

## Mess and RUSI Vancouver Members News Mar 29, 2011



Tomorrow, **March 30<sup>th</sup>** 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.

## Centennial Celebrations – 6 Engineer Squadron

As you've hopefully heard by now, the unit will be celebrating 100 years of service to the North Shore and to Canada this year. To commemorate this special occasion, we have planned some exciting events taking place over the next six weeks or so.

On 16 April, 2011, the unit along with its other Regimental formations 44FES and 54ES will be conducting a bridging exercise in Mahon Park, just a stone's throw from the armoury. The purpose of the exercise is to demonstrate our emergency response capabilities on the North Shore and to connect with our neighbours in the community. Community leaders from the District and the City of North Vancouver will be on hand to help mark the occasion. All of our neighbours and friends are welcome and encouraged to attend.

On 7 May, 2011 - the real celebrations begin. At approximately 10:30am, the Mayor of North Vancouver and our generous donors Mr. Joseph Spears and Mr. Jay Straith will unveil the Sappers' Cairn in Mahon Park and announce the renaming of the field as "Sappers Field". At 12:00pm, 6 Engineer Squadron, along with flanking formations from 39 CER, Cadet units, the JP Fell Pipe Band, the 15 Fd Artillery Band, the Old Guard of 6ES, and vintage military vehicles, will conduct a March-Past parade in Mahon Park before a large crowd at Fen Burnett stadium. The parade will be inspected by military and local community VIPs. There will be a small reception at the JP Fell Armoury following the parade.

The final event, and the main purpose for this email, is the 6 Engineer Squadron Centennial Banquet. As a friend of the unit, please find your invitation attached. You may also receive an invitation in the mail, however, we do not have mailing information for all invitees and so please accept this message as your formal invitation. Please send returns to this email address and we look forward to hosting you on 7 May.

CHIMO!

**What: Centennial Banquet**

**When: 7 May, Cocktails at 1730h, Dinner at 1830h, Dancing to follow**

**Cost: 60\$ (50\$ if paid before 15 April 2011)**

**Dress: Members - Mess Kit    Civilian - Formal**

If you have any questions, contact: 2Lt Chris Beneteau [778-846-3557](tel:778-846-3557)

### **Afghan, Canadian gunners train together**

*Article by Maj Vincent Giroux, Joint Task Force Afghanistan*

*Photos by Lt Francis Lavoie, Joint Task Force Afghanistan*



An Afghan soldier (centre) fires a 155mm M777A1 howitzer in collaboration with gunners from Battery X of 1st Battalion, Royal 22e Régiment Battle Group.

**Kandahar, Afghanistan** — On February 13, for the first time in the mission's history, X Battery from 1st Battalion, Royal 22e Régiment Battle Group and Kandak 4 Battery from 1 Brigade 205 Corps of the National Afghan Army conducted a training exercise together. Joint Task Force (JTF) Afghanistan accordingly entered a new phase in the long, but steady process of developing Canada's Afghan partners.

A Canadian soldier and an Afghan soldier practise firing with a 122 mm D-30 howitzer.

The two Canadian units deployed in the west and east of Panjwayi District, while the Afghan battery deployed in the west. They worked together to conduct two regimental fire missions, which involved concentrating high explosive shells on the same target.

It was a rainy morning when the two artillery observation teams, one Canadian and one Afghan, deployed together to Sperwan Ghar observation post. Despite the poor weather



conditions, they successfully concentrated the fire of the three artillery units, which attested to the improved capabilities of the JTF and the Afghan brigade. Thus the gunners from Panjwayi District had the opportunity to put into practice their knowledge of fire missions involving multiple units.

The mentoring team from 5e Régiment d'artillerie légère du Canada prepared the Afghan gunners to meet this new challenge. Their instruction focused both on the placement of the pieces and on the artillery observation post. And they also demonstrated their ability to serve as a liaison element permitting the integration of Kandak 4 battery into the JTF communications structure. This ad hoc artillery regiment's fire power was equivalent to an average artillery battery. The Afghan battery added its two 122mm D-30 howitzers to the four Canadian 155mm M777A1 howitzers. Compared to the equipment available to the CF in theatre, the Afghan gunners' was rudimentary. Yet they made good use of what they had, depending on tried and true methods that are still being taught in the artillery schools of contemporary armies.

Lieutenant-Colonel Michel-Henri St-Louis, commander of 1st Battalion, Royal 22e Régiment Battle Group, described the event as a resounding success and a step towards the full autonomy of the Afghan artillery at a time when the Canadian combat mission in Afghanistan is coming to an end.

## **“A New Chapter in the New Veterans Charter Receives Royal Assent”**

Ottawa - The Honourable Jean-Pierre Blackburn, Minister of Veterans Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture), celebrated final approval of Bill C-55 today. “It is an important breakthrough in how Canada cares for and supports injured and ill Canadian Forces (CF) members and Veterans,” said Minister Blackburn. Also known as the Enhanced New Veterans Charter Act, Bill C-55 received royal assent this afternoon.

“This legislation represents a significant new chapter in the financial aid available to CF members and Veterans who are injured in the line of duty,” said Minister Blackburn. “We are providing an additional \$2 billion to ensure a better quality of life for ill and injured Veterans and their families.”

Minister Blackburn thanked Veterans and their organizations for their support which he qualified as essential in helping parliamentarians understand the importance of the measures contained in the legislation. He also praised members of Parliament and senators of all political allegiances for taking the time to review the Bill and ensuring its speedy passage through the two chambers.

“The broad support for this Bill reflects the great pride and admiration that all Canadians share for our men and women in uniform, our Veterans and their families,” said Minister Blackburn. “Parliamentarians clearly understood the importance of making sure these enhancements quickly reach the men and women who have earned and deserve this kind of support from their country.” The legislation still has to go through a number of regulatory steps before coming into force, which should be completed within the next five or six months.

**What Bill C-55 does:**

## Improved monthly benefits

- The legislation expands eligibility for monthly allowances (worth up to \$1,632 per month-for life) for seriously injured Veterans; and
- It introduces an additional \$1,000 monthly supplement to the Permanent Impairment Allowance (for life) to help our most seriously injured or ill Veterans who are unable to return to suitable gainful employment.

Also, by amending regulations for the Earnings Loss benefit, the Government will establish a minimum pre-tax income of \$40,000 a year for Veterans who are in rehabilitation or, if they are no longer able to be gainfully employed, until age 65.

## Flexible options for the Disability Award

- The legislation creates new payment options for Canadian Forces members and Veterans receiving a disability award. While they will still have the choice of a lump-sum payment, they will also now be able to receive a disability award as either an annual payment over any number of years or as a combination of a partial lump-sum payment and annual instalments (with interest).
- Veterans will also retain the right to change their payment option at any time. This includes choosing at a later date to receive the balance of their disability award in a final lump-sum payment.

“By offering more payment options for the Disability Award, the Government of Canada has recognized that CF members and Veterans need financial choices that meet their individual circumstances,” said Minister Blackburn.

## Additional Details on the Enhanced New Veterans Charter Act

Royal Assent has been granted for legislation to enact significant improvements to the financial support available to injured Canadian Forces (CF) members and Veterans. Bill C-55, which is formally known as the Enhanced New Veterans Charter Act, makes changes to the New Veterans Charter to address concerns raised by Veterans, their families, Veterans’ organizations, advisory groups and parliamentary committees.

This legislation:

- improves access to monthly benefits (worth up to \$1,632 per month, and payable for life) for seriously injured Veterans;
- introduces a monthly \$1,000 supplement to the Permanent Impairment Allowance-payable for life-to help our most seriously injured or ill Veterans who are unable to be suitably, gainfully employed; and
- provides flexible payment options for receiving a Disability Award.

## Improving access to the Permanent Impairment Allowance and the Exceptional Incapacity Allowance:

When the New Veterans Charter was implemented in 2006, it resulted in some unforeseen gaps between the new charter and the Pension Act, which had previously served all Veterans. As a result, a number of severely injured Veterans found themselves ineligible for either the new Permanent Impairment Allowance under the New Veterans Charter or the Exceptional Incapacity Allowance under the Pension Act.

By correcting these eligibility barriers between the two systems, it is expected that as many as 3,500 Veterans will now qualify for either the Permanent Impairment Allowance or the Exceptional Incapacity Allowance over the next five years.

### **Introducing a monthly \$1,000 supplement for permanently and severely injured Veterans:**

Severely injured Veterans who are receiving the PIA and are unable to be suitably, gainfully employed will receive an additional \$1,000 per month for the rest of their lives. This would be added to other financial supports they may receive, such as the minimum, pre-tax income of \$40,000 a year available through the Earnings Loss benefit. It is anticipated that approximately 500 Veterans will benefit from this change over the next five years.

### **Providing payment options for the Disability Award:**

The tax-free Disability Award is currently a one-time payment designed solely to recognize and compensate for the non-economic impact (the pain and suffering) of an injury or illness. It is in addition to other financial supports (such as the monthly Earnings Loss benefit and the PIA) which recognize the ongoing economic impact of an injury. Under this change to the New Veterans Charter, CF members and Veterans will have new payment options for receiving their Disability Award.

These options are:

- equal annual payments spread out over the number of years of their choice (with interest);
- a partial lump-sum payment with the balance paid out in annual instalments over any number of years (with interest); or
- a single lump-sum payment.

Veterans will also have the option-at any time-to receive the balance of their Disability Award in a final lump-sum payment.

### **Introducing a minimum annual Earnings Loss benefit:**

In addition to the legislated changes outlined above, the regulations which govern the New Veterans Charter are being amended to include a minimum annual, pre-tax income of \$40,000 for recipients of the monthly Earnings Loss benefit. This enhancement should, over the next five years, increase the monthly financial support available to approximately 2,300 Veterans who either left the Canadian Forces while still at a low military rank or when military salaries were much lower than they are today.

## **“SEATS FOR SOLDIERS”**

New Westminster, B.C. April 8, 2011: The New Westminster Senior Salmonbellies Lacrosse Club and The Royal Westminster Regiment are pleased to announce the third annual “Seats for Soldiers” Military Appreciation Night at Queen’s Park Arena in New Westminster on Thursday, June 9, 2011. Again, the Salmonbellies will take on one of their biggest rivals, the Victoria Shamrocks, in a unique evening to salute the Canadian Armed Forces. At this special appreciation event, anyone with an association to the military, including cadets, legion members, military association members along with their families, will be admitted FREE OF CHARGE. Military guests are invited to come dressed in uniforms, legion or regimental blazers complete with medals and bring along families and friends. Civilians are encouraged to wear RED for Canada! Join us as we welcome home our returning soldiers who served in Afghanistan during the past year. At this special tribute event, the Salmonbellies and Shamrocks promise an evening of warrior sport on the only wooden lacrosse floor in North America.

“On behalf of the entire military family, we appreciate the Salmonbellies and the Shamrocks extending this kind gesture which will be an entertaining respite for our hard working service members and their families” stated LCol Doug Poitras, Commanding Officer of The Royal Westminster Regiment.

Pre-game activities starting at 6:00 pm include a military display expo featuring current vehicles, equipment and weapons along with a BBQ and a beverage garden. Brigadier General Paul Wynnyck, Commander of Land Forces Western Area, will visit from Edmonton to perform the ceremonial face off. Intermissions will feature military band entertainment, giveaways and fundraising activities to support the Military Family Resource Centre. Doors open at 6:45 pm for pregame entertainment. Game start scheduled for 7:55 pm.

The Salmonbellies Lacrosse Club, formed in 1889 in New Westminster, has long been one of the fixtures in the Western Lacrosse Association, winning 24 national championships during its 120 year history. In 1928, although Lacrosse was considered a demonstration sport, they won the Olympic Gold Medal. To show support for our Armed Forces, last December, the Salmonbellies and their sponsors shipped lacrosse equipment and shirts to our serving troops in Afghanistan. This June, along with their fans, the Club will show their appreciation once again to the Canadian Military by inviting everyone to experience the excitement this team always delivers. “Two years ago, when the Salmonbellies celebrated its 120th year, we thought it very fitting to do something with one of the Royal City’s oldest and prestigious partners, The Royal Westminster Regiment. Dovetailing off the success of the Operation Salmonbellies Project in 2008, it was the right thing to honour all past and present members of our military. We want to continue this tribute again in 2011!” said Dan Richardson President and GM, New Westminster SR Salmonbellies.

The Royal Westminster Regiment is the oldest active unit in British Columbia with a 148 year history in New Westminster. The militia light infantry battalion has served in The Boer War, World War I, World War II; augmented numerous overseas deployments on UN and NATO missions; served in Bosnia, Croatia, Cyprus, the Golan Heights, Sierra Leone and Afghanistan. In addition, the unit has assisted the community by providing protection from civil unrest, providing a relief centre during the Great Fire of 1898, assisted with the Fraser

River floods of 1948 and aided with the Okanagan Wild Fires of 2003. Westies have been deployed annual from 2007 -2011 to serve in the Afghan Conflict and several currently serving overseas will return in late 2011. During 2010, the Regiment provided security support to the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.

*For information contact: David MacGrotty, Chairman of Seats for Soldiers or Honorary Lieutenant Colonel Karen Baker-MacGrotty at 604-526-2988*

### **From the 'Punitary'**

. There were three Indian squaws. One slept on a deer skin, one slept on an elk skin, and the third slept on a hippopotamus skin. All three became pregnant. The first two each had a baby boy. The one who slept on the hippopotamus skin had twin boys. This just goes to prove that.. "the squaw of the hippopotamus is equal to the sons of the squaws of the other two hides."

### **Murphy's Rules of Combat Operations.**

Five second fuses always burn for three seconds.

### **A Special Play at The Pacific Theatre**

***Jake's Gift*** - Apr 6 — 16 By  
Julia Mackey

A powerful and surprisingly funny drama about a Canadian World War II veteran who reluctantly returns to Normandy, France, for the 60th Anniversary of the D-Day invasion. While revisiting the beach he landed on sixty years earlier, Jake encounters Isabelle, a precocious 10-year-old from the local village whose inquisitive nature and charm challenge the old soldier to confront some long-ignored ghosts.

*Jake's Gift*, written and performed by Julia Mackey, plays April 6-16 at Vancouver's Pacific Theatre, Wednesday to Saturday at 8 pm with matinees on Saturdays at 2 pm. Tickets \$16.50-29.50 (HST not included). To reserve call 604.731.5518 or visit [www.pacifictheatre.org](http://www.pacifictheatre.org).



*Pacific Theatre is located at 1440 West 12th Avenue, Vancouver (12th Ave. & Hemlock). The entrance is on 12th Avenue marked with "Pacific Theatre" above the door.*