Lepine received the German Armed Forces Silver Cross of Honor on Sunday, Mar. 13. Awarded for exemplary service or outstanding deeds and extraordinary achievements, the medal is the German equivalent to the Canadian Order of Military Merit.

"It's an honour," Lepine said of the outstanding achievement. He is the first Canadian officer to receive the award. Only one other Canadian Forces member has been decorated with the Silver Cross, but that officer was given the award when he was a member of the German Air Force.

Lepine received the medal due to his outstanding work while posted to Ministry of Defence in Berlin for four years in 2006 as part of the NATO exchange program. Prior to that, he had been selected to attend the German General Command and Staff College in Hamburg.

While working in Berlin, he was the Ministry of Defence's representative on African issues, as well as being responsible for terrorism analysis and strategy. He was also the German national representative to the NATO Centre of Excellence for Defence against Terrorism, and to the G8. "It was challenging" Lepine said of his time in Germany. "It was very educational, and it's always an honour working with another armed forces."

Lepine said one of the biggest challenges was the language barrier, even after completing a year of German language training at the Canadian Forces Language School in Gatineau before leaving for Germany in 2004.

"The language they taught in Hamburg was different from the language used at the Ministry of Defence," he said.

Returning to Canada last year, Lepine was posted to RMC and now works as an assistant professor in the Department of Politics and Economics.



Royal Military College professor Maj Pierre Lepine, right, shakes hands with Lt.-Col. Jay Kuhlen of the German Armed Forces after being awarded the Silver Cross of Honor on Sunday

Seaforth Gets 'Close Shave' and Haircut

This article appeared in the last edition of the Seaforth Newsletter. It is too good a story to keep to oneself.

"Pte JC Wilson of Falkland Captured, Wounded, Escapes Back to Camp in 24hrs.

The following article appeared in The Vancouver Daily Province, December 16, 1943 (p 25) and was one of the clippings collected by a young lady in Vernon during the war years. The clipping was recently forwarded to me (Ken MacLeod) by Jessie Ann and Len Gamble of Armstrong, friends of the lady.

Seaforth Gets 'Close Shave' and Haircut "Things Happen When This Soldier Goes to Town"
by Dick Sanburn, Special War Correspondent for The Vancouver Daily Province
and Associated Southam Newspapers. LONDON, Nov. 30—(Delayed)

It was lovely fall day and a watery sun danced on the golden leaves in the sleepy valley in the Apennines. The village, just captured by a Canadian unit, had been more peaceful since 25-pounders were turned loose on the pink house up on the hill a mile away, and a German observation post blasted to ruins. Private JC Wilson, of Falkland, BC, decided it was a fine time to get a haircut. There hadn't been much time for haircuts for the Seaforth recently, and now, with this short respite, it was possible again to think of unwarlike things. Private Wilson got permission and set out for a peaceful stroll to "salone" on the other side of the village. It is almost impossible to walk more than a few steps in any Italian town without finding "salone," Italian for barber shop, but Wilson was bent on enjoying the fine weather, so he went to the farthest one he could find. That was the last the unit knew of him for 24 hours.

The next day one Lieut. F.R. Pettett, Vancouver, met Wilson coming down a winding street. "Well, where've you been all the time?" asked the officer. "Sir, I've been for a haircut and I got wounded," replied Wilson somewhat cryptically. Then he opened his shirt and showed Lieut. Perrett a deep bullet crease across his chest. Slowly Wilson related the most fantastic haircut story in the history of the regiment: He had reached "salone" without incident, and once more wore the Government Issue style haircut, more cut than hair. Still with time to spend, Wilson decided to take a different route back to his billet, and strolled off through fields on the outskirts of town. Dreaming contentedly about how much this particular valley, with its towering mountains, resembled British Columbia, Wilson strolled smack into a German patrol, and his dream exploded in the horrible reality of being taken prisoner, even though a prisoner with a brand new haircut. The Jerries marched Wilson off triumphantly towards their headquarters. As his brain churned with the ignominy of his position, Wilson lagged behind and fell in beside the German officer commanding the patrol. The officer was carrying a light automatic Schmeiser rifle. Just as the group came to the top of a small incline and started downward, Wilson turned suddenly and clipped the Jerry officer neatly on the jaw. The officer collapsed, pulled the trigger of his rifle in surprise, and shot Wilson in the chest. Then Wilson joined the prostrate officer. Angry German soldiers rushed back. They mauled Wilson a bit and once more searched him quickly for weapons. They felt a bulge in the pocket of his battle dress pants. "What's that?" they demanded. "Oh, just pencils and writing paper," replied Wilson. In the next few seconds Wilson slipped a hand into that pocket, grabbed his "pencils and writing paper" and like a magician pulled out no such harmless articles but a captured German revolver which he immediately put to use and fired several shots at his captors. They ducked. Taking advantage of the confusion Wilson got to his feet and ran at top speed back toward the line, firing shots enough to keep the Germans' head down. He eluded them. He resumed his walk through a beautiful valley which resembled British Columbia, at a much quicker pace and with a much clearer idea of where he was going this time. That's how Pte. J.C. Wilson, Falkland, BC, went for a haircut, was taken prisoner, got wounded, escaped and came home again all in less than 24 hours.

Ken MacLeod Note: Pte. JC Wilson was killed on December 8, 1943 during the crossing of the Moro River at San Leonardo, eight days before the article appeared in The Vancouver Daily Province and unknown to the newspaper.

Lt Frank Perrett died of wounds in Holland on April 25, 1945, a few days before the end of the war.

Queen bestows title on Wootton Bassett for commemorating our fallen heroes

By [Robert Hardman](#) *The Daily Mail*

First honour of its kind to be granted in 100 years

Not since Malta received the George Cross in 1942 has a place been so deserving of an official honour. Wootton Bassett, the Wiltshire town which drops everything to salute every fallen member of the Armed Forces, is to be saluted itself and become Royal Wootton Bassett by decree of the Queen. It is the first town to be granted the honour in more than a century.



Last respects: Mourners stand in silence as a cortege carrying the bodies of seven British soldiers killed in Afghanistan passes through Wootton Bassett High Street

The announcement was made by Prime Minister David Cameron in the Commons yesterday. The Queen, he said, had agreed to the tribute as ‘an enduring symbol of the nation’s admiration and our gratitude to the people of that town’. He went on: ‘Their deeply moving and dignified demonstrations of respect and mourning have shown the deep bond between

the public and our Armed Forces.’

The Wootton Bassett repatriation ceremonies will cease this summer, however, because there will be no more hearses passing through from neighbouring RAF Lyneham. It was confirmed yesterday, by the Ministry of Defence, that repatriations of all dead British personnel will revert to RAF Brize Norton in Oxfordshire by September 1. The Wootton Bassett ritual started in 2007 when local members of the Royal British Legion decided that the convoys of coffins leaving RAF Lyneham for the coroner’s court in Oxford should not pass unnoticed.

No sooner had the Prime Minister made his announcement yesterday than the news was speeding around town faster than a runaway piglet on market day. ‘It’s not something we ever sought but it’s a great honour,’ said the Mayor, care worker Mary Champion. By mid-afternoon, no one in Wootton Bassett could possibly have been unaware of their new-found royal status as town crier Owen Collier took to the streets with his bell and a particularly deep-bellied ‘Oyez!’. Kirsty Lambert, landlady of the Cross Keys pub, said: ‘It’s something to be proud of rather than something we want to celebrate. We all know why it’s happened and we’d much rather that it had never happened at all.’ Sadly, it is about to happen all over again this afternoon when the body of Lance Corporal Stephen McKee, 27, of the Royal Irish Regiment comes home. He was killed by a hidden bomb last week in the Nad-e Ali district of Afghanistan. As always, the people of Wootton Bassett will quietly leave their desks or their

shops or their kitchen sinks to congregate in the High Street and pay their respects as the hearse slows, the bell tolls and Royal British Legion standards from all over the country are lowered. As ever, Kirsty Lambert will provide a function room and free refreshments for the bereaved family at the Cross Keys.

It will be quite a gathering. Lance Corporal McKee, of Banbridge County Down, was from one of those grand old Forces families which are the backbone of the British Army. Stephen was serving in the same regiment as his brothers, a cousin and his father-in-law. For his widow, Carley, his death follows last year's loss of their baby daughter. At moments of such impossible pain and grief, many families have found the support of Wootton Bassett profoundly comforting. Kirsty finds many return on the anniversary of their loved one's repatriation just to be among friends.

And that is why this honour is so well-deserved. The only other 'Royal' towns in Britain are Royal Leamington Spa, which was granted the title in 1838 by Queen Victoria, and Royal Tunbridge Wells, honoured in 1909 by Edward VII.

Both were recognised for the fact that the Royal Family had enjoyed their local waters. Bognor also acquired the more ancient but less august suffix of 'Regis' in 1929, after George V had convalesced there, like Lyme Regis. All of them petitioned for their royal status.

What makes Wootton Bassett entirely different is that it has never sought any sort of honour. Indeed, it has gone out of its way to defer all suggestions of recognition, arguing that the focus be on the fallen. Yesterday's news was a genuine surprise.

Quite how the honour will be presented remains a matter for Buckingham Palace, the Cabinet Office and the town council to decide. Last night, a Cabinet Office spokesman said the title would take effect from the moment that the Queen signs Letters Patent granting the honour later this year.

Asked whether there would then be some sort of municipal royal investiture – as with, say, an OBE – the Cabinet Office, the Palace and the town council all admitted that they had no idea. 'I suppose we will just have to find out what Tunbridge Wells did last time,' a civil servant said last night.

Read more:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1366810/Wootton-Bassett-given-Royal-prefix-rare-honour-Queen.html#ixzz1GoVBwo77>

From the 'Punitary'

A sceptical anthropologist was cataloguing South American folk remedies with the assistance of a tribal Brujo who indicated that the leaves of a particular fern were a sure cure for any case of constipation. When the anthropologist expressed his doubts, the Brujo looked him in the eye and said, "Let me tell you, with fronds like these, you don't need enemas."

Murphy's Rules of Combat Operations.

A retreating enemy is probably just falling back and regrouping.